

Inspection of Highgate Montessori School

Highgate United Reformed Church, Pond Square, London N6 6BA

Inspection date:

14 June 2021 - 15 October 2021

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are developing confidence and positive self-esteem. This is because their views are valued. Children are given choices about the activities they want to do. They are excited to express their preference to go out for a walk to search for pumpkins. Children are confident to engage in conversations with adults and express their wishes. For example, they are delighted when their idea of discovering if a pumpkin can roll like a ball is followed through.

Children's behaviour is good. Staff promote positive role models. They teach children how to manage their feelings effectively. Children understand the values of being kind and considerate to their friends. They are able to take turns when playing games. Older children show empathy as they offer impromptu cuddles to their younger peers. They are quick to offer their support in helping their younger friends to take off their shoes.

Children play together well. Staff create a safe, caring and nurturing environment. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe. They know the safety rules for outings. Staff teach older children about risks associated with choking. They discuss the importance of making sure that small resources are not accessible to their younger friends. Children know that spilled water must be cleaned up quickly to avoid someone slipping.

Communication between parents and staff is effective. The provider has continued to share information with parents throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Parents express that they are extremely happy with the communication they receive. They say that they are well informed about their children's progress and value how their children's interests are fully considered.

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

- The provider, who is also the manager of the setting, is committed to promoting high-quality provision for children. She supports staff in planning a broad and stimulating curriculum which encompasses all areas of learning. Staff record regular observations of children's progress. They use these effectively to support them in planning a curriculum that focuses on what children need to learn next. Any gaps in children's learning are identified and appropriate interventions are implemented.
- The manager works in partnership with parents and outside professionals to help ensure all children make good progress in relation to their individual starting points. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The manager is working with a new staff team. She ensures that staff receive

induction and training to support them in their roles. All staff are provided with professional development opportunities. They are further supported through daily briefing sessions. Staff are well qualified and express that they value ongoing training to enhance their knowledge. They are supported by a reflective manager who is able to identify areas to improve practice.

- Children are motivated in their learning and show curiosity. This is because their interests inform planning. For example, children's interest in dinosaurs is enhanced through storytelling. Children are encouraged to share their experiences of trips to museums with their parents. They enjoy opportunities to play with dinosaurs in their imaginative role play. They are excited to watch a familiar documentary which explores the life of dinosaurs.
- Children take pride in their environment. They are enthusiastic to help lay the tables for lunch. They are skilled in counting the correct amount of cutlery they need. Children are confident to say there are not enough tablecloths and independently go in search for more. All children develop valuable skills at lunchtime. They use cutlery to feed themselves. Younger children are able to pour their own water, and any spillages are managed sensitively. However, sometimes, staff do not observe children who are not seated close to the table, which hinders their ability to eat comfortably.
- Children are developing good physical skills. They are able to balance and move their bodies in imaginative ways as they engage in dance sessions. Younger children are confident to climb small equipment. They further develop their stamina and coordination as they enjoy walks around the local community.
- Children are developing confident communication and language skills. They are excited to engage in listening activities. Children enthusiastically listen to sounds and make an informed guess about what is making the sounds. For example, they suggest that sounds from a didgeridoo could be a lion or an elephant. They are thrilled to learn the name of the instrument and listen with interest when staff discuss how it was originally played by Aboriginal people. However, at times, younger children who show an interest in this activity are not fully included.
- Parents speak highly of the learning experiences offered to their children. They are impressed with the new knowledge their children gain on a daily basis and are particularly happy with how their children have developed empathy.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a good knowledge of child protection matters and what to do should they have concerns about a child's welfare. All staff attend safeguarding training as part of their induction. Staff have a clear understanding of what to do if any allegation is made against a member of staff, or if they have concerns about a colleague's conduct. Risk assessments help to keep children safe. There are detailed recruitment and vetting procedures in place to help assess the suitability of staff.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- expand the skills of the staff in the 3-6 area so they can readily adapt learning experiences to the level of the younger children, to further support them and provide a smooth transition between the areas
- continue to improve support for the youngest children at lunchtime, reminding them to sit closer to the lunch table.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY550293
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	10144735
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 at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	20
Name of registered person	Highgate Montessori LTD
Registered person unique reference number	RP910912
Telephone number	07581370095
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Highgate Montessori School registered in 2017. It operates from Highgate United Reformed Church hall in Highgate, in the London Borough of Camden. The setting offers early years education based on the Montessori philosophy. The setting is open Monday to Friday, from 8am to 6pm, for 48 weeks a year. The setting offers a holiday club during school breaks. The provider employs three members of staff, two of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The provider, who is also the manager of the setting, works directly with the children. She holds a degree in early years practice and a foundation arts degree in Montessori practice.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

Heather Rick
Siobhan O'Callaghan

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- Discussions took place with the manager and staff throughout the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with parents and children to gather their views about their experiences of the setting.
- The inspector joined the staff and children on a walk within the local community.
- Relevant documents and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the setting were looked at by the inspector.

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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