

Inspection of Monkey Puzzle

Park House, 16 High Road, LONDON N2 9PJ

Inspection date: 9 August 2023

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

This exceptional nursery supports every child to feel safe and secure due to warm bonds with familiar staff. This enables them to confidently take ownership of their day. Children are at the heart of every decision this nursery makes. Staff support children to have consistently high levels of engagement and curiosity, as they make choices about their activities. For example, children select ropes and tie knots around trees to create a maze in the woods. Behaviour is exemplary. There is a culture of mutual respect and kindness that starts with a passionate leadership team and filters down throughout the whole nursery.

Leaders go above and beyond to provide children with rich and varied learning experiences. For example, they recently celebrated a 104th birthday during a visit to a local retirement home. They visit the high street almost every day, enjoying 'babyccinos' in the coffee shop, selecting books at the library, and donating to the local food bank. Children further learn about the world around them, and develop a love for the outdoors through inspirational camping days, in which they spend their entire day outdoors, and high quality, forest-school sessions.

Staff know children extremely well, and planning is based on their interests and next steps. Children thrive from a carefully sequenced and ambitious curriculum. Leaders work closely with other professionals to ensure that the support for children with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is superb. All children make excellent progress across the curriculum and are exceptionally well prepared for their next stage of learning.

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

- Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum that is carefully structured to ensure that children are continually building on prior learning. Staff are clear on the learning intentions for the age group they work with. For example, the priority in the baby room is building secure attachments. This is evidenced as babies are quickly comforted by cuddles from their key workers. Children make excellent progress across all areas of learning.
- Staff consistently model and extend children's language. In the baby room, you can hear singing throughout the day. Highly skilled staff engage older children in thoughtful discussions, in which new vocabulary is introduced and explained. For example, an adult explains that the juice from an orange is 'acidic'. This leads to confident communicators.
- Staff ensure that children are thoroughly prepared for their next stage of learning. Leaders create links with local schools to find out what skills and experiences the children need and use this information to plan 'school-ready' weeks. This helps children to make seamless transitions.

- Leaders prioritise outdoor learning. Pre-school children demonstrate remarkable independence as they get ready for forest school, including changing into waterproof trousers and wellington boots. They are very familiar with routines and expectations, including those around safety, and show skill in assessing risks for themselves. For example, one child safely uses a mallet to 'hunt for treasure'. Children happily explore outside and develop into resilient and curious learners.
- Leaders share that the nursery 'belongs to the children'. For example, the pre-school committee encourages children to make decisions, such as what extracurricular activities they wish to participate in. Children's voices are heard, their ideas are encouraged and their efforts are praised. This has a significant impact on their confidence and emotional well-being.
- Children demonstrate impeccable behaviour as the result of securely embedded routines and consistent expectations. Staff begin to equip children with strategies to solve problems and manage feelings from a very young age. This contributes to a calm, purposeful atmosphere in which children interact positively with each other, often through imaginative play.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works closely with other professionals to ensure the needs of children with SEND are fully met. Training is organised to ensure that the whole staff team can manage unique needs. Consequently, children with SEND make rapid progress towards closing any gaps in learning.
- Leaders prioritise the well-being of staff. Staff benefit from purposeful supervisions and are upskilled by high-quality training sessions. They comment that they feel exceptionally well supported and are very happy and proud to work at this nursery. This results in a committed team of staff that work together to provide the best possible experiences for children.
- Parents speak extremely highly of the nursery. They feel communication is very strong and staff know their children exceptionally well. There is notable praise for an 'incredible' leadership team and the community spirit the nursery creates.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise safeguarding above all else and the whole staff team take their responsibilities very seriously. An approachable management team and open communication contributes to a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are knowledgeable about the signs of abuse and are clear on reporting arrangements. Leaders ensure ongoing suitability of all staff, and induction processes are notably thorough. All staff have a paediatric first-aid certificate. Daily risk assessments ensure the setting is safe and hygienic, and outings are thoroughly risk assessed in advance. Children are involved in assessing and managing their own risks, for example, they talk about 'safety bubbles' when using tools.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY434830
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10288915
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	0 to 4
Total number of places	80
Number of children on roll	122
Name of registered person	North London Day Nurseries Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP902720
Telephone number	02079981725
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2017

Information about this early years setting

Monkey Puzzle nursery is part of a franchise and registered in 2011. It operates in East Finchley, in the London Borough of Barnet. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, from 8am to 6.30pm, for 51 weeks of the year. There are 34 members of staff, of whom 19 hold relevant early years qualifications at level 2 or above.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Nicola Baker

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 setting.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Children chose to communicate with the inspector during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The SENCo spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of forest school activities with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- 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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