

Inspection of Pillar Box Montessori

107 Bow Road, Bow, London E3 2AN

Inspection date: 20 July 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff greet children warmly as they arrive at nursery and remind them to 'sign in' using their picture and to hang up their coats. This approach to supporting children to carry out tasks for themselves and develop their independence continues throughout the day. Children choose the toys they want to play with, and they respond to requests when it is time to come together. They learn to manage their personal care needs, such as handwashing. Staff's encouragement throughout the day helps children to develop a positive, 'can do' attitude to their learning. For example, children confidently retrieve resources from the shelf and become engrossed in their play and learning.

Staff use age-appropriate behaviour management methods consistently throughout the day. Children learn how to manage their emotions and learn the vocabulary they need to express their feelings. This helps children to understand the impact of their behaviour on others and to reflect on their actions. Children play in a safe and well-maintained environment, with resources and activities that challenge them. The curriculum follows children's interests and builds on what they already know. Staff provide children with a wide range of interesting activities, indoors and outdoors, that prepare children for the next stage of their learning, including school.

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

- Staff use observation to determine children's interests and establish the next steps in their learning. This helps to develop the curriculum and supports children to make progress across all areas of learning and development. Staff carefully consider how to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language to ensure that all children can access the whole curriculum.
- Outside play and experiences are an important part of the day at the nursery for all children. Staff make effective use of the garden to provide children with a range of physical play experiences. The youngest children at this nursery go on trips to the local shop to buy fruit. Pre-school children enjoy a weekly trip to the local pool. Children enjoy trips to the police station and the fire station, where they meet some of the people who work in the community. Children learn how to cross roads safely, stay with the group and develop an awareness of their surroundings. This helps children extend their physical skills and to learn about their community and how to keep themselves safe.
- Children independently access resources that allow them to explore various concepts. For example, children explore 'cause and effect' when they place items in water to see if they float or sink. Staff observe children as they play and ask them about what they are doing. However, staff do not make the most of all

opportunities to expand children's vocabulary and help them to develop their communication and language skills as they learn.

- The nursery cook and the manager plan a healthy daily menu, ensuring that children follow a nutritious and balanced diet. This contributes to children's understanding of healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. The experienced cook accommodates children's allergies, dietary requirements and cultural preferences skilfully. Children wash their hands before they eat and learn to serve themselves at the table. However, the organisation of the day does not always support children at mealtimes, as staff are busy preparing for naptime or completing other tasks. This means children do not always get the help they need to develop their table manners and social skills while they eat.
- Parents speak highly about the nursery and the relationship they have with their child's key person. They say that their children gain good independence skills and that they like the outdoor play experiences offered. Staff share their observations of children with parents and provide opportunities for parents to feed back what their children learn at home. This helps to provide continuity in children's learning.
- The manager provides effective help and support to all staff. There is a strong induction process in place to help new staff succeed in their roles. The manager uses regular appraisal and supervision meetings to help identify where staff need further support and training. Staff say they value the range of ongoing opportunities for further professional development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities to safeguard children. Staff are confident about their duty to follow up concerns as needed. They know what to do if they have concerns about children's welfare. The manager works with the local authority and other local providers to provide support for families if required. Recruitment processes are robust, and the ongoing suitability of staff is routinely checked. Staff regularly risk assess the indoor and outdoor spaces to ensure children's safety and security.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- provide additional support for less experienced staff to improve their knowledge of how to support children's conversational skills
- consider how to strengthen mealtime routines to fully promote children's interactions with their peers.

Setting details

Unique reference number	119603
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10260759
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	40
Name of registered person	Pillar Box Nurseries Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP902304
Telephone number	020 8980 0700
Date of previous inspection	7 October 2022

Information about this early years setting

Pillar Box Montessori registered in January 2001. It is situated in Bow, in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. It is open each weekday, from 8am to 7pm, throughout most of the year. The nursery receives funding to provide free early education for children aged three and four years. The provider employs twelve members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold early years qualifications at level 2 to level 6.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Trina Lynskey

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Staff, parents and children spoke to the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity with the manager.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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