

Inspection of Pillar Box Montessori

107 Bow Road, Bow, London E3 2AN

Inspection date: 4 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

The nursery has recently experienced an unsettled period due to instability with staffing. There have been a number of staff changes, including a new manager. The provider fails to monitor previous managers' performance effectively. She does not identify weaknesses in managers' practice and where there are breaches to the early years foundation stage welfare requirements. For instance, some staff do not have a clear understanding of the correct procedures to follow if they have a safeguarding concern. This puts children at significant risk.

The newly appointed manager understands her role. She recognises areas that need improving and has a clear action plan to help develop practice at the nursery. The manager knows what she wants children to learn and why. She has high expectations for what they can achieve. However, some staff's interactions are not of a consistently high quality, and this hinders the amount of progress children are able to make. For instance, during some routines, such as lunchtime, staff are preoccupied with other tasks and their interactions with children are mainly instructional. They are not consistent in supporting children to communicate and practise their language skills during these times. This impacts negatively on the development children make in their personal, social and language skills.

Children play happily and enjoy exploring activities set up for them. Staff respond to their key children suitably when they are upset or need reassurance. Children's emotional well-being is supported adequately. Pre-school children are confident learners and motivated to join in. They enjoy learning new things, such as the names of shapes, and they are curious. Children behave well, overall. However, staff's interactions with younger children do not always help them to understand what is right and wrong, and why.

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

- Weaknesses in leadership and management mean the setting does not assure children's welfare. Some staff have a poor understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and how to protect children from any potential harm.
- The provider does not implement effective systems to ensure that all adults who may have regular contact with children are suitable to do so, as required. However, there are suitable risk assessments in place to make sure that unchecked staff are not left unsupervised with children.
- The quality of teaching is varied across the nursery. At times, some staff do not interact with younger children well to support their communication and language skills. For instance, staff use closed questions and do not encourage children enough to talk and practise using language. The provider does not ensure that early years trained staff are deployed sufficiently so that those working with

children each day hold the required qualifications. As a result, the quality of children's education is inconsistent.

- Staff know their key children well. They know what children are able to do and generally provide age-appropriate activities for children to join in with. Staff recognise any gaps in children's learning and most plan suitable activities to help boost their learning.
- Children make adequate progress in their physical development. They learn to use tools with control and care. Children use equipment outside, such as ride-on toys, and develop their balance and gross-motor movements.
- Children develop their levels of independence. Younger children learn to hang up their bag and coat when they arrive at the nursery. Pre-school children do things for themselves capably, such as clearing away their plates after lunch. Children learn to be responsible members of society.
- Qualified staff in the pre-school room teach children well, overall. They skilfully use questions to engage children in thinking and discussions. Children are keen to share what they think and express themselves clearly and confidently. However, there is scope for staff to improve the teaching of early literacy, particularly to aid children's early reading skills.
- Partnerships with parents are effective. Staff share relevant information with parents about their child's day and what they are learning. Staff inform parents of how they can support children with their development at home to embed a consistent approach.
- There are some suitable procedures in place to check staff's ongoing performance, such as supervisions. However, the recent number of changes to the nursery manager has led to inconsistencies with the support given to staff. Therefore, weaknesses in staff's teaching have not been addressed swiftly to ensure that all children always receive good-quality learning experiences.
- The provider does not ensure that all new staff receive a thorough induction so they know fully what their role and responsibilities are from the outset.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Some staff have an insecure understanding of the safeguarding procedures to follow to help keep children safe. For instance, they do not know what to do in the event of an allegation being made about a member of staff. This jeopardises children's safety. However, the manager and staff know how to recognise any signs that indicate a child may be at risk of harm and who to report their concerns to. The premises are secure. Regular risk assessments help staff to recognise and remove any hazards in the setting.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and Childcare Register the provider must:

	Due date
ensure all staff gain a secure understanding of the safeguarding procedures and practices, including whistle blowing procedures	08/06/2022
implement robust vetting systems to ensure that practitioners, and any other person who may have regular contact with children, are suitable	08/06/2022
ensure staff working with children are suitably qualified and that at least one member of staff working with each age group holds an approved level 3 qualification and at least half of all other staff hold an approved level 2 qualification	08/06/2022
ensure that all staff receive a thorough induction to help them understand their roles and responsibilities	08/06/2022
improve the quality of staff's interactions, particularly with younger children, to ensure all children receive high quality learning experiences throughout the day	08/06/2022

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

- improve staff's understanding of how to teach early literacy, with particular regards to aiding children's early reading skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	119603
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10225303
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	1 to 4
Total number of places	42
Number of children on roll	32
Name of registered person	Pillar Box Nurseries Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP902304
Telephone number	020 8980 0700
Date of previous inspection	27 February 2019

Information about this early years setting

Pillar Box Montessori registered in 2001. It is situated in Bow, in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. It is open each weekday, from 8am to 6.55pm, throughout most of the year. The nursery receives funding to provide free early education for children aged three and four years. The provider employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold early years qualifications at level 3 or above and two hold a suitable level 2 qualification.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Anneka Mundy

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider 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 took the inspector on a learning walk and told her about what they want the children to learn at the nursery.
- The inspector and the manager completed a joint observation of a teaching activity to review the quality of education.
- Parents provided feedback on their experiences of the nursery and the inspector engaged with children at appropriate times.
- The inspector looked at documents relating to the suitability of those working with children, such as their early years and first-aid qualifications.

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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