

Holmewood Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	100554
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	376414
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2012
Lead inspector	Madeleine Gerard

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	131
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Yinka Vogel
Executive Headteacher	Sue Donovan
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Madeleine Gerard

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent approximately five hours observing teaching and learning led by four teachers and 13 additional staff, and held meetings with parents and carers. Meetings were also held with staff and members of the governing body. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at work in children's individual record books, and at tracking data showing children's attainment and progress. The school's development plans and records for safeguarding pupils were also seen. The inspector considered responses to 81 questionnaires received from parents and carers.

Information about the school

Holmewood Nursery is a larger than average Nursery school. Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught in two Nursery classes. The majority of children attend either only the morning or the afternoon session. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of children from minority ethnic groups is above average. A minority of children speak English as an additional language. The majority of these children are at an early stage of learning English. There are no disabled children at the school. The proportion of children with special educational needs is above average. Most of these children have speech, language and communication needs. The school organises and manages breakfast and after-school clubs during term time, and full-day care during the school holidays. The children's centre that shares the school site is the subject of a separate inspection. The school works in an informal federation with another local nursery school. The two schools share the same headteacher. Holmewood Nursery has been designated a National Early Years Teaching Centre.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. Working together as a very strong team, the staff establish a calm and safe environment where all the children are valued and each individual child is known extremely well. Achievement for all groups of children in their academic and personal skills is outstanding.
- Teaching is outstanding. Observations of children’s interests are used very effectively to plan activities in the inside and outside areas that promote exceptionally well their understanding and increase their knowledge. Assessment information is used extremely well to tailor activities to children’s needs and check that all groups of children make consistently rapid gains in their learning.
- Exemplary arrangements to support children and their families when they join the school, and very well-established routines, ensure that children feel very safe and settle very quickly when they start. Children behave extremely well in the classrooms and the outside areas because adults make their expectations consistently clear and provide excellent role models.
- The promotion of children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. For example, children have opportunities to tend the school’s vegetable beds, feed the laying hens, and celebrate festivals from a very wide variety of faiths and cultures. Visitors to the school and visits to places of interest are popular. Outings within the school’s surrounding area to deepen children’s knowledge of their locality are less frequently organised.
- Highly effective leaders and managers constantly strive to bring about further improvements to the school’s provision and outcomes for children. Improvements to the already rich curriculum include an increased emphasis on developing children’s numeracy skills and enhanced opportunities for children to practise writing in the outside areas. Reading and children’s enjoyment of books are encouraged strongly through daily shared story-time in small groups, and opportunities to borrow books from the school’s library.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase opportunities for children to deepen their knowledge of the area and community around the school through outings and visits within the locality by July 2012.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement for all groups of children is outstanding. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the survey are rightly confident that their children are making good progress and that their particular needs are met. Children join the school with skills and capabilities that are generally well below the levels expected for their age. By the time they leave the Nursery, their attainment overall is above expectations for children of this age. They make consistently rapid progress in all areas of learning, including in communication, language and literacy skills.

Learning is typically brisk and very purposeful. Children are extremely keen to get on with tasks as soon as they can and thoroughly enjoy choosing activities for themselves in the inside and outdoor areas. They sustain their interest, work hard and concentrate very well. They listen attentively to explanations and follow instructions carefully. This was illustrated in a numeracy session outside where children working in a group with an adult were increasing their knowledge of numbers up to 20. They enjoyed the challenge of counting sequences of numbers. Children thought carefully to understand and follow the teacher's guidance to count on from 10, and to find the number 13. They sustained their interest in the task and practised their knowledge of numbers by collecting 13 natural items from the garden. Children who speak English as an additional language made similarly brisk progress to that of others in the group. They developed confidence in pronouncing numbers because they listened carefully to the adult and other children, and repeated them accurately.

Children with special educational needs make outstanding progress in their skills. They establish extremely positive relationships with staff. They enjoy working individually with teachers and additional adults, as well as in small groups with other children. They benefit from additional sessions, closely tailored to their needs, with well-trained staff and specialist therapists. Children who speak English as an additional language progress outstandingly well because they practise their listening and speaking skills very regularly. All groups of children enjoy singing songs together and rapidly extend their knowledge of new language because adults consistently seek to ask questions and prompt discussions about what the children are doing.

Quality of teaching

In the survey, all the parents and carers agreed that their children are well taught at the school. Inspection findings endorse this view. One parent typically wrote, 'The teaching staff are fabulous, the facilities are amazing and that makes very happy children.' The curriculum underpins children's enjoyment of their learning and teaching promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

outstandingly well. Children make friends quickly because adults model warm and positive relationships and promote social skills. Celebrations, including dancing during Black History Month and the annual international day, promote children's awareness of others. Children from widely diverse backgrounds and cultures work and play very well together. They take turns readily and share resources. They know to sign up to use the scooters and tricycles and to respect the sand-timers so that all children have an equal turn to use the equipment. The breakfast and after-school clubs provide a calm and enjoyable start and finish to the day for the small number of children who attend.

Effective teamwork ensures that children can choose a very wide variety of resources, toys and equipment in the inside and outside spaces. There is a particularly good balance of adult-led tasks and activities for children to choose themselves. Daily observations of children's progress are very detailed. Staff use these systematically and carefully to plan suitably challenging tasks that are motivating and capture children's interest. For example, children practised their knowledge of prepositions by singing songs, and they enjoyed hiding under scarves and using actions to show their understanding. The curriculum is constantly refined as children's preferences and interests develop and activities are varied daily to ensure children's curiosity is continually stimulated. Independence is encouraged strongly through daily routines. Children know to find their name card and put it in their key worker corner when they arrive. All children help to tidy up and prepare the resources for the next group of children to use. Children's self-esteem and self-confidence are boosted through selecting for themselves the pieces of work they wish to include in their individual 'affirmation' record books. Teaching and the curriculum for children with special educational needs are individualised and carefully tailored to provide the support they require for high quality learning. Children welcome visitors, including authors, artists and musicians, and enjoy outings to places of interest such as museums and a city farm. Planned opportunities to develop children's knowledge of their surrounding locality through visits within the local area are more limited.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Children make an exceptional contribution to their own learning. They thoroughly enjoy working independently and participate wholeheartedly in all activities. They behave outstandingly well at the Nursery and have extremely positive attitudes to school. One parent typically wrote, 'My child always looks forward to going to school and comes back happy and enthusiastic.' The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the survey were confident that behaviour is good and that learning is not disrupted by bad behaviour. A very few parents and carers did not agree that any cases of bullying are dealt with effectively. The vast majority of parents and carers in the survey confirmed that the school keeps them well informed and that their children feel safe at school. Home visits by staff before children join the school and well-organised and structured induction arrangements ensure that children quickly settle at school. They develop confidence that adults will help them should any problems occur, and feel secure.

Adults consistently explain to children how to keep themselves safe from harm. For example, adults ensure they know how to use equipment and resources safely. Children systematically learn how to use woodwork tools safely: they know to wear

protective eye masks and to keep their fingers safely out of the way. Children arrive for the morning and afternoon sessions punctually. The school successfully emphasises the importance of attending regularly and on time to enable children to benefit from daily routines and valuable learning time.

Leadership and management

The headteacher works very closely with all the staff and members of the governing body with an extremely clear vision for the school. They work with outstanding determination to tackle discrimination and promote equality. Consequently, all groups of children, whatever their background or ability, have equal access to exciting and stimulating provision that is sharply tailored to their needs as individuals so that they do extremely well. Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have successfully sustained the excellent quality of education that the school provides so that children's learning continues to benefit greatly. They have ensured that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well.

Professional development for teachers and other teaching staff helps maintain a very consistent approach to all aspects of teaching and children's learning, and the curriculum. Improvements to the excellent curriculum include rearranging the daily timetable to prioritise group story-time and increase children's enjoyment of books. Other enhancements include the introduction of Spanish, the addition of laying hens to the wildlife in the school grounds, workshops involving parents and carers in helping their children develop numeracy skills, and a popular monthly Saturday morning activity session for fathers, male carers and their children. The school has successfully secured land for an allotment adjacent to the site. Volunteers, parents and carers, and their children, have worked with the school to design and develop a vegetable garden.

The school works in very close partnership with the children's centre to ensure that children and their families benefit from the additional support and guidance that are available. Through close links with the partner school, staff are sharing their expertise to train others, and developing their leadership skills further. This work also reflects the school's success in becoming a nationally recognised Early Years Teaching Centre. Arrangements for safeguarding children meet statutory requirements; staff have received recent training and the school site is very secure and extremely well maintained. All these strengths reflect the school's outstanding capacity to improve further.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



1 February 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Holmewood Nursery School, London SW2 2RW

Thank you for your friendly welcome when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed my visit and seeing all the interesting things that you do there. This letter tells you what I found during my visit.

Holmewood Nursery is an outstanding school. I know you like coming to school very much because you all behave so well and get along very well with one another. I could see how much you love learning both inside and outside. Your parents and carers told me they like the school very much, too. All the adults work so very hard and make sure you have many exciting activities to do every day in the classrooms and in the outdoor spaces. Because of this, you are all doing exceptionally well in your learning. Those of you who need additional help are extremely well supported so that you also make outstanding progress.

Your headteacher, the staff and members of the governing body are always looking for ways to make your school even better. We have asked them to plan even more outings for you to explore and find out about your local area. All of you can help by continuing to attend school regularly and on time.

Finally, I would like to thank you again and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Madeleine Gerard
Lead inspector

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