

Harry Roberts Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100888
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	376479
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Sarah McDermott

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 local authority
Chair	Tania Stewart-Davies
Headteacher	Alexandra Law
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 May 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The team observed teaching and learning in eight lessons, taught by five teachers. The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body and staff and also spoke to children. They scrutinised children's work and looked at the data the school had collected on children's academic progress and attendance. They also looked at the school development plan, investigated procedures for keeping children safe and analysed the responses to questionnaires from staff and 44 parents and carers.

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

- The extent to which different groups of children make progress, particularly in mathematical development.
- The extent to which children who speak English as an additional language make progress in communication, language and literacy.
- The effectiveness of the new headteacher with senior managers and governors in identifying and successfully addressing any underachievement.

Information about the school

Harry Roberts Nursery is situated on the same site as the Ocean Children's Centre and Ocean Day Care. Ocean Day Care caters for children from 6 months to 5 years old and is run by the school. The school was in the process of registering the day care under its new name of Ocean Management Daycare so it was not inspected at the same time as the nursery as it would normally have been. The children's centre is not managed by the governing body and is inspected separately.

The nursery comprises two classes. Currently most children are part time, attending either in the morning or afternoon, as they settle into school routines. Eventually over half of children will attend full time. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The majority of children are from Bangladeshi backgrounds but children from a wide range of other cultures and backgrounds, including Somali and White British, also attend the school. More than three quarters of children speak English as an additional language and a high proportion is at an early stage of learning to speak English. The few children with special educational needs and/or disabilities have needs relating to speech, language and communication. The current headteacher was appointed at the beginning of this autumn term.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Harry Roberts Nursery is a good school where cheerful children thoroughly enjoy their learning. One parent reported that his daughter asked in the holidays, 'I haven't been to school for two days – when am I going back?' Children, parents and carers feel very much part of the nursery school family. One mother commented, 'We love how much care is given to our child and also to the whole family – we can't wait for our other child to come!' The nursery successfully meets its aim of making children's first experience of school a happy and positive one. Most children, whether boys, girls or from different ethnic backgrounds make good progress in all areas of learning, including mathematical development. They make particularly good progress in personal, social and emotional development because all staff put a priority on developing children's independence and encouraging the children to make friends with, and look after, each other. Staff have built up much expertise in helping children who speak English as an additional language to make just as good progress as others in all areas of learning. Some of these children who start with little spoken English make excellent progress in communication, language and literacy. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Their progress is not so consistently good because learning objectives in their individual education plans are too often written in complicated language that are difficult for parents, carers and staff to follow. This then leads to irregular reviews of learning to check that these children are making as much progress as they should.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is good. Children behave well and know how to keep themselves safe. They are extremely clear how to lead healthy lives. Sharing lunch with the children was a delight. They helped themselves to plenty of vegetables and salad as well as handing out plates and fetching water. They handled knives sensibly to cut up food on their own. Teachers make learning fun by setting out a very enticing array of activities to stimulate interest. Children enthusiastically used magnifying glasses to look more closely at the bream provided by the fishmonger to compare with the goldfish in the tank. Staff encourage children to have a go at activities. Soon children grow in confidence and learn from their attempts. Teachers methodically record how much progress each child is making and then match activities to their personal needs. They are revisiting the way they judge the children's learning so they have a refined picture of how children's levels compare with the national expectations.

The new headteacher has identified the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery and already has concrete plans for tackling areas needing developing. The strong,

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competent and stable senior management team has ensured the children's welfare and good achievement has been maintained during the change of headteacher and the reorganisation of the adjacent children's centre and day-care provision. The governing body is satisfactory. Governors have been effective in making strategic decisions on the headteacher appointment and the budget. They are building up their knowledge of the performance of children from improved information provided by the senior management team, but do not yet visit the classrooms regularly enough to gain first-hand impressions of children's learning. The nursery has maintained the children's good performance since the previous inspection. The promotion of mathematical development has improved and there is closer working with the children's centre and day care for the good of families and children. Consequently, it has good capacity to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make as much progress as other children by:
 - writing targets in simple language so that all staff, parents and carers can easily understand them and be effective in helping children to make good progress
 - reviewing targets for improvement frequently so children make good progressive steps in their learning.
- Involve the governing body more thoroughly in monitoring and evaluating the performance of children by:
 - providing accurate data on the performance of children compared with nursery schools nationally
 - arranging regular visits for governors to observe the children's learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children**2**

Children arrive happily at the beginning of their sessions with smiling faces, keen to find their friends and greet the grown ups. The tears of the few unsettled arrivals soon dry up with a comforting welcome and an interesting activity. If they feel at all worried they have a favourite adult to which they turn for reassurance. Children very quickly learn about healthy eating and that lively exercise is fun and good for them. One mother commented, 'Since starting nursery, my daughter has good habits of taking fruit and vegetables.' Children behaved particularly well with the visiting football coaches and revelled in catching and throwing balls. They enjoy helping to clear up, knowing the routines at the end of each session. Attendance is as expected for nursery-age children. Even so, children are well prepared for moving on to the Reception class in their new schools because of their good behaviour, increasing confidence and well-developed independence.

Many children have inquiring minds, are keen to find out more and practise new skills. Children arrive with skills below those expected for their age, make good progress and leave in line with expectations for their age group. Children are learning

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to recognise numbers and count up to 10. They loved digging up potatoes and counting them out in rows. However, some are not yet at the next stage of calculating or using their knowledge of number in everyday situations. Children are enchanted by stories and keenly give their ideas and suggestions. Many chatter away confidently with adults, gaining English language knowledge in leaps and bounds, but fewer share conversations with other children. Some are able to write the letters of their name whereas others are only beginning to make meaningful marks on paper. Staff already have plans for improving writing skills further.

These are the grades for children’s outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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	2
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which children feel safe	2
Children’s behaviour	2
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	2

How effective is the provision?

Everywhere children turn, interesting activities and accessible resources entice them to learn. Teachers make very good use of every corner, including the attractive gardens as productive learning areas. In addition, outings to the local post box or nearby shops extend children’s experiences of the neighbourhood. The recent trip to Hainault Forest, together with a good turnout of parents and carers, resulted in an excellent display of grasses, flowers and feathers collected by the children. Most teachers are on the lookout for unexpected opportunities for learning, such as encouraging the making of tyre marks after the children tricycle through running water. On other occasions chances slip by as when a boy was pressing his nose to the fence to watch a road sweeper unnoticed by adults around him.

All adults are particularly good at developing children’s personal, social and emotional

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

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skills. They are patient and calm, yet firmly encourage independence. Teachers consistently model good practice in conversation and regularly introduce new vocabulary. However, sometimes the balance is tipped too much towards adult talk at the expense of children speaking in sentences or learning to converse readily with playmates. Staff prepare learning activities very thoroughly and include toys to reinforce learning. In a good counting and singing session, children delighted in counting the model frogs off the log as they sang 'Five little speckled frogs'. Teachers ensure that each child has a 'special book' filled with photos and examples of work so they can proudly share their progress with the family. Staff work well to include children with learning difficulties into all activities. However, on occasion, not enough attention is paid to the precise small steps that are needed for these children to make any better than satisfactory progress. The care of children is good. The nursery school works particularly carefully to support families whose circumstances make them vulnerable so children's learning is interrupted as little as possible.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher has taken on effective leadership of the nursery in a matter of weeks. The strong team ethic of the staff has made her familiarisation of the workings of the nursery all the easier. Senior managers have a clear view of what is working well and what needs developing. The school development plan, although a little behind schedule, has pinpointed carefully identified priorities for improvement. Good partnership with the local authority is reaping rewards, especially important at a time of change. Already the headteacher has called on useful outside advice to analyse performance data so she can push on for further improved learning. The governing body takes a good strategic lead, but is not sufficiently knowledgeable about the skills children are gaining against national expectations to enable governors to ask challenging questions of the headteacher and her senior managers.

Parents and carers are considered vital partners in their children's development, particularly in the early days of settling to regular education. They are well included in a wide range of activities and appreciate being able to turn to the nursery staff for help and advice on family issues. The nursery follows safeguarding procedures well, but without restricting children's access to exciting and challenging activities so they can learn how to deal sensibly with risk. The promotion of equal opportunities and

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the elimination of any discrimination are high priorities. No child is left out of any activity if at all possible. The nursery is a valued part of the neighbourhood. On a practical note, children can watch everyday local activities go on through the fence. At their own level, children warmly accept their nursery community with the wealth of cultures and faiths in its midst. They are growing in their knowledge of children from other parts of the United Kingdom and the world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	2
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	2

Views of parents and carers

The level of response to the questionnaires was above average for nursery schools. The vast majority of parents and carers are pleased with all the nursery does for their children. They all agree their children enjoy nursery and justifiably are unanimous in believing their children are safe. The most disagreement, even though small, is with the information parents and carers receive about their children’s progress and how they can help their children’s learning. This issue was fully investigated. On the evidence available inspectors judge that information provided to parents and carers is good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Harry Roberts 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 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 100 children registered at the school, with only 62 currently on roll as the autumn term arrivals settle in.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	77	10	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	80	9	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	25	57	14	32	4	9	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	64	16	36	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	29	66	15	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	22	50	19	43	3	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	68	11	25	3	7	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)	25	57	13	30	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	27	61	16	36	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	52	18	41	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	66	10	23	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	68	13	30	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	32	73	12	27	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



16 September 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Harry Roberts Nursery School, London E1 4PZ

We really enjoyed meeting you all when we visited your nursery. We particularly enjoyed listening to the lovely stories that your teachers read to you. You certainly have great fun outside too and it was good to see you digging up your potatoes and counting them.

Harry Roberts Nursery is a good school because you have good teachers who organise the nursery well. We are not surprised that you all love going to it. We are pleased to see that you all learn well. Remember to attend nursery as often as possible because it prepares you well for going on to primary school.

These are the things that make your nursery so good. You:

- make good progress in your learning
- behave well
- have a go at things on your own
- know how to keep yourselves healthy by eating plenty of fruit and taking exercise
- look after yourselves to keep safe and sound
- help to clear up and do jobs around the nursery
- have exciting things to do (like playing with water, dressing up, riding scooters and trikes, going on trips out of nursery)
- are well looked after by the adults.

To make your nursery even better we have asked your teachers to give clear and simple instructions to help those of you who need special support with learning so you make just as good progress as other children. We have also asked governors to come and visit you as much as possible to see how well you learn.

Yours sincerely

Sarah McDermott
Lead inspector

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