

Inspection of Blackheath Montessori Centre

Independents Road, Blackheath, London SE3 9LF

Inspection date: 9 March 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children thrive in the inclusive environment and are extremely happy. They are confident, self-assured and show exceptional levels of independence. For example, they keep themselves busy, independently choosing their learning once they arrive at the pre-school. Children talk confidently and use a range of vocabulary in their everyday speech. For instance, children use words such as 'dehydrated' and 'lethargic' as they have discussions about the importance of drinking water. Leaders and staff set exceptionally high expectations for all children and provide an extremely ambitious curriculum. Older children who have mastered the concept of adding and subtracting are challenged to solve multiplication and division problems. Children quickly deepen their knowledge of letters and sounds, and begin to apply this in reading. Younger children are developing excellent handwriting skills. For example, they can hold a pencil properly and learn to trace numbers and letters. Most older children can confidently write their names and spell simple words. Children's behaviour is exemplary. They are polite and play exceptionally well with their peers. For example, children often say 'excuse me please' if they want to ask a question or join an activity. They are keen to share resources with their friends and include them in their chosen activity. Children have formed long-lasting friendships in the pre-school and feel extremely safe and secure.

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

- The quality of education is outstanding. The dedicated staff team provide a stimulating and vibrant learning environment where children of different ages and abilities are exceptionally eager to explore, investigate and learn through play. Teaching is extremely challenging and tailored to children's individual needs and stages of development. Children make excellent progress in their learning and development.
- Staff build secure and trusting relationships with all children. They follow a robust and carefully tailored approach when children start at the pre-school to help them settle in. Staff are highly successful in promoting children's positive relationships and excellent behaviour. All children are exceptionally well prepared, emotionally and socially, as they move on to the next stage in their learning, including starting school.
- The curriculum provision for mathematics and literacy is exceptionally strong. Staff use their skills, knowledge and training extremely well to extend children's mathematical and literacy development. For example, they support children to understand mathematical concepts, such as 'place value of a number' and 'time'. In addition, those exceeding in reading are introduced to punctuation to help challenge them further. Children develop secure foundations for future learning.
- Parents are extremely positive about the pre-school. They appreciate the

approachable and passionate staff. Staff use highly effective strategies such as the online assessment system, meetings and workshops to support parents' engagement. Parents report that staff keep them well informed and treat their children as individuals.

- Children benefit from extra-curricular activities, such as music, French and sports, to build on their interests and acquire skills for life. Children get delighted as they practise high and low musical notes on a pretend piano and a xylophone. Children are proud to demonstrate their proficiency in another language as they say 'hello' and count in French.
- Staff are highly skilled at supporting children to understand the link between healthy eating and healthy bodies. For example, they teach children about the different nutrients derived from food and how this benefits the body. Children learn to understand that fruits and vegetables are good for the immune system, while eating too much sugary food is not so good on the teeth.
- Supervision and training arrangements to monitor staff practice are highly effective. Staff benefit from good training opportunities and mentoring to help them develop and build on their skills. Staff have regular well-being sessions to discuss the workload, career progression and any other personal issues to help them carry out their duties efficiently.
- The management team has not prioritised their own professional development to help address minor weaknesses in practice. For example, they failed to recognise the correct procedure to follow when an incident was brought to their attention. Despite this, they have a strong vision and are committed in their pursuit for excellence.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Management and staff implement robust policies to help safeguard children's welfare. They have a suitable understanding of child protection, including the procedure to follow if they have any concerns about a child's welfare. In addition, they understand their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty. Staff carry out regular checks of all areas of the premises to remove any potential hazards to children's safety. The management team follow effective recruitment procedures to ensure the suitability of staff working with children. They ensure that required records relating to care practice, such as records of complaints, are kept as required.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- enhance ongoing professional development to precisely address minor weaknesses in leadership and management.

Setting details

Unique reference number	129010
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	10138111
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	51
Name of registered person	Blackheath Montessori Centre Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP524082
Telephone number	020 8852 6765
Date of previous inspection	8 June 2016

Information about this early years setting

Blackheath Montessori Centre registered in 1993. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, from 8am to 6pm, for 48 weeks per year. 13 members of staff work directly with the children, 12 of whom hold appropriate qualifications. This includes one member of staff with a master's degree and four who hold qualifications at level 6. The pre-school follows the Montessori approach and receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Josephine Afful

Inspection activities

- This inspection was carried out following the risk assessment of concerns raised.
- The inspector observed the quality of education and its impact on children's learning in all the rooms, and held meetings with the management team.
- A learning walk of the play and learning areas was conducted by the management team and the inspector.
- The inspector spoke to parents and read emails that some had sent in, and took their views into account.
- The inspector spoke with children and staff at convenient times.
- The inspector viewed a range of documentation, such as evidence of staff suitability and paediatric first-aid qualifications. The inspector checked the complaints folder.

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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