Inspection of The Gower School

18 North Road, London N7 9EY

Inspection date:	19 March 2025

Overall effectiveness	**Outstanding**
The quality of education	**Outstanding**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Outstanding**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children flourish in this extremely nurturing setting. The warmth and care they receive as soon as they arrive in the morning are evident. Children enthusiastically engage with staff as they excitedly explain that they have made ginger biscuits that they want to share with their friends. Staff listen attentively and actively respond to children. They value what children have to say and praise them for their kindness. This supports children to develop secure emotional relationships. Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour. They teach children about the importance of working together and how to learn from one another. Staff encourage children to work together to solve problems and find a solution, such as negotiating the use of space when playing.

Staff plan a very ambitious curriculum for all children. The impact is that children make rapid progress in relation to their individual starting points in development. High-quality teaching supports children's motivation to learn. Staff place a focus in the curriculum on children developing their imaginations and creativity. They use puppets to help children to understand everyday situations that they encounter, such as taking their medication. Children are thrilled as staff teach them about rainbows as they paint with a variety of colours. Children articulately explain that sun and rain are needed for a rainbow to appear. Staff continually engage in meaningful conversations with children. They use planned activities to deepen children's learning through asking open questions and introducing new vocabulary. Children's love of books is evident, for example, when they listen attentively to stories.

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

- Staff are committed to helping children gain a deep understanding of healthy foods. The setting is working towards an accreditation for healthy eating. Children learn about their friends who have food allergies. This important knowledge helps all children to understand how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Leaders express high expectations for their staff team. They are committed to staff's professional development and ongoing supervision sessions. For example, staff have attended training on children's brain development to enhance their knowledge further of how children learn and develop.
- Staff say that they are very happy in their work. They say that leaders are extremely supportive of their personal learning interests, as well as their ongoing well-being. Some staff are trained in mental health first aid to support other staff and parents. The mutual respect within the staff team is clear. This supports them to work together to create an engaging and nurturing environment.
- Staff have a thorough understanding of the Montessori ethos and style of

learning. They skilfully link this with the principles of the early years foundation stage. Staff focus the carefully sequenced curriculum on each child's learning needs.

- Babies and toddlers are extremely well supported as they confidently explore a range of natural materials. Staff plan accessible environments where babies can be independent. Babies develop their imaginations as staff immerse themselves in supporting their role play. Staff's successful training in baby signing helps to ensure that babies have a voice. Babies are confident to communicate when they want more food or a drink.
- Staff enhance children's personal development through the setting's ethos of 'classroom promises'. Children learn about the importance of kindness and respect. Older children understand that they need to tidy away resources, so these are available to others. Staff let children know that they can leave their activities out on individual playmats and they will not be put away until they have finished. This helps children to feel valued and motivated to continue their learning.
- Parents express high satisfaction with the setting. They praise the extremely professional approach towards their children's care, learning and development. Parents value the well-organised environments and the setting's approach to inclusive practice. Parents say that their children are always delighted to attend the setting and talk fondly of staff. Staff welcome parents warmly into the setting, for example, to share breakfast with children.
- Staff work continually with outside professionals to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are extremely committed to ensuring that all children receive the right support at the right time. Staff implement interventions and use strategies to help all children to make excellent progress. For example, they use signing and visual prompts to help children to know and understand what is happening next.
- Older children show high levels of motivation as they excitedly share their knowledge of numbers and how they can problem-solve. They are eager to write and draw with purpose. Children develop excellent physical skills. They confidently climb and balance on equipment. Older children express that sports and dance are their favourite fun activities.
- Staff place a strong focus on children learning about the world around them. Several staff are trained to provide forest-school activities for children. They teach children to gain a deep understanding of nature, how to protect their environment and learn about sustainability.
- Children learn to value the similarities and differences between themselves and others. For example, they recently learned about the Hindu festival of Holi. Staff teach children the importance of words such as 'different', 'important' and 'one of a kind'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's

interests first.

Setting details

Unique reference number	131690
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10383693
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	120
Number of children on roll	94
Name of registered person	The Gower Schools Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP523738
Telephone number	020 7700 2445
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

The Gower School originally registered in 2000. It is an independent co-educational nursery and primary school that joined the Independent Schools Association in 2013 and were then inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The setting operates the nursery provision within The Gower School. It operates all year round from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, apart from one week at Christmas and Easter and two weeks in August. It offers government funded places for childcare. There are 41 staff working in the setting, the majority of whom have appropriate childcare qualifications. This includes five staff who have early years degrees, eight staff with Montessori diplomas equivalent to a level 4 qualification, 14 staff with level 3 qualifications and four staff with level 2 qualifications. The setting follows the Montessori educational philosophy.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors
Siobhan O'Callaghan
Catherine Greene

Inspection activities

- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want children to learn.
- Leaders and managers carried out joint observations with inspectors. These were of planned adult-led learning experiences and observations of lunchtime routines.
- Inspectors observed the quality of education being provided and assessed the impact on children's learning.
- Inspectors spoke with staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection and took account of their views.
- Parents shared their experiences with the inspectors during the inspection and the inspectors took account of their views.
- Inspectors held a meeting with the leadership team to discuss how they evaluate the provision, including their safeguarding duties.
- Inspectors looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the setting.

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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