

Vanessa Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100316
Local Authority	London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
Inspection number	354835
Inspection dates	9–10 May 2011
Reporting inspector	John W.Paull

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	63
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sophie Sainty
Headteacher	Michele Barrett
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Six sessions led by three teachers and four early years practitioners were observed, including activities chosen by the children themselves. Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff and governors. Opportunities were taken to talk to children about their views of the school and what it does for them. A small number of parents and carers were spoken to face to face, and the inspectors received and analysed 49 questionnaires. A sample of documents was scrutinised, including information related to children's work and what they are taught, their rates of progress, safeguarding and attendance.

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

- Whether, since the last inspection, the school's leadership has sustained high quality provision and outstanding outcomes, with particular reference to mathematics across all the areas of learning.
- How well the children's attendance is promoted. How well the children's attendance is promoted.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized nursery school. The present headteacher was appointed last November. About one third of its children are of White British heritage and two thirds are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, including a few who are learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most of these children have speech and communication difficulties. Vanessa Nursery has its own purpose-built learners' swimming pool inside its building. The Nursery works closely in partnership with the Cathnor Park Children's Centre.

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

Vanessa Nursery is a vibrant, stimulating environment that provides outstanding teaching and learning opportunities delivered by a particularly skilled staff and based on a highly innovative curriculum. As a result, its children achieve remarkably well in all areas of learning across the Early Years Foundation Stage, and they enjoy their experiences with absorbed interest all the time. Parents and carers recognise this excellence. Typically, one commented, 'Fantastic Nursery the best start to a child's education that anyone could ask for', and another said, 'The room, the outside garden and the pool, it doesn't matter where the children are, they are cared for, helped and educated to the highest degree possible. No wonder it has such a great reputation locally.' The inspection findings fully concur. This utterly inclusive school welcomes and adapts its teaching to meet everyone's needs. A strong partnership with the nearby children's centre, routine home visits and general openness to families mean that nearly all its children are well known to staff before they start. Children's individual requirements for effective learning are therefore met as soon as they arrive and continue highly effectively, and their personal and emotional development is paramount.

The headteacher, staff and governing body have very quickly developed into a team who constantly discuss, question and find ways of moving provision forward. This is very apparent in an invigorating sense of common purpose and high morale, which has already resulted in a rigorous approach to using ongoing assessment. Children's observed different preferences for learning and stages of development are used very thoroughly to plan individualised 'learning journeys' and experiences. Progress is therefore accelerating from already rapid rates for children of all different backgrounds and ethnicities, including those who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, across all areas of learning.

Safeguarding, including staff vetting, is managed very thoroughly. Clear routines for collecting children at the end of each session are meticulously applied. The maintenance of outstanding performance since the last inspection indicates that the capacity to sustain excellence is very secure. Senior leaders, together with the governing body, evaluate provision and outcomes with great care and accuracy. For example, they have correctly identified that the school's extensive cohesive activity within the local community should now be extended further afield. A clear action plan to achieve this is already in place and developments are underway. As part of this improvement, foundation status as an international school has been registered with the British Council, with the aim of applying for an award at a later date.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Implement its plans to establish partnerships with nurseries in other countries as quickly as this is achievable.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

Children achieve exceptionally well and thoroughly enjoy their learning. Their experiences before coming to school are varied and their range of skills, including in social and emotional development, is very wide although, for many, it is quite low. Owing to outstanding teaching and provision, children nevertheless settle very quickly and their progress is often very rapid indeed. They take part happily in activities, often with great absorption because of the sensitive and skilful ways in which adults approach them, point things out and involve them in their learning. This close engagement with planned activities means that behaviour is consistently outstanding. The children help each other and are genuinely interested in what each other achieve, as well as in what the adults do, for example when they role play as a teacher with a list to see who is swimming today or staying to lunch. Every child is encouraged to express his or her own ideas and views and to state choices. All the teachers and practitioners are highly skilled in developing children's vocabulary and the necessary skills for making marks on paper and other relevant surfaces, using a range of crayons, paints, pencils and other implements. The result is that children learn very securely and progress rapidly, to the extent that attainment across all areas by the time they leave is high when measured against age-related targets. Staff take every opportunity across all the areas to engage children in counting activities. For example, illustrations to a favourite story carried numbers on the back. The children's attention was drawn to this, so they could identify their picture numerically. This type of activity helps children's early numeracy skills to develop quickly and represents an improvement since the last inspection when it was identified as something that the school should address.

Children's excellent cultural development is evident in the way they work and play together harmoniously with a great sense of belonging. This is very apparent when they come together in their key groups, including children from all the ethnic heritages represented. Children also learn very effectively about the work of famous artists such as Kandinsky and Van Gogh, taking great care to match colour and shape as they stand at an easel. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are completely involved in all these activities and also progress very rapidly, working together with all other groups. The remarkable range of skills that the children acquire prepares them very well for the next stages of learning and their attendance is above average, when the effects of a chicken pox epidemic are taken into account.

The children thoroughly enjoy the things they do that help the nursery to run smoothly, tidying areas, or registering themselves. Such contributions to the community are greatly enhanced when, for example, they garden with retired people in partnership with Ravenscourt Greenhouses, who return the favour in the nursery's garden.

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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	1
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment ¹	1
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	1
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance ¹	2
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?

Provision is of the highest order. The adults are all fully involved as key practitioners, taking responsibility for groups, observing needs and outcomes, so each child has individualised targets that are frequently checked and assessed. Whenever someone's progress appears to slow down, reasons are sought, which includes seeking advice from parents and carers. Based on such information, targets are adjusted, and great care is taken to guide and support children through individual programmes. In this way, what is taught and how it is taught are constantly adapted to meet different needs, including those of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Rates of learning and progress are thus constantly monitored and maximised. In cases where this is not enough, further advice is sought from experts and outside agencies. Partnerships with children's centres, psychologists, the school's own speech therapist and other agencies are key elements. By working alongside experts, the staff learn new techniques themselves. The result is a very skilful staff team and such specialised skills are employed to support all children.

The curriculum and the resources to teach it are also of a very high quality. The nursery has three distinct learning areas: 'The room', 'the garden' and 'the pool'. However, these words do not do justice to the meticulous care and use of space that has evolved and emerged and the way that a highly effective staff team use them. In the pool, for

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example, children used cans and basins to acquire ideas related to capacity and flotation, while experiencing flotation with their own bodies. Thus, all spaces and activities are set up to support progress in all areas of learning. It therefore matters little what a child chooses to do, because all areas of learning can be accessed and taught all the time and everywhere, based on each individual's targets. The deputy headteacher's meticulous tracking of children's progress underpins all this, as it is used to adapt and influence planning. Overarching themes then hold everything together to enhance children's involvement and interest.

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 whole staff, including teachers, early years practitioners and support staff, take on a wide range of extra responsibilities. All staff are focused on driving improvements and contributing their expertise. Safeguarding checks are carried out frequently in a systematic and very careful way. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, together with the governing body, have built an excellent team spirit and shared determination to provide the best. As soon as she arrived, the headteacher canvassed the staff's opinions to establish their views about anything that might have slipped a little and anything that they thought needed to be done to ensure continuing excellence. She then played a central role in encouraging and empowering staff to try out their ideas, monitoring carefully and then encouraging the sharing of things that were working well. National development initiatives are used particularly effectively. A telling example is how a scheme known as 'Every Child a Talker' has been embedded into the nursery's practice and improved provision further. This is apparent in the way that all staff, including support staff, approach the children with the clear intention, successfully achieved, of enriching their speech and communication. The programme has been further adapted to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and those learning to speak English as an additional language. Such adaptations of provision are visible all the time and, as a consequence, equal opportunities are ensured for everyone, and anything that might prevent outstanding achievement is tackled with great determination.

Community cohesion in the local context is remarkable and is an inextricable aspect of the school's daily life. This is seen especially in links with the nearby children's centre and various services to support parents and their children. Tea parties are held from time to time and welcoming parties for the parents of new children, so they get to know each other and longer established families in the school. However, community cohesion is not

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quite as well developed on a wider scale. That said, a partnership with a nursery in Soweto, South Africa is close to beginning and the staff and children recently visited Chinatown for the Chinese New Year. The school's past and recent performance show that its capacity to maintain outstanding provision is well embedded and it achieves exceptionally good value for money.

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
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

Both in responses to questionnaires and when spoken to directly by an inspector, parents and carers indicated that they were very impressed with the Nursery. Indeed, every single one felt that their child enjoys attending, that the staff look after the children safely and that the teaching is good. All of them also indicated satisfaction with the experiences provided for their children. A very small minority expressed some disagreement, but none strongly. No pattern of dissatisfaction emerged for inspectors to investigate. Nevertheless, senior leaders and governors displayed no complacency about this outcome and immediately sought explanations that might improve future responses even further.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Vanessa 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 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 63 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	86	7	14	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	69	14	29	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	43	28	57	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	51	22	45	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	61	19	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	47	23	47	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	51	20	41	2	4	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)	26	53	17	35	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	53	19	39	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	55	20	41	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	51	20	41	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	61	16	33	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	67	16	33	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



11 May 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Vanessa Nursery School, London W12 9JA

I thoroughly enjoyed my time with you when I came to your school. You were all very helpful and it was great to chat to you and to see your work and watch your play. It was wonderful to hear so many of you say that Vanessa is brilliant. The inspectors found that your nursery is truly excellent, and so we call it an 'outstanding' school. I enjoyed hearing about some of the lists that you make. Here is a list with some of the things that are outstanding about your school.

- You learn about lots of things and very quickly indeed.
- You all seem very happy and come into the nursery cheerfully and smiling.
- All the adults teach and look after you outstandingly well.
- You work and play together in a very friendly way, which helps you all to learn.
- The staff work very closely with your parents and carers to help you make fast progress.
- The governors at Vanessa work as a great team, together with the headteacher and the staff. They all have excellent ideas to make Vanessa even better.

Here is something that all of you, adults and children, can do to improve your nursery further.

- Extend the excellent way that you find out about and help people who live locally into linking up with people who live far away and in other countries.

You can all help your school by carrying on working and playing well together. I hope that you will always enjoy learning as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

John W. Paull
Lead inspector

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