

# Walthamstow Montessori School

Penryhn Hall, Penryhn Avenue, Walthamstow, London E17 5DA

**Inspection date**

27 January 2022

**Overall outcome**

**The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

#### *Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i)*

- At the previous standard inspection in February 2020, the curriculum in key stages 1 and 2 lacked ambition and was not well sequenced in all subjects taught.
- Since the last inspection, the total number of pupils on roll has decreased. This is because leaders have decided to no longer enrol pupils over the age of six. Therefore, all of leaders' work on improving curriculum planning has been centred on the provision for three- to six-year-olds. Leaders have not developed any subject curriculum plans for pupils up to the age of 11 for whom the school is registered. For this reason, the requirements of the independent school standards remain un-met.
- For pupils aged three to six, leaders have reviewed and updated their schemes of work across most subjects. Owing to staffing difficulties during the pandemic, this is still a work in progress. Nevertheless, the updated plans are more ambitious than was previously the case. The overall intended knowledge leaders want pupils to gain is organised rationally. Leaders recognise that there is still more that they need to do to develop the curriculum. For instance, they intend to set out the specific chunks of knowledge pupils are expected to learn in order to securely master the overall curriculum goals.
- The independent school standards in these paragraphs continue to not be met.

#### *Paragraph 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g)*

- At the time of the previous inspection, staff in the upper school did not have the necessary subject knowledge to teach a range of subjects effectively, including computing, history and phonics.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders arranged training for teachers and support staff. All staff have benefited from training, being observed and receiving feedback from an external consultant in the teaching of phonics. Staff have also improved their knowledge and expertise across several subjects such as computing and geography. In addition, leaders delivered sessions on teaching the new requirements of the early years statutory framework, as well as the school's Montessori teaching and learning framework. As a

result, teachers now have the knowledge and skills to teach a range of subjects effectively.

- The proprietor employs some subject specialists, for example for teaching Italian, music and physical education.
- Teachers use a range of assessment frameworks to check regularly on pupils' learning. They use the information to adapt their teaching, address misconceptions and support those falling behind, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Time is used effectively in class, and teachers make use of suitable resources to help pupils gain new knowledge and understanding.
- These requirements of the independent school standards in these paragraphs are now met.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1)(c)*

- The school's safeguarding policy meets the government's latest guidance.
- A copy of the policy is published on the school's website.
- These requirements of the independent school standards continue to be met.

#### *Paragraph 10*

- The school has a suitable anti-bullying policy and strategy. It makes clear that bullying will not be tolerated. The strategy includes leaders' work to prevent bullying by creating a culture of nurture and support. Leaders maintain a record of all incidents that occur and the actions that staff take in dealing with them. Records show bullying seldom occurs, and that when it does, any incidents are managed effectively.
- The requirements of the independent school standards for this paragraph continue to be met.

### Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

#### *Paragraph 33–33(k)*

- The school's published complaints procedure lays out the timescales for managing complaints. It states the processes for escalating complaints and how each stage will be dealt with. It clarifies how records will be made and retained, and to whom they may be made available.
- The requirements of these paragraphs in the independent school standards continue to be met.

### Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

#### *Paragraph 34, 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)*

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have made some progress in addressing the unmet standards relating to the quality of education in part 1. They have improved curriculum planning for pupils up to and including the age of six.

- Leaders have not planned the curriculum for pupils aged seven to 11. Although there are currently no pupils of that age group on roll, this remains a requirement of the school's registration.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the advisory group members had not agreed their role and did not hold school leaders to account for the quality of education. The new chair has started to address this. He is in the process of recruiting new members for the advisory group, who will be independent of the school and have an educational background. The chair has also drafted terms of reference so that the board and school leaders will be clear about how the board will hold leaders to account.
- The requirements of the independent school standards in this part continue to not be met.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

## School details

Unique reference number	134579
DfE registration number	320/6064
Inspection number	10213908

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Number of part-time pupils	26
Proprietor	Lorna Mahoney
Headteacher	Wendy Palumbo
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,500 to £7000
Telephone number	020 8523 2968
Website	<a href="http://www.walthamstowmontessori.com">www.walthamstowmontessori.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@walthamstowmontessori.com">office@walthamstowmontessori.com</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	4 to 6 February 2020

## Information about this school

- The school is registered for pupils in the age range of three to 11. The proprietor intends to apply to the Department for Education (DfE) to change its registered age range from three to 11 to three to six. Currently, there are no pupils older than the age of six on roll.
- This Montessori School also includes a separately registered and inspected provision for two-year-olds.
- The school's last standard inspection took place in February 2020, when the school was judged to be inadequate. Some of the independent school standards were not met.

- The school operates on two sites, a lower and an upper school. The lower school is located at the Penrhyn Hall address. The upper school is located nearby in St John's Church, Brookscroft Road, E17 4LH.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This was the school's first progress monitoring inspection. It was conducted with 30 minutes' notice.
- The school was asked to submit an action plan after its last standard inspection in February 2020. The action plan was judged by Ofsted as not acceptable in November 2020. The school was notified of this outcome by the DfE in November 2021.
- The DfE requested that the inspector consider whether particular independent school standards contained within parts 1, 3, 7 and 8 are met.
- The inspector met with the proprietor and the headteacher. He had telephone conversations with the local authority designated officer and chair of the advisory board. He spoke with a group of pupils, listened to some read and met with a group of staff. He toured the school's premises, checked the single central record of vetting checks and considered a range of documentation about safeguarding and the school's curriculum.
- There were too few responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, to consider as part of this inspection.

## Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school does not meet the following independent school standards**

*Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection*

#### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
  - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in subparagraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
  - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
    - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.

#### **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

### **The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards**

#### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
  - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
  - 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
  - 3(c) involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;

- 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
- 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
- 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
- 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.

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