

# Inspection of Maria Montessori School

26 Lyndhurst Gardens, London NW3 5NW

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Inspection dates: 3 to 5 June 2025

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Early years provision

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Children and pupils at this school thrive in a culture of respect, responsibility and genuine collaboration. Pupils are polite and friendly towards each other, to adults and to visitors. From the very start, the school ethos instils in pupils care and consideration for one another. It is second nature for pupils to support each other, both academically and socially. This builds an inclusive community where everyone is involved in activities if they wish to be.

The school's high expectations of what pupils can achieve are realised. Pupils are inquisitive and their attitudes to learning are impressive. They have ownership of making sure that they use their time effectively. This is clear in the way that pupils demonstrate incredibly high levels of independence and curiosity, in both their academic learning and in developing skills for life. For example, pupils, including the very youngest children play an active role in maintaining their environment as part of their everyday experience at school. This includes cleaning out the guinea pig cage and setting the table and clearing up after lunch. Older pupils plan and execute their own educational visits and residential trips linked to their area of interest and learning. These tasks are all completed to an extremely high standard and often without the need for adult support or intervention.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The school ensures that pupils experience a broad, rich and ambitious curriculum. This is underpinned by following children's interest and curiosity, while ensuring that specific key skills and concepts are taught across a range of subjects. The school's approach is highly individualised for each pupil. This means that pupils' needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are swiftly identified, well catered for and met. Where needed, additional adaptations are put in place to meet specific needs. The school also works well with families and external agencies to ensure the right support is provided.

The school prioritises reading. The teaching of reading follows a clear and progressive sequence. This ensures that pupils build their knowledge of the sounds that letters make to be able to read words with accuracy. The books that pupils read provide suitable opportunities for them to apply their phonics knowledge. As a result, pupils become confident and fluent readers. The individual approach to pupils' learning means that any additional support that is needed is identified and quickly put in place. For example, pupils benefit from additional practice with staff or through peer support provided by more proficient readers.

Across the early years (children's house) curriculum, the school has precisely identified what children should learn. Teachers carefully check and evaluate what children know. The strong impact of this work is evident in children's secure recall of their learning, the work that they produce and their incredibly high levels of engagement and concentration. In the primary (elementary) and secondary

(adolescent) phases, the school is not as clear on what pupils need to know in some subjects and to be ready for their next stage of education. This means that in these subjects, the curriculum is not helping pupils as well as it could to remember what they need to for their future learning.

Through learning activities and opportunities, pupils' independence and responsibility for their learning are explicitly promoted. In all phases, teachers skilfully model the learning before expecting pupils to independently and deliberately practice the concepts taught. When pupils are working independently, teachers intervene expertly to support or deepen understanding. Teaching is supported effectively by the resources and activities available in the classroom. These are very specific and deliberately matched to the intended learning, including, for example, reading practice. Pupils know how to use the resources available to them and do so with care and consideration.

There is a highly consistent and well-embedded approach to promoting pupils' behaviour. The school's ethos of 'grace and courtesy' places great emphasis on modelling and teaching pupils' social responsibility. Expectations are clear and understood by pupils and they follow them very well.

Pupils' preparation for life beyond this school, including helping pupils to become positive members of society, underpins all aspects of the school's provision. There is a vast range of opportunities that stretch and challenge pupils' talents and interests and support the development of life skills. Pupil leadership roles are routinely available, such as 'accounts, garden and bakery managers'. Risk taking is managed effectively, for example, young children independently iron napkins ready for lunch. Staff help them to do so proficiently, safely and with care. Pupils proudly talk about their work on healthy eating, which includes growing organic vegetables, cooking them and eating them with their friends. Surplus vegetables are sold to the local community. The oldest pupils develop their business skills through their own bakery service, where they buy the ingredients, bake and sell their own bread to the school community. There are also many opportunities for pupils to volunteer and engage with the local community. For example, pupils organise litter picks on Hampstead Heath, sing with residents in a local nursing home, collect toiletries for distribution to families in need and have interviewed a local councillor on environment policy.

Pupils are well prepared to make choices about their future. Older pupils explore career opportunities and receive individual, impartial advice and guidance for their future choices.

Proprietor oversight and governance arrangements are robust. Those responsible for governance are well informed, make decisions in the best interests of the pupils and hold the school to account. Staff enjoy working here and feel well supported and well cared for.

All the independent school standards and the requirements for the early years foundation stage are met. The school is compliant with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- In the primary (elementary) and secondary (adolescent) phases, the most crucial knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn and remember have not been precisely identified in some foundation subjects. This means that sometimes, the curriculum is not as effective as it could be in ensuring that pupils understand and remember what they need to for their future learning. The school should continue to strengthen the curriculum so that the most important learning is clearly identified and taught to pupils, so that they are well prepared for their next steps in learning.

### **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## School details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 131978   |
| <b>DfE registration number</b>             | 202/6399   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Camden   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10375101   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Other Independent School   |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Independent day school   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 16  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 186  |
| <b>Proprietor</b>                          | Maria Montessori Institute   |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Sara Giwa-McNeil   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Michel Capobianco  |
| <b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>            | £17,334 to £27,684   |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 020 7435 3646  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.mariamontessori.org">www.mariamontessori.org</a>         |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | <a href="mailto:schools@mariamontessori.org">schools@mariamontessori.org</a> |
| <b>Dates of previous inspection</b>        | 21 to 24 June 2022   |

## Information about this school

- Maria Montessori School is an independent day school which follows the Montessori philosophy and approaches. It is located on four different sites in London:
  - 26 Lyndhurst Gardens, Hampstead, London NW3 5NW
  - St Mary's Hall, 7 Ashley Road, Hornsey, London N19 3AD
  - All Saints Church Hall, 28 Powis Gardens, Notting Hill, London W11 1JG
  - St Matthew's Church, 27 St Petersburg Place, Bayswater, London W2 4LA.
- All sites offer provision for children aged three to six.
- The Bayswater site offers further provision for pupils aged six to 12. The Hampstead site offers further provision for pupils aged six to 16. The provision at Hornsey is closing at the end of the academic year.
- Children aged two-and-a-half years to six years are allocated to the 'Children's House' provision. Parents of Nursery-age children can opt for part-time arrangements. Children in the Reception Year onwards attend on a full-time basis.
- Pupils aged six to 12 years are allocated to the 'Elementary' provision.
- Pupils aged 12 to 16 years are allocated to the 'Adolescent' provision. The school refers to pupils in this provision as 'students'.
- The school's most recent standard inspection took place in June 2022. An additional inspection took place in July 2023 to increase the age range at the school to 16. At the time of the inspection, there were 17 students aged 12 to 15 years old.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and those responsible for governance, including the executive director.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and personal, social and emotional development. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at the curriculum for other subjects, including, for example, considering curriculum documentation and through speaking to teachers.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

### **Inspection team**

|                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Julie Wright, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Katerina Christodoulou       | Ofsted Inspector        |
| David Radomsky               | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Simon Conway                 | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Jennifer Bax                 | Ofsted Inspector        |

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