

Rachel Keeling Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100886
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	354909
Inspection dates	16–17 February 2011
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Barnett
Headteacher	Ben Hasan
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2008
School address	Bullards Place London E2 0PS
Telephone number	020 8980 5856
Fax number	020 8980 8874
Email address	head@rachelkeeling.towerhamlets.sch.uk

Age group	3–4
Inspection dates	16–17 February 2011
Inspection number	354909

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 Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, 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.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited 10 adult-directed learning experiences taught by five different members of staff. Inspectors held meetings with the chair of the governing body and another governor, and with staff. They looked at pupils' books, records of their progress, lesson planning and the school's self-evaluation documents, including records of teaching and the main improvement plan. Responses to questionnaires completed by staff and by 56 parents and carers were also considered.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How rapidly and consistently children achieve across all the areas of learning and how high their attainment is by the time they leave.
- How effective the teaching is and what proportion is consistently outstanding.
- What impact the school has had on increasing the frequency with which children attend.
- The impact of the leadership on improving outcomes for the children and the extent to which the governing body has fulfilled requirements in relation to community cohesion.

Information about the school

Rachel Keeling Nursery School provides places for 100 children. Of these, 60 attend full-time and 40 attend part-time. Children are currently admitted in September or January. The school is located in an area of densely built, high-rise, mainly social housing. A relatively high proportion of children are known to be eligible for free school meals. The intake reflects the diverse cultural and ethnic makeup of Bethnal Green. Two-thirds of children are of Bengali heritage. A high proportion speak English as an additional language, although relatively few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The great majority of these pupils have speech and language difficulties. Breakfast club provision, which is managed by the governing body, is available to all children. The current headteacher joined the school in January 2009. For the three years prior to his appointment, the school had a series of temporary headteachers.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Rachel Keeling Nursery School is outstanding. It provides an inspirational start to school life. Attention to the detail of children's learning is the hallmark of this impressive school. The exceptional learning environment is planned and resourced with great care so that children benefit from stimulating, engaging resources and quality experiences which rapidly and successfully extend their learning. The recently upgraded garden area is a particular strength, offering rich high quality experiences for the children. The school achieves a creative balance between the priority it gives to children's learning and the focus placed on high quality care. At the heart of the school's philosophy is the very close relationship with the parents and carers. The school works hard to engage them in their child's education, with a view to establishing positive attitudes and good practices which should ensure that each child is well placed to benefit fully from later education. However, children's attendance is, currently, an identified area for improvement.

Outstanding learning and progress reflect the excellent teaching children receive. Despite few children entering the nursery with skills appropriate to their age, most, by the time they leave, reach or exceed the levels expected. Many children have weak language skills or speech and language difficulties on entry to the school. A few children also enter with limited knowledge of English. Children benefit from a language-rich environment and a high level of engagement with adults who ensure that, both in adult-led activities and those chosen by children themselves, they have many opportunities to speak and to write. This ensures that even children with weaknesses in speech and language make rapid progress, thereby 'narrowing the gap' between them and their peers. Counting and awareness of numbers permeate the curriculum and the outdoor area is particularly rich in incidental opportunities for children to develop their counting skills and to recognise simple shapes. The school is currently seeking to extend children's skills in simple addition. Provision for the other areas of learning is also strong, particularly in the creative curriculum and in promoting knowledge and understanding of the world.

The quality of care is outstanding. Children feel very safe and this helps promote their confidence and their social skills. The school encourages children to take controlled risks in their outdoor play, where there are excellent opportunities to climb ropes and poles, balance on beams and ride bicycles without stabilisers. This contributes strongly to their sense of independence and self-reliance. Lunchtimes are positive social occasions where children eat in 'family groups' with an adult. This reinforces the school's high expectations of table manners and also underpins the children's awareness of healthy foods and what they need to do to lead healthy lives.

At the heart of the school's success is the outstanding leadership provided by the headteacher and his senior colleagues. Much has been done in the last two years to move the school on, ensuring that the focus on learning is as successfully embedded as the high

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

quality of care. The team encompasses a wide range of linguistic skills and cultural awareness, so that the school engages closely with the needs of the community it serves. Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate, constantly seeking to enhance provision further. The school has clearly improved on what was already outstanding provision. The ambition of the headteacher and governing body to make it better still, and the coherence of their plans to do so, indicate that the school has outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Work with parents and carers to ensure that children attend the nursery as frequently as possible, so avoiding any loss of continuity in children's learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

The school is resolutely committed to ensuring that children benefit fully from their time in nursery education. Children have really positive attitudes to learning, engage very well with the opportunities provided and enjoy school a great deal. Despite most children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, entering school at levels well below those expected for their age, high quality learning opportunities and closely targeted support ensure that they make excellent progress. Those with limited knowledge of English are also supported very well and make excellent progress. Achievement is good, particularly in adult-led activities. Adults communicate their excitement for learning and children are very responsive to their enthusiasm. This encourages children to sustain attention for lengthy periods, and this is true for both boys and girls. Children stay on task for extended periods when painting or making clay pots. They wait their turn patiently, monitoring a sand-timer, for the next bicycle to become available, or for their turn on the climbing ropes. Children enjoy discovering new things ? mixing colours, building tepee shelters and solving the problem of reaching the slightly high water pump handle. There are many opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills. Mathematics, particularly sequencing and positional language, permeates most outside activities. Books, often information books aimed at much older children, are readily available to engage the imagination and stimulate discussion and the opening up of ideas. There are many opportunities for children to practise their speaking and their early writing skills.

Pupils' personal development and their behaviour are outstanding. They are enthusiastic, eager to learn and sociable. They show considerable control in their use of challenging climbing and balancing equipment. They ride bicycles with confidence. Children willingly take on responsibility and enthusiastically tidy up when asked to help. They show initiative, as seen when one boy volunteered to lead a song during an exceptional musical session led by a visiting musician, and did so with considerable assurance. The other children listened in rapt attention. High quality opportunities in music, and the need to cooperate with others to achieve the required outcomes, contribute extremely well to children's excellent creative development. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have really good opportunities to learn about the diverse cultures locally, including their own, and about the key religious and cultural festivals.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Children's attainment ¹	3
The quality of children's learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children's behaviour	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Children's attendance ¹	3
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

There is a strong shared vision among the staff and an outstanding awareness of how young children learn. Planning is closely aligned to the specific needs of individual children. The assessment of children's learning is rigorous, but does not get in the way of either teaching or learning. The tracking of the progress of individual children is very thorough and children are able to contribute to their 'Special Book'. Every child has an individual education plan which indicates the priorities in each area of learning for the next term. There are daily reviews of the progress of individual children. School data indicate that progress is outstanding for many children. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who are supported exceptionally well.

The curriculum provides an outstandingly rich range of opportunities, with specialist activities in each area of the building. Children may choose, for example, high quality design and build activities, where they can undertake ambitious constructions. These include complex castles constructed from blocks and modified on a daily basis, or carefully produced and intricately decorated clay pots. Other children undertake sustained craft tasks involving real hammers, saws and glue guns, following tasks from design to the finished article. Children have good opportunities to develop information and communication technology skills. One boy successfully programmed a robot to make turns, while one child showed another how to use the interactive whiteboard so that

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

objects could be moved across the display. The outside garden area is exceptionally well resourced and is used intensively to promote learning. External partnerships, particularly the recent development work on music in partnership with Wigmore Hall, contribute well to extending children's learning.

Staff care for children outstandingly well. They are exceptionally responsive to children's needs and to those of their families. A few children use the breakfast club, which is effectively managed. There is high quality practice in supporting the health, social, behavioural and transition needs of children whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Transition arrangements, both on entry to nursery and when moving to the main primary school, are excellent. This ensures that children have the confidence to make the transfer successfully. The school works very closely with support agencies, particularly for children with specific needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's high expectations and passionate advocacy of quality in nursery provision are the driving force which underpins the school's success. There are systematic and rigorous structures in place to monitor, review and improve learning for all children, constantly seeking to enhance provision which is already outstanding. The children are, in turn, challenged continuously through innovative learning experiences. Daily staff review meetings and termly target setting for all children ensure that the momentum of learning and improvement is effectively sustained. The school development plan accurately identifies areas for improvement which need to be addressed. Currently the leadership team embeds ambition and sustains improvement outstandingly well. The work of the Family Support Worker in establishing a range of workshops on parenting, family and transition issues and in providing ready access to one-to-one advice and support has further secured the close partnership between parents and carers, and the school. Equality of opportunity is closely monitored and is excellent.

Governance is good. Despite some turnover in members, the governing body is increasingly confident in holding the school to account, particularly in relation to the business management, and are now taking an increasingly strategic role in its development. Statutory responsibilities are met. By visiting and carrying out checks, governors closely monitor all aspects of health and safety and, at the time of the inspection, all safeguarding requirements were met. The school is a highly cohesive community. Community cohesion is effectively promoted in relation to the diversity of

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

faiths and lifestyles in the local community, and, to an extent, globally. There are satisfactory opportunities to learn about other communities nationally.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are extremely happy with the school and with the quality of care their children receive. One said, 'A wonderful school ? my daughter has learned so much in the past year.' Parents and carers appreciate the rich opportunities which the school offers and the level of involvement they have in their children's learning. One or two parents and carers had concerns as to the effectiveness of communication. However, the inspection team found that day-to-day communications appear to be at least as efficient as in most schools.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Rachel Keeling Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 100 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	80	11	20	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	66	19	34	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	36	64	19	34	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	57	23	41	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	59	23	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	59	21	38	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	66	19	34	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	20	36	27	48	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	55	21	38	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	61	19	34	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	59	21	38	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	38	68	15	27	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	75	14	25	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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 children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
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 children. 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

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.



18 February 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Rachel Keeling Nursery School, London E2 OPS

Thank you for making us welcome during our recent visit. We enjoyed meeting you and thought that your behaviour was excellent. We found that yours is an outstanding school. These are our main findings.

- You are making outstanding progress, as a result of outstanding teaching.
- By the time you leave Nursery, you are working at the levels expected for your age.
- Your school is a really exciting place to learn. I particularly liked the music sessions with the djembe drums. The garden has been carefully planned and is full of engaging things to do. You get to go on many exciting visits and clearly enjoy them.
- You are very helpful in school. You make a good contribution to the school and work hard to engage with the local community.
- You feel very safe and have an outstanding awareness of the importance of eating healthily and staying fit.
- School leaders ensure that you are outstandingly well looked after.
- Adults run the school with skill and imagination and this is a key reason why you all do so well.

We are asking the school to make one improvement so that you can do even better.

- Work closely with your parents and carers to ensure that you attend school as often as possible, so helping you to learn new things even more quickly.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Logan
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.