

Inspection of Polkadots Nursery @ Athlone

Athlone Hall, Athlone Street, London NW5 4LL

Inspection date: 6 July 2022

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are nurtured and cared for in a warm and inclusive nursery environment. They develop close and affectionate bonds with the staff, who get to know them and their families well. This helps children to feel safe and secure at the nursery. Children demonstrate that they are happy and comfortable in their surroundings as they move around confidently and make choices about their play. Children develop a good range of skills and attitudes that provide a firm foundation for starting school. They learn to look after their own belongings and to manage their personal care, for instance using the toilet and washing their hands independently.

Children respond positively to the staff's high expectations. They behave well and show a good understanding of what is expected of them. For instance, at group times, children confidently recall rules such as 'good listening' and 'good sitting'. They learn how to share and take turns and are consistently kind and helpful to others. Children enjoy the activities and benefit from a curriculum that is well sequenced. They celebrate a range of cultural festivals and enjoy outings, for instance to the local market and library. These experiences help to broaden their understanding of the world.

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

- The provider is passionate about ensuring high-quality care and education for all children. She works closely with the manager and staff to review the nursery and develop practice. For example, she supports all staff to achieve a professional qualification to help ensure that teaching is of a consistently high standard.
- Staff say that they are well supported and describe the team as 'a family'. They comment that they love their jobs. This is reflected in the energy and enthusiasm that they bring to their roles. Staff speak positively about additional training. They explain how this helps them to support their key children's individual needs.
- Leaders and staff recognise the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on some children's learning. They work hard to ensure that all children reach their full potential. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those receiving additional funding, are given superb support to close any gaps in their learning. For example, children receive daily one-to-one support and take part in focused group sessions to promote their speech, listening and attention skills.
- The support for children who are developing their speech, and children who speak English as an additional language, is a real strength. For instance, staff simplify what they say and use lots of repetition to help children remember words. They routinely include simple signs, pictures and objects to help children

communicate. However, staff could do more to help older and most-able children extend their vocabularies and language skills even further.

- Children display a positive approach to learning. For instance, children of different ages spend a long time making musical instruments. They concentrate and develop physical dexterity as they fill bottles with dried rice and pulses. When they discover there are not enough funnels to go around, older children persevere and demonstrate effective problem-solving skills. They adapt a cardboard tube and proudly show that this does the job just as well.
- Staff generally support children's early literacy skills effectively. For instance, they think carefully about the books that they choose for children. They use these to explore important themes, such as starting school. However, at times, staff give less thought to how they can promote literacy in the nursery garden to support children who prefer to learn outdoors.
- Leaders and staff value their partnerships with parents highly. They work hard to embed a shared approach to support children's care and learning. For instance, the provider has introduced online workshops for parents. These offer information on issues such as oral hygiene and healthy eating to help promote healthy lifestyles for children.
- Parents speak highly of the nursery and staff. They describe the excellent support and communication that enable them to continue children's learning at home. Parents say that the provider has given 'invaluable help' to liaise with other professionals where children need additional support with their learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The provider carries out robust checks on staff and provides guidance and training to help ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Staff understand how to keep children safe in their daily practice. For example, they check the premises and resources each day to help minimise any hazards. Leaders and staff know about different types of child abuse and recognise the signs of harm. They know the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about the welfare of a child or the conduct of a staff member. This includes the processes to involve other safeguarding agencies to help protect children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- strengthen staff's understanding of how to extend vocabulary and language skills for older and most-able children
- develop further the curriculum for literacy to provide more consistent learning opportunities for children who prefer to learn outdoors.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY558213
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	10190225
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	25
Name of registered person	Polkadots Nursery @ Athlone Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP558212
Telephone number	07985616644
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Polkadots Nursery @ Athlone registered in 2018. It is situated in the London Borough of Camden. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 9.15am to 3pm, during school term times only. The nursery offers funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The provider employs 11 staff to work with the children. Of these, eight staff hold childcare qualifications. One staff member has qualified teacher status and the others are qualified at level 5, level 3 or level 2.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sarah Crawford

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken this into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager showed the inspector around the nursery premises. They discussed the curriculum and how the provision is organised.
- The provider ensured that relevant documents were available for the inspector to view. This included staff's suitability checks and paediatric first-aid certificates.
- The inspector observed the quality of the education and considered the impact on children's learning. This included an observation with the manager.
- The inspector held discussions with parents, staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection to assess their views and experiences.
- The provider and manager met with the inspector to discuss leadership issues, such as recruitment and staff supervision.

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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