

Church Hill Nursery School and Children's Centre

Inspection report

Unique reference number	103028
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	376800
Inspection dates	12–13 July 2012
Lead inspector	Kath Beck

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	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline France
Headteacher	Sandra Campbell
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Kath Beck

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed approximately five hours of teaching and learning led by a total of 10 Nursery staff. During some of this time, the inspector was accompanied by the headteacher. Discussions were held with members of staff, representatives of the governing body, and parents and carers. The inspector spoke with children as they played. The responses to the on-line Parent View survey were taken into account in planning the inspection. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at samples of children's learning stories and profiles, safeguarding arrangements, records to track children's achievements, the school development plan and notes of the monitoring of the quality of provision. The responses to questionnaires from staff and 83 parents and carers were also considered.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized Nursery that provides 50 full-time equivalent places, and has the flexibility to offer five further full-time places in an emergency. Two thirds of the children come from minority ethnic backgrounds, and more than half speak English as an additional language. Most of these are at an early stage of learning English. One fifth of the children are identified as disabled or having special educational needs, mostly with behavioural, speech, language and communication difficulties. Six have a statement of special educational needs, mostly for complex needs and autism. The school has breakfast, lunchtime, teatime and holiday clubs.

Since the previous inspection, the school has moved into purpose-built accommodation, within an extensive garden. It is integrated into the children's centre. The work of this centre, and two others, is overseen by the headteacher. The Church Hill Children's Centre was inspected in February 2011 and the report is on the Ofsted website.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- Church Hill Nursery School and Children's Centre is outstanding. Skilled, knowledgeable leaders and managers, including the governing body, are ambitious for children to receive the best possible start to their independent life. The pursuit of excellence in all activities, together with the school's involvement in the children's centre, has resulted in significant improvements in provision, children's achievements and capacity to improve since the previous inspection.
- Achievement is outstanding. Children, including those new to speaking English, and those with a disability or special educational needs, rapidly acquire knowledge, skills and understanding across the areas of learning. Some count confidently up to 20 and sometimes beyond, or have begun to recognise familiar words and to write simple sentences.
- Teaching is outstanding. Through detailed observations, and close partnerships with parents, carers and specialist advisers, staff know the children, their interests and specific needs exceptionally well. They use this knowledge to implement imaginative teaching strategies, and sharply focused interventions that are matched precisely to children's individual needs. Staff interactions extend children's learning extremely well, especially in communication, language and literacy. This is not consistently the case in problem solving.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Children have excellent, enthusiastic attitudes to learning, often sustaining their involvement in activities for long periods of time. They know how to keep themselves safe, especially when playing in the garden.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Leaders and managers have sustained the high quality aspects of the school found in 2009. Staff training, leading to high level qualifications in early years work, targets set in performance management, coaching, and regular monitoring of the quality of

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teaching have led to outstanding achievements. The school garden, 'International Day', celebrations of different cultures and visits out contribute significantly to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that interactions between children and adults are of consistently high quality, especially in problem solving.

Main report**Achievement of pupils**

Children's starting points vary considerably because of the wide range of needs. Over half are below the levels of development expected for their age, and some are well below, especially in their personal and physical development and communication, language and literacy. During their time in the Nursery, children make rapid progress and the majority transfer into their Reception Year attaining the levels expected for their age or exceeding them. Their personal development is outstanding, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Children are independent, confident and considerate towards each other. Many tasks, such as hunting snails in the garden, keep them active while they are learning. Multilingual staff, signing, 'talk time' and a national initiative to develop and extend children's skills in spoken English enable children to express their ideas and become articulate.

Staff integrate early reading, writing, and counting skills into children's play. A game about going to the cinema and then to the supermarket involved children in recognising numbers to five and counting to 20 and beyond. Drawing up the shopping list created much excitement as children wrote recognisable letters to represent the items they wished to buy. Their 'learning stories' show they can also write simple phrases that clearly convey meaning. Making music, clapping rhythms, singing songs and identifying common sounds gives children a firm foundation for linking the sounds letters make (phonics). Story time captures their enthusiasm for books, which they often to choose to look at on their own or with a friend afterwards. Children who are already learning to read enjoy individual sessions to develop this skill.

Excellent provision for children with a disability and special educational needs helps them to make sustained progress. Staff work with speech and language therapists and physiotherapists to devise activities to meet needs, such as making bread to extend communication and physical skills. Advice from a special school is applied successfully by those working with children with autism. In some cases, children are beginning to talk, and one has begun to read.

These factors demonstrate that staff successfully narrow the performance gap for

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children in the school compared to others of this age nationally. Parents and carers have full confidence in the school and are extremely pleased with their children's progress and development.

The school makes excellent use of data to analyse children's overall progress. Earlier in the year, this showed that children's progress in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy, while good, was not as fast as in the other areas of learning. Staff have undertaken training, and now ask open questions to help children to think through different ideas and include counting in a wide range of activities. Progress in numeracy has risen, but not all staff make the most of opportunities that arise for children to solve problems.

Quality of teaching

Staff use their in-depth knowledge of the children, and high levels of expertise in working with this age-group, to match tasks to abilities and interests. Sharply focused assessments and daily reviews of achievements by all staff enable them to plan appropriate interventions and to develop new skills. Children's 'learning stories', which include the views of parents and carers, demonstrate their rapid progress and the engaging curriculum they enjoy. More-able children who can count are challenged individually to make tally charts to find out their friends' favourite stories, and make treasure maps. Those with a disability and special educational needs, or who speak English as an additional language, work in small groups with an adult for short periods of time to make up stories. Excellent resources help these children to acquire imaginative vocabulary and to keep safe when out in the community.

Staff help children to understand the importance of being able to read and write. During the Queen's Jubilee, they wrote to her and sent pictures, including one of her on a surfboard. The children were thrilled to receive a reply. Children learn phonics in games that they play and their interactions with adults. Simple word recognition skills are built into a range of activities such as playing in the supermarket. A visit to the local tube station led to reading the names of shops and the items they sold. These were included in the children's design for a new station. On other occasions, children enjoy short targeted sessions where they look at books.

Adults are skilled at supporting ideas that children initiate. A group of children wanted to make a den using different pieces of material that they found. They decided that the materials should be draped over a tree trunk growing at an angle to the ground. The materials were too small and had to be joined together. The children experimented with different kinds of tape, which did not stick to the materials, and clips to achieve the effect they desired. In the process, they took on the roles of 'plasterer' and 'carpet layer'. Staff leading this activity enhanced children's social skills and language development when problem solving, but this is not always the case.

Outside, staff extend learning opportunities by encouraging the children to explore the wonder of the world around them. They grow plants and vegetables in the

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nearby allotment, find insects and take time to observe them closely, and follow the trails through the forest of bamboo and trees while 'Going on a Bear Hunt'. There are many opportunities for children to run, climb, balance and slide. For some, these are challenging skills and staff support them well to enhance their physical development. On other occasions, they persevere, with help, to design and make helicopters or watches out of wood.

Parents and carers, in discussion and in their questionnaires, regard teaching as exceptional, and this is supported by evidence found during the inspection. One parent said, 'My child has developed her physical, social and academic skills because staff are knowledgeable and caring.'

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Children's behaviour makes an exceptional contribution to a safe, happy learning environment. Regardless of background or ability, they play imaginative games with their friends. Children enthusiastically recall their recent visits to an adventure park, or make up their own Olympic Games, collaboratively sharing their different ideas. Children clearly feel safe. They know how to take risks, but remain safe, when climbing trees or using playground equipment in the garden. They make up their own rules for respecting nature and remind each other about road safety. Notices in the garden say, 'Do not disturb the insects' and 'Do not cross when cars are coming'.

Staff, parents and carers responding to the questionnaires express high levels of satisfaction with children's behaviour and their safety. The school's partnership with the services at the children's centre and children's regular visit sessions before joining the Nursery enable staff to identify those with behavioural difficulties at an early stage. When these children start, partnerships with parents and carers are fully established and individual staff or strategies are already in place to support them. Children respond extremely well to the consistent positive behaviour management approaches that staff use. Consequently, they become adept at managing their behaviour so there is a bubbly, purposeful atmosphere where they can concentrate for long periods of time. One parent said, 'My child's behaviour has changed completely, for the better, since he started in the Nursery.' The school's strong promotion of respect for one another means no incidents of bullying of any type or racist behaviour have been recorded in recent years.

The breakfast, lunch and teatime clubs promote children's personal development strongly. They also contribute much to children's health, well-being and safety. Full-time places assist those whose circumstances are thought to make them especially vulnerable. The large majority of families ensure that their children attend regularly and arrive promptly.

Leadership and management

The highly ambitious vision for the school to provide high quality learning experiences is shared by leaders, managers, the governing body, staff, parents,

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carers and those involved with the children's centre. Early intervention is a key priority to ensure children make the most of their time in the Nursery. Partnerships with health professionals, specialist advisers, and other schools also contribute to the ambition and drive to help children achieve extremely well.

Senior staff and members of the governing body are skilled and very knowledgeable about the requirements for children of this age. The development of robust data systems, and their understanding of the locality, allows them to base their decisions on a deep understanding of the school's performance and children's needs. The views of parents and carers are surveyed formally and informally, and contribute to the school's overall sophisticated evaluation procedures. The governing body and senior staff are forward looking. Long-term strategic plans take into account the school's future development, national changes to provision for this age group, sustainability and its future role within the community.

Staff training in extending children's spoken language and the incorporation of numeracy into many activities has increased the rate at which children progress in these aspects of the curriculum. Coaching has raised the skills of new staff so that there is a consistent approach in managing children's behaviour. 'Learning Walks' by senior staff identify issues that can be addressed immediately to improve children's learning experiences. It is through this strategy that leaders identified inconsistencies in the way staff interact with children when they are problem solving.

Members of the governing body are very well informed about the school's work through their regular visits. They ask challenging questions about the impact of provision and monitor the budget carefully. Through their rigorous arrangements for safeguarding, children are safe. Staff undergo regular training in child protection and first aid. The regulations for the recruitment of new staff and checks for their suitability to work with children are followed meticulously.

The school has a very strong commitment to equality and diversity, through its exceptional provision for all children, but especially those with a disability and special educational needs, or new to speaking English. It works very closely with parents and carers, including making home visits, to ensure the school meets each child's individual needs. Within the highly engaging curriculum, story books and resources reflect the home backgrounds of the children. Taking trips on the train to places of interest, Carnival Day, International Day and visits by musicians from different countries contribute significantly to children's understanding of the multicultural society in which they live. These activities also enhance significantly their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Parents and carers are very proud of the Nursery. One summed up the views of the majority by saying, 'We are very lucky to live near such an excellent Nursery.'

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 July 2012

Dear Children

**Inspection of Church Hill Nursery School and Children's Centre,
Walthamstow E17 9SB**

I am writing to you, even though I know you are not able to read my letter at the moment, to let you know how much I enjoyed visiting your Nursery. A grown-up will read this to you, I am sure. During my visit, I noticed that you play very happily together, and are very kind and helpful to one another. I know that you love playing in the garden, climbing the trees safely. With all the wet weather, you found lots of snails and were fascinated by how they move, and what they looked like when you used a magnifying glass.

Your Nursery school is outstanding because:

- The grown-ups know you extremely well. They know what interests you and make learning fun as they help you to speak well, and help you to begin to write, to read and to count numbers in order.
- You are eager to get to Nursery every day because there are lots of fascinating things to do. I noticed that many of you spent a long time making things even when you found it hard to bang in the nails. Well done!
- You like to go out on visits, and learn a great deal about the celebrations and food from other countries.
- All of the people who look after you want you to learn as much as you can before you go on to the next school.

To make your Nursery even better, I have asked everyone who looks after you to help you to think about different ways in which you can solve problems when you are playing. I know you will enjoy this because you have a lot of good ideas of your own.

Yours sincerely

Kath Beck
Lead inspector

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