

The Grove Nursery School Children and Family Centre

Inspection report

Unique reference number	100771
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	376452
Inspection dates	13–14 March 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	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Smartt
Headteacher	Kay Beckwith
Date of previous school inspection	28 April 2009
School address	Tower Mill Road London SE15 6BP
Telephone number	020 7701 6629
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Age group	3–5
Inspection date(s)	13–14 March 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Madeleine Gerard

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent approximately four and a half hours observing teaching and learning led by three teachers and ten additional staff, and held meetings with staff, parents and carers, and members of the governing body. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The inspector observed the school's work, looked at work in children's individual record books, and tracking data showing children's attainment and progress. The school's development plans and records for safeguarding children were also seen. The inspector considered responses to the 25 questionnaires received from parents and carers and 15 staff questionnaires.

Information about the school

This is an average-size nursery school. The majority of children attend full time. The others attend part time, mornings or afternoons. The proportion of children from minority ethnic groups is above average, and a higher proportion of children than average speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is average. Most of these children have speech, language and communication needs. There have been a number of staff changes over recent years. The headteacher joined the school in July 2011. The children's centre, provision for babies and children up to age three as well as the breakfast and after-school clubs, which share the school site, are the subject of a separate inspection.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school where children are happy. They are valued, known as individuals and enjoy their time in the school’s safe and caring environment. Occasionally, activities for children to choose for themselves are not matched to the full range of abilities to raise their achievement further. This is why the school is good rather than outstanding.
- Achievement is good. From mostly low starting points, children make good progress to reach the levels expected for their age when they leave.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan interesting activities inside and outside that promote children’s understanding and increase their knowledge. A wide variety of well-selected and engaging resources and equipment successfully motivate the children to learn. Regular and detailed observations of children’s interests and progress are used effectively to plan adult-led tasks that ensure children are suitably challenged in their learning.
- Children’s behaviour and safety are good because adults make their expectations clear and provide positive role models. Routines ensure children feel safe and are confident to join in activities with adults and other children in the inside and outside spaces. Children have a good awareness of how to use resources and equipment safely.
- Leaders, managers and members of the governing body work closely together. They have maintained the school’s overall effectiveness whilst successfully managing a number of staff changes since the previous inspection. Regular checks on the quality of teaching and the curriculum, together with systematic staff review and additional training for staff to improve performance, help to secure good provision. However, the monitoring of children’s self-selected activities is not quite as rigorously checked. Successful curriculum developments include the introduction of specialist music sessions and enhanced opportunities for children to grow their own produce in the school’s allotment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure activities for children to select for themselves are tailored to the full range of children's learning needs by September 2012, and check the impact of this work on children's achievement.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The achievement of all groups of children is good. Most parents and carers are rightly confident that their children make good progress at the school and feel that the school meets their children's particular needs. Children join the school with skills and capabilities that are generally below those expected of three-year-old children. Their knowledge and understanding of the world, and their literacy and numeracy skills, are often particularly weak. By the time they leave, the gaps are narrowing effectively so that their attainment overall is at the expected levels for their age. This includes children who are known to be eligible for free school meals, who respond well to the nurturing individual care provided.

Learning is typically enthusiastic and focused. Children are keen to get involved in tasks as soon as they can and quickly choose activities for themselves in the inside and outdoor spaces. They often sustain their interest in what they are doing, work hard and concentrate well. This was illustrated when boys and girls were examining the dried skeleton of a fish as part of a project exploring underwater life. They enjoyed the challenge of drawing what they could see in order to explore the various parts of a fish's body. Children listened carefully as adults explained the functions of different parts of the skeleton and they thought hard about how to record on paper what they observed. Children learning English as an additional language made similar brisk progress to that of other children. They developed confidence in using key vocabulary because they listened carefully to the adults and repeated new words accurately. Another group of children were fascinated by a baby octopus that the teacher used to explain how octopuses move underwater. They were eager to count the octopus' legs and to describe its skin. They listened very attentively to explanations of how an octopus uses ink to hide from other creatures.

Disabled children and those with special educational needs make good progress in developing their skills. They establish positive relationships with adults and other children. They benefit from regular individual and small-group sessions tailored to their needs with well-trained staff and specialist therapists.

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. Adults prioritise speaking and listening skills and extend children's learning through discussion and questioning. Reading, and the pleasure of sharing stories, are promoted strongly. Adults regularly read to individuals and small groups. Children have access to a wide variety of appropriate books and were observed confidently selecting books for themselves to

read and recounting stories to one another. Effective team work ensures children can choose a wide variety of resources, toys and equipment in the inside and outdoor spaces. The well-organised curriculum supports children to enjoy their learning and promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Staff promote social skills consistently. Themed events, for example during book week, and visitors to the school, including African drummers during Black History month, foster cultural development. Children from a wide variety of different backgrounds work and play well together. Outings to the local area help children to develop their knowledge of the community.

There is a good balance of adult-led tasks and opportunities for children to select activities for themselves. During adult-directed tasks, staff use their knowledge of children's learning, progress and interests to adapt work to their individual needs. This helps children to build on what they know and can do already, whatever their ability or needs, and they make swift gains in their learning. For example, working with an adult, children practising their knowledge of numbers were constantly challenged to extend their skills of adding two numbers together. Occasionally, the pace of children's learning is not as consistently brisk, when activities for them to choose are not as closely matched to the wide range of their abilities. This means that sometimes these activities are too difficult for some children or insufficiently challenging for others. As a consequence, children's interest is not as consistently well engaged and sustained. Children enjoy growing plants and caring for the two guinea pigs that live in the school garden. Recently introduced experiences help children to learn about the natural environment and enjoy outdoor activities in local park woodland and in the school's allotment. Independence is encouraged through well-established daily routines. Children know to find their name card and put it on the attendance board in the classroom when they arrive. All children are encouraged to tidy up at the end of the morning and afternoon sessions.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most parents and carers confirm that behaviour is good. In the survey, two of the twenty five respondents felt that learning is disrupted by bad behaviour and another two disagreed that the school deals well with any cases of bullying. All parents and carers in the survey confirmed that their children feel safe at school. The inspection found children's behaviour and safety to be good. They are friendly and welcoming. This helps children to settle, make friends quickly and feel secure when they join the nursery. Children make a good contribution to their own learning. They participate in activities enthusiastically and respond promptly to reminders from staff about the behaviour expected. They know to tell the adults should any problems occur and are confident that adults will help them. The inspection found no evidence of bullying of any kind. Children were observed readily seeking help from staff to deal with unkind behaviour or disagreements over equipment. Issues were swiftly and effectively resolved with the help of the adults. Clear guidance to promote children's awareness of road safety, and opportunities to explore the work of local emergency services, help children to understand how to keep themselves safe from harm. The school encourages regular attendance and punctuality to enable children to benefit from daily routines and valuable learning time.

Leadership and management

Leaders, managers and members of the governing body work successfully, together with the staff, to tackle discrimination and promote equality well. This is shown by the equal progress that children make, whatever their needs. The school consistently prioritises the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through extremely close links with the children's centre and with its breakfast and after-school clubs, the school ensures that children, including those experiencing challenging circumstances, and their families, receive appropriate care and guidance to promote their well-being. Children, whatever their background or ability, have equal access to the school's curriculum and do well during their time in the nursery. In a comment, typical of many, one parent or carer wrote, 'The staff make a huge effort in ensuring that everyone is always welcome and supported.'

Accurate self-evaluation enables the school to identify appropriate priorities for improvement. Careful monitoring, together with professional development for teachers and other teaching staff, helps maintain a consistently good approach to teaching and children's learning. Similar monitoring of teachers' planning for children's independent learning is not quite as effectively established. Since the previous inspection, the school has made improvements to the outside environment to promote learning. Inside, a new sensory room is used to support children in individual sessions and small groups. In the survey, all the parents and carers confirmed that the school helps them to support their children's development. Family learning encourages parents and carers to take an active part in their children's progress. This includes opportunities for parents and carers to spend time in the nursery with their children, library books to read with their children, and courses on a wide variety of topics organised in partnership with the children's centre.

Arrangements for safeguarding children meet statutory requirements; staff are well trained and the school site is secure and well maintained. All these strengths reflect the school's 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.



15 March 2012

Dear Children

**Inspection of The Grove Nursery School Children and Family Centre,
London SE15 6BP**

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. I particularly enjoyed observing all of you exploring the fish skeleton and the octopus. This letter tells you what I found during my visit.

The Grove Nursery is a good school. All of you get on together and are well behaved in the classrooms and outdoor spaces. Your parents and carers told me they like the school a lot. You understand clearly how to keep yourselves safe from harm. This helps to make your school such a happy place to be. You are enthusiastic to come to school and enjoy yourselves while you are there. You are all doing well in your learning. Those of you who need additional help are well supported so that you also make good progress.

I have asked the staff to make sure that all the activities that you can choose for yourselves are carefully planned so that they are the right level of difficulty for you. I would also like the school to check that this is helping you to reach even higher standards in your learning. All of you can help by continuing to think hard and concentrate when you work with the adults and when you choose activities for yourselves.

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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