

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100554
LEA Lambeth LEA
Inspection number 276328
Inspection dates 15 November 2005 to 16 November 2005
Reporting inspector Sean O'Toole AI

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

Type of school Nursery
School category Community
Age range of pupils 3 to 5
Gender of pupils Mixed
Number on roll 124
Appropriate authority The governing body
Date of previous inspection 14 June 2000
School address 66 Upper Tulse Hill
Brixton
London
SW2 2RW
Telephone number 02086742186
Fax number 02086748838
Chair of governors Yinka Vogel
Headteacher Mrs Sue Donovan

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Holmewood is located in an area of substantial deprivation, where nearly four out of ten children are eligible for free school meals. Black British, African or Caribbean children make up half of the school's numbers and about a third come from other minority ethnic backgrounds. Six come from families who are seeking asylum or refugee status. Fourteen are at an early stage of learning English; their main languages are Spanish, Twi and Cantonese. Children start nursery following their third birthday. Most have low levels of attainment especially in speech and language. About a fifth have learning difficulties or disabilities and one has a statement of

special educational need. The school works closely with Sure Start and has a history of providing family support. It is soon to be designated as a Children's Centre.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Satisfactory

Grade 4 Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

The school provides high quality education which includes an excellent focus on identifying and meeting the needs of every child. There are exceptionally high standards of care. Parents have very positive views of the school. As one said of her children: 'Their experiences have enriched their lives in a warm, caring...and fantastic way.' Children thrive because of the outstanding teaching and the often magical and vibrant curriculum. Most start school with limited skills, especially in language, but the staff compensate for this by identifying exactly what each child needs. Detailed and accurate assessments enable staff to plan challenging work which meets the needs of children of all abilities and backgrounds. Boys and girls achieve very well. By the time they leave the school almost all are working at levels which are appropriate for their age and about a fifth are in advance of the expectations for their age. Progress is rapid and consistent throughout the school. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities make very good progress. Those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with little English also make substantial gains in their learning. Underpinning the school's work are excellent leadership and management, a vibrant sense of purpose, and a shared commitment and belief that every child matters. The school believes itself to be good; it is, in fact, outstanding. Staff have built upon the significant strengths celebrated in the previous inspection report and have the capacity to improve further. The school provides very good value for money.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

The priorities of the school's improvement plan provide a comprehensive framework for sustaining high performance.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards Achievement is very good. Reliable tracking of children's progress and focused teaching ensure that every individual achieves challenging targets. Boys and girls make equally rapid progress. They are especially successful in personal, social and emotional development and develop the ability to work well with others, often negotiating and managing their own learning. By the end of their time in the nursery most children have personal qualities which are beyond those expected for their age. Children make very good progress in

communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Boys' writing has improved greatly and they respond enthusiastically to opportunities such as 'booking in' their wheeled vehicles for an MOT. The children thrive in this exciting and stimulating environment, and by the time they move on to other schools they are working at appropriate levels for their age with a significant number exceeding the expected goals. The children achieve very well in finding out about the wider world and in physical and creative play. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities blossom. Individual programmes of work, and excellent use of Makaton (sign language) to aid understanding, enhance learning. Parental involvement in this work is especially commendable. Because of the staff's flexibility and know-how those with behavioural problems are fully integrated and make very good gains in their learning. First rate support is given to those at an early stage of learning English. The staff value children from all backgrounds and their upbeat approach to celebrating different languages fosters confidence and competence in children and their parents in improving their English.

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being

The children make remarkable gains in their personal qualities and quickly adjust to working and playing alongside others. They are lively, confident, friendly and helpful. The youngsters behave very well and love coming to school. They make excellent relationships with other children, and trust and respect adults working with them. Enthusiasm bubbles over. One parent wrote, '... he loves to learn and explores his world with confidence.' Children make massive strides in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Opportunities to learn new languages eat different foods, share stories and celebrations from around the world, enhance the children's development. In an exceptionally good session the children sang tunelessly and with gusto, songs from around the world, delighting in new sounds and words and delighting in what they had learned. Most attend regularly and punctually; attendance is satisfactory. The children work well together and on their own, maintaining high levels of concentration. They are prepared very effectively for the next stage of their education, being equipped with good basic skills in literacy and numeracy. They also enjoy the rich curriculum and involvement of their parents in their learning. Children work safely, and are good at selecting and clearing away resources. They enjoy healthy foods and exercise. Lunchtime is a delightful and special occasion when children learn to share and mix, as well as take responsibility.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Children are encouraged to become independent and focused learners and this is a key factor in their rapid progress. The staff recognise that children learn in different ways and plan meticulously to meet individual needs. Planning is linked exceptionally well to assessment. Staff use the information from observations to pinpoint each child's progress and painstakingly identify the next steps in learning. This is especially the case

for those with learning difficulties. Involvement of parents in learning is particularly effective. The information given to parents about how to help their children and the exceptional use of homework contribute to the children's success. Adults speak clearly and model language effectively. Those at an early stage of learning English benefit from highly skilled teaching and opportunities to use a rich variety of resources. Well matched and challenging work brings relevance and enjoyment to learning. Teaching in the outdoor area is highly effective as are role-play and drama in developing speaking and listening skills to promote early reading and writing skills. In an excellent session, set in an imaginary woodland, the teacher extended the children's ideas and vocabulary very well. She skillfully moved learning on through questions and, by introducing new materials and ideas, the children stayed focused for an extended period.

Grade: 1

Curriculum and other activities

The children find the curriculum thrilling and stimulating. It promotes learning and personal, social and emotional development exceptionally well. Highly effective planning makes learning meaningful and relevant for children of all abilities and backgrounds. The curriculum is enriched by outstanding opportunities for visits and visitors from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. Celebrations of Black history involve parents and the community in contributing to the children's understanding. Staff make excellent links between the areas of learning. They ensure that the indoor and outdoor environments support and extend children's spontaneous play and language development. Links with the community are excellent and vulnerable children benefit substantially from the school's involvement in a transition project. The school is highly inclusive and meets the needs of those with learning difficulties and disabilities with great skill. Those who are just learning English benefit from intensive support and encouragement.

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support

The school's primary focus on the health and well being of children underpins every aspect of its work. Parents justifiably lavish praise on the school for the exceptional way it cares for individuals. Child protection procedures are robust and widely understood. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure. Very good provision is made for pupils with specific medical or personal needs. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are effective and conscientiously observed. The school conscientiously surveys parents' and children's views and responds very well to suggestions. Numerous successful parent groups contribute to the school's curriculum and gain much from its open and welcoming approach. Highly developed systems for assessing academic progress contribute much to the children's progress. Parents particularly appreciate the 'Affirmation Books' which include samples of work selected by the children during their time at the nursery.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

The school has been modest in judging that leadership, management and governance are good; they are outstanding. The inspirational headteacher and senior managers lead and manage the school with vision and flair leading to consistency in all aspects of its work. There is an outstanding ethos that embraces inclusion and celebrates the children's academic and social achievement. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good and the school is in a strong position to build upon the high quality it provides. The effective process of self evaluation involves governors, staff and parents. There is no complacency and the staff rise to new challenges. This is reflected in the good school improvement plan which provides an effective blueprint for the way ahead. The headteacher, senior staff and governors monitor teaching regularly. All who work at the school are ambitious for the children's success and willingly adopt and adapt new practices which enhance learning. This has brought a sharper edge to assessing and monitoring the children and has helped to accelerate their progress. Governors are very supportive of the school and contribute much to its development and profile in the community. They help successfully in strategic planning, monitor spending and ensure that the school makes wise and prudent decisions when choosing supplies and services. Highly skilled administrators contribute substantially to the smooth running of the school.

Grade: 1

Annex A

Inspection judgements

| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall | 16-19 |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| Overall effectiveness | | |
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 | NA |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 | NA |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage | 1 | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 | NA |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | Yes | NA |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes | NA |
| Achievement and standards | | |
| How well do learners achieve? | 1 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 1 | NA |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate

School Overall 16-19

Personal development and well-being

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 | NA |
| The attendance of learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 | NA |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 | NA |

The quality of provision

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 1 | NA |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 | NA |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 | NA |

Leadership and management

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 1 | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 | NA |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected | Yes | NA |

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy

| | |
|--|-----|
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise | Yes |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse | NA |
| Learners are educated about sexual health | NA |

The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe

| | |
|---|-----|
| Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements | Yes |
|---|-----|

| | |
|---|-----|
| Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place | Yes |
| Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism | Yes |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them | Yes |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution | |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships | Yes |
| Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community | Yes |
| The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being | |
| There is provision to promote learners' basic skills | Yes |
| Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams | Yes |
| Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form | NA |
| Education for all learners aged 14-19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy | NA |

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I really enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you for helping me to find out about it. One Mummy said, 'I would like to go to Holmewood if I was four'. So would I!

You are really good at lots of things and so are your teachers.:) Everyone gets on well together and listens carefully.:) You are good at sharing toys and work hard together.:) You are very good at learning English and other languages.:) Your teachers really care about you.:) The nursery is full of fun and excitement.:) Mrs Donovan is a brilliant headteacher.:) Mums and dads love coming to school with you.:) You are very sensible when you have lunch.

I know that you love coming to school and hope that you are always as happy.

Best Wishes

Sean O'Toole

Lead inspector

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