

Inspection of Islington Square Day Nursery and Pre-school

7-9 Esther Anne Place, London N1 1UL

Inspection date: 7 January 2025

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

Staff have established strong bonds with the children, who are confident to express their wants and needs. Staff encourage children to be kind to one another and to demonstrate respectful behaviour. Staff have attended training and offer children practical and consistent support in managing their behaviour. Staff talk with children about feelings and help them to understand how their actions affect others and have implemented strategies, such as the use of sand timers, to support children to learn to share and take turns. This helps children to manage their feelings. Children's behaviour is good.

Staff have high expectations of what children can do. They are good role models and demonstrate positive attitudes. Children mirror this and confidently play and explore. For example, toddlers enthusiastically copy the yoga poses and stretch and learn to control their movements in a yoga session. Activities and daily discussions support children well in learning about healthy practices. For example, staff plan regular cooking activities for children to cook healthy recipes, such as autumn pumpkin energy balls, promoting positive relationships with healthy food.

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

- Leaders have a clear overview of the curriculum and monitor its effectiveness. They support the staff to identify where children may be falling behind in their learning and take action to help them keep up. Staff work well with outside agencies. Additional funding is used effectively to provide the targeted resources and experiences some children require to thrive and develop. All children make good progress.
- Overall, staff support all children to develop their language and communication skills. They use sign language for babies, props and plan small-group activities well to aid toddlers and older children in learning new vocabulary and to start to form sentences. Children have many opportunities to practise their language skills. For instance, when older children mix flour, water and oil with their hands to make play dough, they say they are 'making pizza' and describe the toppings they would like to add.
- Staff usually build on children's play and encourage them to answer questions. However, on occasion, staff ask too many questions and do not offer older children enough time to think and respond during some activities. This does not help them think critically and learn how to solve problems in their learning.
- Stimulating activities and purposeful daily discussions support children well in learning about healthy practices. For example, children talk with staff about the benefits of eating well as they pretend to cook dinner for staff in the role-play area. Staff supervise children well and ensure that all areas are safe.
- Children gain a love of books from a young age. Babies help to lift the flaps in

books to see which animal is behind. They turn the pages in books and learn how to handle books gently. Younger children enjoy books with textures, bold words and pictures. Older children enjoy listening to a wide range of fiction stories and can recall events from their favourite books, such as 'The Gruffalo'. After reading the book, staff extend learning, as pre-school children build their habitats for the 'Gruffalo', made from metal squares, small wooden logs and stones. To further develop literacy skills, children choose books from the lending library to share with their parents at home.

- Overall, staff support older children's mathematics with lots of opportunities to talk about shapes and volume. However, at times, staff do not maximise opportunities to support younger children to learn about quantity, counting and number language during everyday play.
- Staff show children that they are kind, polite and respectful. Children reflect this in their daily play and enjoy participating in activities that aid them in understanding and respecting differences and similarities.
- The manager undertakes regular supervisions and appraisals of staff, which aid them in reviewing their work and making further improvements and promoting new ideas. For instance, staff successfully plan regular opportunities for children to participate in science, technology, engineering and mathematics activities, cooking and developing their investigation skills, to foster children's curiosity and help them become active learners.
- Parents and carers are delighted with the setting and express how much their children enjoy attending. They speak highly of the staff and particularly value how much they have helped with the good progress children are making.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to give older children time to think and resolve the problems that they encounter during play, so they consistently develop their thinking and problem-solving skills
- strengthen opportunities for younger children to extend their understanding of wider mathematical language.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2686900
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10367459
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	60
Number of children on roll	90
Name of registered person	Dicky Birds Pre-School Nurseries Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP902359
Telephone number	02070789000
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

Islington Square Day Nursery and Pre-school registered in 2022. The nursery is located in Islington in the London Borough of Islington. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm for 51 weeks of the year. The provider employs 20 members of staff, of whom 10 hold appropriate early years qualifications from level 5 to level 2. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Anahita Aderianwalla

Inspection activities

- The inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked about their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- The inspector observed staff interaction with children during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- Meetings were held between the inspector and the manager who is the early years specialist and regional support manager. The inspector looked at relevant documentation and saw evidence of the suitability of staff.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, children 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025