

Rainbow Montessori School

13 Woodchurch Road, London, NW6 3PL

Inspection dates

10 July 2015 and 20 October 2015

Overall outcome

Unmet independent school standards identified

Reason for the inspection

- This unannounced emergency inspection was conducted at the request of the Department for Education.
- The visit was triggered by complaints received by the Department about: the curriculum; pupils' welfare, health and safety; the implementation of the school's complaints procedures; and the leadership and management of the school.
- The Department asked the inspector to report against regulations contained within parts 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8 of the independent schools standards. The complaints were not investigated although reference was made to them in conducting this inspection.
- One of Her Majesty's Inspectors visited the school on 20 October 2015 to gather additional evidence.

Main findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- The school meets all of the requirements for this standard.
- The curriculum is a combination of the Montessori curriculum blended with the National Curriculum. The school's bespoke scheme of work ensures all required areas are included in the school's curriculum. Pupils eagerly talked about their enjoyment of the cross-curricular learning in their 'culture' studies and their trips to The Science Museum, British Library and 'dinosaur museum'.
- Pupils engage purposefully with a range of high quality, practical, age appropriate equipment and classroom resources. French, music, dance and sports provision is delivered by subject specialists.
- Pupils benefit from individual learning plans that encourage personal enquiry to stretch their understanding further. These individual learning plans take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of the pupil and are closely linked to the national curriculum.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- All the requirements for this standard are likely to be met.
- The school successfully promotes pupils' independence, self-esteem, confidence to make decisions, and respect the beliefs and views of others. Pupils understand right and wrong, have respect for rules and take responsibility for their actions.
- Pupils spoken with during the inspection visit demonstrated a high degree of care, courtesy and consideration for others. They are tolerant, value democracy and free speech, and appreciate the rule of law. Weekly grace and courtesy lessons include helping pupils to develop and show respect for their own and other cultures.
- Pupils have a broad understanding of and respect for public institutions and services in England. They visit many places of worship and celebrate the religious and cultural festivals of people from around the world. The school takes appropriate steps to ensure that pupils are offered a balanced point of view at all times.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- The school meets all of the requirements for this standard.
- The school's safeguarding policy was last updated in July 2015. It now refers to the latest statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education* July 2015. The designated senior member of staff for child protection has completed a suitable higher-level training course within the last two years and records show that other staff have been trained at an appropriate level. A senior member of staff involved in appointing staff has completed a course in safe recruitment procedures.
- The school's policies for behaviour and the prevention of bullying set out a framework within which pupils are encouraged to show care and respect for each other's safety and well-being. Staff have recently undertaken external training. Detailed records are kept of serious incidents and the actions taken by the school to address these.
- The required checks on the electrical installation, gas appliances and portable electrical equipment are carried out. The required checks are made on the fire alarm, emergency lighting and fire-fighting equipment. A health and safety audit of the premises is conducted annually by a specialist company. Records seen indicate that appropriate action is taken to resolve any concerns raised in the report.
- The school's attendance registers were examined. Further evidence gathered during the additional visit demonstrated an awareness of senior leaders in the importance of attendance. Clear systems are in place to ensure that pupils are not at risk of being 'missing in education'. School leaders are aware of their duty to refer to the relevant local authority. This information, along with many of the school's policies, is shared with parents on the school's website in their recently updated Parents' Handbook.
- The school has a photography policy and all parents are required to give permission for their children's pictures to appear on the school website or in other publications. Inspection evidence indicates that this policy is implemented effectively.
- A suitable number of staff are trained in first aid. Observations during this inspection indicate that there is appropriate supervision of pupils at break times and around the school.
- The risk assessment policy ensures consistency of practice. The additional evidence collected demonstrated the school's appreciation and understanding of risk assessments and their importance.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- The school meets all of the requirements for this standard.
- Administrative systems have been reviewed to ensure all members of the senior leadership team have immediate access to the single central record. Further evidence and scrutiny of documentation, show checks, including the date on which they were made, are recorded on a suitable, single, central register.
- Systems are in place to ensure the school fulfils their safeguarding duties when engaging agency staff.
- Checks on new appointments are made and induction arrangements recorded.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- The school does not meet two of the requirements for this standard.
- A medical room is located in an area accessed via the staff kitchen. A corner of the staff resource room has a sink, a well-stocked first-aid box and a fold-away cushion bed. It is, however, not near a toilet facility for pupils to use.
- There is one shower on site in the adult toilet. However, there are no showers or suitable changing accommodation provided for pupils aged 11 years or over for use after physical education. The local park is used to supplement the playground space for sporting activities but changing and shower facilities are not available.

- Drinking water is available in all classrooms and suitably labelled throughout the site.
- The school roof was replaced over the summer break and a refurbishment undertaken of stairways and a communal area to include a bright and airy cloakroom. The internal and external lighting, heating, ventilation and acoustics meet requirements.
- Teaching takes place in three large classrooms. Additional facilities include a small but suitably equipped science laboratory, a small music room for individual instrumental tuition, playground space and a large library. The library is a multi-functional space, also used for whole class music teaching and provides an annex for group activities.
- The site is clean, and well maintained and provides suitable toilet and washing facilities for the sole use of pupils. Separate toilet facilities are provided for adult use.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

- The school meets all of the requirements for this standard.
- The complaints policy, available on the school's website, outlines the procedures for handling complaints on an informal and formal basis. The formal procedure includes the provision of a panel hearing and details the manner in which complaints are handled.
- Details of how to contact Ofsted and the number of formal complaints received in the last academic year are also included on the school's website.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- The school does not meet the requirements for this standard.
- Those persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school were unaware of the requirement for the provision of suitable changing accommodation and showers for pupils aged 11 years who receive physical education.
- The designated space for first aid is not near a toilet facility for pupil use. This impacts on pupils' well-being, as access to the nearest pupil toilet is through two doors and down a staircase.
- The last inspection of the school was in September 2011. The inspection report is published on the school's website, as required.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements

- The proprietor must ensure that suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education (paragraph 23(1)(c) and,
- That the accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility is near to a toilet facility (paragraph 24(1)(b).
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; (paragraph 34(1)(a))
 - fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; (paragraph 34(1)(b)) and actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1)(c)).

Inspection team

Michael Best, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector (10 July 2015)

Jean Thwaites

Her Majesty's Inspector (20 October 2015)

Information about this school

- Rainbow Montessori School is an independent, co-educational day school for pupils aged from four to 11 years. It opened in 1982. There are 52 pupils on roll, most of whom live locally. There are 15 children in the early years, six of whom are in receipt of government funding. The school serves a diverse community. Many pupils speak English as an additional language but few are at an early stage of learning English. A small number of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs.
- The school is located in West Hampstead, in the London Borough of Camden, in a detached Victorian house. It is part of a group that, along with the junior school, includes three nursery settings in West Hampstead, Highgate and Queens Park. Many of the children attending these nurseries move on to the junior school. The school aims to bring the best out of each child 'to fulfil their potential both in academic and human terms'.
- The school was last inspected in September 2011 when it met all the independent school regulations and provided a good quality of education. The founding Principal and then proprietor died shortly after the last inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	100086
Inspection number	465461
DfE registration number	202/6390

This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

Type of school	Montessori day primary school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	52
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	John Madden
Chair	N/A
Headteacher	Sylvia Peternell
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 September 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£11,046 to £11,205
Telephone number	020 7328 8986
Fax number	020 7624 4046
Email address	rms@rainbowmontessori.co.uk

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