

Inspection of Imperial College Early Years Education Centre

8 Princes Gardens, LONDON SW7 1NA

Inspection date: 21 February 2020

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
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The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children and their parents are met warmly on arrival by familiar staff. Older children hang up their coats and join their friends. Babies separate easily from parents. Staff take time to speak to parents and ensure all children settle extremely well into the daily routine. Highly effective staff deployment means the start of the day is calm and relaxed. Children are comfortable and ready to learn.

The high-quality nursery environment is maintained to an exceptionally high standard. Children's developmental needs are central to how spaces are organised. For example, furniture in the youngest children's rooms is at a low level. This helps babies to access the resources they need independently.

Children have opportunities to explore numbers, letters and mark making in every learning area. For example, in the realistic home corner, there are lists to write and magazines to read. Children's physical well-being is supported exceedingly well. Staff provide challenging outdoor learning experiences which all children thoroughly enjoy.

Throughout their day at nursery children demonstrate high levels of engagement in their learning. They focus intently on their work and are expertly supported by a highly skilled staff team. Children are happy. They make friends and play well with their peers. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are exceptionally ready for their next steps in learning, including starting school.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The leadership team and staff have high expectations for all children. They plan a rich and inspiring learning environment based on children's individual needs. An exceptional level of thought about the resources available means children engage meaningfully and purposefully with their learning. All children, including those who speak English as an additional language and those with SEND, make excellent progress from their starting points.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. They are remarkably happy and settled. Staff are nurturing and compassionate and they are excellent role models for children. Children learn about and respect their different cultural backgrounds and customs. They play together exceptionally well. They are kind and courteous. Children demonstrate a high level of confidence and self-esteem.
- Staff are committed to improving children's health. Children have high levels of personal independence. They learn about managing their personal hygiene, for example, washing their hands and brushing their teeth. Children and staff learn to consider their mental health and how to look after their emotional well-being.

Children are supported exceedingly well to develop their understanding of the importance of healthy food choices and lifestyles.

- Parents speak highly of the care their children receive. They compliment the high-quality resources, the opportunities for children to play outdoors, the consistently knowledgeable staff team and the nutritious food their children eat.
- The leadership team has taken steps to reduce the environmental impact of the nursery. A member of staff leads on reducing waste and finding sustainable alternatives. Children learn about ways they can reduce their impact on the environment. They read about plastics in the ocean and develop their own creative ideas and solutions in their play. This helps children develop a high level of understanding about the world and being part of a wider community.
- Children have regular access to the incredibly well-designed nursery garden. A bespoke climbing frame provides exciting opportunities for children to extend their physical skills. There is space to use bicycles, dig in the mud, play in the sand and enjoy the outdoors. Through a gate, children can access a wilder space which they call the 'secret garden'. Here they identify trees, squelch in the mud and explore the natural environment.
- The leadership team has strong links with outside organisations that provide further opportunities for learning. Children recently visited the pond at the local Ecological Society where they observed frogspawn. In the nursery, staff have created a pond with frogs, pond weed and rocks. Sticky rice and lentils make a realistic 'frogspawn'. There are books available about the life cycle and what children can expect when they return to the pond. Staff use opportunities to engage with the natural world to help children develop excellent literacy, communication and language skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff regularly update their safeguarding and child protection training. Leaders have implemented highly effective safeguarding policies and procedures which underpin their outstanding safeguarding practice. When dealing with safeguarding concerns, staff make meticulous and detailed notes. Staff have a comprehensive knowledge of possible safeguarding concerns, including harmful cultural practices. They understand the necessary procedures to follow should they have any concerns about the welfare of a child. Thorough risk assessments and regular fire drills help to keep children safe. Children learn how to move safely around the nursery, indoors and outside.

Setting details

Unique reference number	135043
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	10128375
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children	0 to 5
Total number of places	186
Number of children on roll	180
Name of registered person	Imperial College Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP519260
Telephone number	020 7594 5540 or 5127 or 5371
Date of previous inspection	2 January 2013

Information about this early years setting

Imperial College Early Years Education Centre provides full-day care and a holiday playscheme. It opened in 1970 and is run by Imperial College for the children of students and staff. It operates from 11 rooms over six floors in converted Victorian houses on the Imperial College campus, in the city of Westminster. Access is via several flights of stairs as there is no lift. The nursery is open each weekday from 8.45am to 5.15pm all year round. The playscheme operates similar opening hours and is open every half term and during the summer holiday. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area and a three-acre 'secret garden'. The setting provides funded places for children aged three and four years. It supports children with SEND and a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The setting employs 55 staff. Of these, two hold early years professional status, 11 have degrees in early years education, three staff are qualified teachers and most of the remaining staff are qualified in early years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Trina Lynskey

Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke to the management team, staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector completed a learning walk with the manager and senior leaders to discuss how the curriculum and setting are organised.
- The inspector reviewed a sample of relevant documents including suitability checks, policies, procedures and other records regarding health and safety.
- Two joint evaluations of activities were completed with senior leaders.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

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