

Inspection of Ambler Children's Centre and Extended School

Ambler Primary School, Blackstock Road, London N4 2DR

Inspection date:

9 September 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

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Staff go above and beyond for children and families in this exemplary setting. Children are welcomed into a nurturing, home-like environment with strong settling-in plans. Secure bonds with staff help children feel safe and settle quickly. Children are at the heart of the setting, showing confidence, curiosity and positive behaviour. Through consistent communication and reinforcement, staff are teaching children to understand why it is important to be kind to each other. They actively encourage children to be independent and to help each other with tasks.

Leaders and staff adapt learning to meet children's individual needs, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A dedicated inclusion lead supports children and their families, preparing them for their next stage of learning. Systems are fully embedded to ensure a strong multi-agency approach.

Activities are planned so that children can build on and develop their skills and learning. They count and measure with confidence and become confident communicators as they sit together with staff and solve problems, helping each other with full recognition. Communication and language is strongly emphasised, with children exploring local authors and diverse books to build verbal skills. Babies are fully immersed in sing and sign sessions. Staff provide children with props and visuals to sing nursery rhymes ensuring all children can participate. Children enjoy exploring the community around them. An exemplary inclusive culture is embraced, valuing children's views. Visual aids support all children, and staff use British Sign Language to assist children with disabilities.

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

- Inspirational and skilled leaders demonstrate a strong and clear vision for children's learning. They create a tailored curriculum and thoughtfully design the space to meet children's needs. Personalised settling-in sessions and home visits help staff plan for children's needs immediately.
- Staff create early support plans for children with additional needs. Staff know each child extremely well. Key person's give children highly sensitive and caring reassurance. Staff swiftly identify learning gaps and implement targeted strategies, leading to outstanding progress.
- Leaders create a calm, positive culture. They prioritise staff well-being and development so that they are able to deliver high-quality care and learning. Staff fully engage with the ongoing professional development. Their shared passion for giving every child the best start is deeply embedded across the setting. Staff feel valued by leaders, with well-being prioritised through access to an in-house mental health lead.

- Staff are trained to support vulnerable minds, enabling sensitive communication with those who've faced challenges. Parents report significant progress and feel fully involved throughout their child's journey.
- There are excellent partnerships with parents, who are fully included through clear communication and tailored support. Parents speak extremely highly of this nurturing and reliable setting. They feel involved in their children's learning journey. They have free access to books and shared reading opportunities. Breastfeeding mothers are warmly welcomed with a safe, dedicated space. Families consistently share positive feedback with a strong focus on mental health and well-being.
- Staff teach children about the benefits of healthy eating. They provide nutritious meals, encouraging children to try different foods that they enjoy. Staff ensure that daily routines teach children how to stay safe. Opportunities are given to build independence through self-serving meals and eating with cutlery. Staff constantly review the setting's risk assessments with managers and make sure that children are well supervised at all times with excellent communication with each other.
- Staff teach children how to play with the resources safely. Children are given explanations that they can understand, encouraging them as they explore. In all areas, indoors and outdoors, staff's considered presentation of the good-quality resources means that children can self-select and develop the skills they need to be independent learners.

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	EY340678
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10408155
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 3
Total number of places	36
Number of children on roll	39
Name of registered person	Ambler Primary School Governing Body
Registered person unique reference number	RP526503
Telephone number	02073597628
Date of previous inspection	27 January 2020

Information about this early years setting

Ambler Children's Centre and Extended School registered in 2006. It is situated in Highbury, in the London Borough of Islington. The centre is open from 8am to 6pm, each weekday, for 49 weeks of the year. They employ 14 members of staff. Of those, two hold qualified teacher status, one holds a level 6 qualification, five hold level 3 qualifications and a further three hold a level 2 qualification. The centre provides funded early education for children aged two years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Divia Raghvani

Inspection activities

- The inspector carried out a learning walk with the head of the children's centre to gain an understanding of their curriculum and quality of education.
- A joint observation was completed by the inspector and head of the children's centre of a spontaneous activity.
- The inspector held a discussion with the leaders.
- 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 inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector talked to staff and parents at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.

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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