

Rebecca Cheetham

Nursery Education Centre

Marcus Street, Newham, London E15 3JT

Inspection dates 26– 27 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Children’s progress in communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and mathematics is not good enough. Not all staff know the best methods to help children to communicate and speak confidently.
- Teaching is not consistently good across the nursery. Staff are not planning sufficient high quality activities indoors and outdoors that help children to extend their spoken language, think critically and solve problems.
- There are not enough resources, or planned opportunities, to stimulate children’s curiosity about the world and allow them to develop their own ideas and explore them in depth.
- Counting and the recognition of numbers are not yet included in a wide range of play activities.
- Leaders, managers and governors have made important changes to improve the school in a short time. These changes need to be checked rigorously to ensure they are having the desired impact.
- Self-evaluation procedures are at an early stage of development. They do not concentrate sufficiently on the effectiveness of the school or take into account the views of all groups with an interest in the nursery.
- While the school improvement plan sets out key areas for improvement this year, priorities are imprecise and the intended impact on children’s achievements is unclear.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in expressive arts and design and literacy. They enjoy curling up with a book and writing recognisable letters.
- Teaching is mostly good when children are organised into small groups to learn the sounds letters make, or to talk about what makes them happy or sad.
- Most children behave well and care for one another. Their behaviour at lunchtime is exemplary.
- Children make friends with others from different communities. They celebrate their languages and cultural differences, and play happily together.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed approximately four hours of teaching and learning, sometimes accompanied by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and inclusion manager.
- Activities in the morning, lunchtime and in the afternoon were observed.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, members of the teaching staff, and representatives of the governing body and local authority.
- The responses of 14 parents and carers who completed the on-line survey Parent View were taken into account. The inspector spoke to a few parents when they brought their children to the nursery.
- The school's self-evaluation form, improvement plan, minutes of the meetings of the governing body, notes of the checks made on the quality of teaching, arrangements for safeguarding, teachers' planning, records of children's attendance and progress, and displays of their work were reviewed.

Inspection team

Kath Beck, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This nursery is smaller than other nurseries nationally. Twenty four children attend all day, while the rest attend either in the morning or in the afternoon.
- One third of the children are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs who are supported through Early Years Action is similar to that found in most schools nationally. The proportion of children supported through Early Years Action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is lower than that found in most schools.
- The school is part of a children's centre that is led and managed by the headteacher and governing body. There is provision for two- and three-year-olds, and care for children from 8.00am to 6.00pm, that is registered with Ofsted. These are inspected separately and their reports are on the Ofsted website.
- Since the previous inspection there have been several changes to the leadership and management of the nursery. The current headteacher was the acting headteacher from September 2011 and was appointed to the substantive post in September 2012. She is also the headteacher of Ranelagh Primary School, which is close by. The deputy headteacher in the nursery has been seconded from the same primary school for a year commencing September 2012. He has responsibility for the day-to-day running of the nursery, children's centre and registered provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching, especially in communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and mathematics to consistently good or better by ensuring all staff:
 - know the best ways to help children to communicate and speak confidently
 - plan consistently high quality activities indoors and outdoors that help children extend their vocabularies and to think critically and solve problems
 - provide children with the resources and opportunities they need to stimulate their curiosity about the world and allow them to develop their own ideas and explore them in depth
 - include counting and recognition of numbers in a wide range of child-initiated play activities.
- Ensure that leaders and managers, including the governing body:
 - implement robust self-evaluation procedures that concentrate on the effectiveness of the school and take into account the views of all groups with an interest in its success
 - refine the school development plan so that it is precise about what needs to be done, and illustrates how the improvements are expected to help children make better progress
 - check rigorously that recent changes and new ways of working are having the desired effect on improving the school and raising achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children's progress in communication and language, in mathematics and in their personal, social and emotional development is not good enough given their varied starting points.
- While some children are articulate, many speak English as an additional language or have speech and language difficulties that make it harder for them to communicate in English. Most adults model spoken English well, but generally they do not use a wide range of methods, such as picture clues or signing to help children to communicate in a variety of ways. Multilingual adults and speech therapists provide additional support and guidance.
- Data over time show that children's skills in recognising numbers and counting have been lower than expected for their age. Recent action has been taken to improve this situation. These skills are now built into activities that children enjoy with adults, but are not always included in activities they can do alone.
- The development of children's personal, social and emotional development is held back by limited opportunities for children to become curious, develop their ideas and explore them in depth. There are not sufficient activities indoors or outside that help them to think critically, solve problems and have greater confidence in their growing abilities.
- Children's understanding of the world is adequate. They were fascinated by their work about ice, where they were able to feel it and watch it melt, and are currently waiting with anticipation for the chicks to hatch from the eggs in the incubator. Children operate simple computer games well, but there are not enough activities and resources to help them think about and explore the world around them on their own.
- Children's progress in early literacy skills is good. There are many opportunities for them to enjoy making marks and write recognisable letters. Some can already write their name. Short fun activities that capture their interest help them to learn the sounds that letters make. They love to curl up on a cushion to look at a book or share stories with a grown-up.
- Opportunities to play ball games, balance, climb, and ride on a variety of wheeled toys help children to make good progress in developing their coordination and control of their movements. Snacks and lunches cooked in the nursery show children how to make high quality healthy choices in relation to food.
- Art and craft activities, singing and music contribute well to children's achievements in expressive arts and design.
- The progress of disabled children and those with special educational needs varies. For some progress is slow because their medical needs result in time away from school. Other children make steady progress in developing their skills and confidence. The nurture group offers very good support for children who are not used to social situations to learn to talk and play together well.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Typically in sessions that require improvement:
 - there are not sufficient resources for children to take part in rich challenging experiences that allow them to think things through for themselves and sustain their interest for long periods of time
 - role-play activities, and adult interactions do not do enough to extend their understanding and promote their spoken language
 - planning for activities indoors and outdoors does not cover the areas of learning consistently, or explain how children are to be involved in problem solving or in developing new vocabulary
 - there are not enough activities to fascinate children and capture their curiosity, such as looking through magnifying glasses, and make them want to find out more

- activities that children undertake alone do not always support their developing mathematical skills.
- In the good sessions staff used:
 - a range of engaging ways to help children to develop their early literacy skills and develop their understanding of their feelings
 - effective questioning to help children to speak in full sentences and express their ideas
 - games to help children learn to count and recognise numbers
 - time efficiently to maximise learning
 - children’s own ideas to extend their learning, such as how to make cake for the chicks to eat when they hatched.
- To ensure that all pupils have an equal chance to succeed, disabled children, those with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language are involved fully in all the sessions. In some cases they receive one-to-one support so that their needs can be met.
- Home visits, frequent assessments, and a review of each child’s progress every week give the key workers a clear idea of what their children know and can do. This information is used to track children’s progress and also to plan specific activities for individuals to take their learning forward.
- All staff promote a happy learning atmosphere where children feel safe. Recent improvements to the classrooms include attractive displays of children’s work that value their efforts. Relationships are warm and supportive. Children are happy to move independently between the different rooms to take part in a range of activities.
- Children enjoy taking books home to share with their families, especially to see if they can recognise any of the sounds and letters that they have been learning about in school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- At lunchtime children’s behaviour is exemplary. They sit at tables with their friends and adults and demonstrate excellent manners. When they have completed their meal, they take responsibility for clearing away their plates and those of the grown-ups.
- In small group sessions children listen carefully to their teacher and to one another, knowing how to take turns. They are taught to be kind to one another, and those who find it hard to behave are managed well.
- When adults play with them, children become enthusiastic and keen to learn. During the inspection they became really excited about finding the ten eggs that had been hidden for them to find, and asked to play the game again. At other times, there are not enough resources or activities to capture their enthusiasm. Consequently, they lose interest and say they have nothing to do.
- Staff, governors and parents say that children typically behave well. No child has been stopped from going to the nursery because they have been unkind to others. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Attendance is broadly similar to that found in most nursery schools. A small number of parents do not always bring their child to nursery in time for the start of the session, especially in the morning. The school is considering ways to overcome this as it hinders the progress of the children concerned.
- Children are kept safe and know how to use scissors, and other small tools sensibly. They know they must walk around the nursery calmly in case they bump into and hurt one of their friends.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have brought about stability and confidence to the

leadership of the nursery. Short-term decisions are carefully considered and made in the best interests of the children. Self-evaluation procedures are at an early stage. They do not focus on the effectiveness of the school or yet take into account the views of a range of interested groups fully. The school development plan is not precise enough about the improvement priorities and how actions will be checked for their effectiveness.

- New leadership and management procedures have been implemented. A new data system to track children's progress and their achievements is used effectively to identify the areas of learning where progress is not as good as it should be. It also draws attention to the children who are falling behind. The system is used to hold staff accountable for the progress of the children in their care.
- Qualified staff who also have leadership responsibilities are undergoing training to improve their skills and support the drive for improvement more effectively. Some know well how to develop children's ability to communicate confidently, but their expertise has yet to be shared with their colleagues.
- All staff have been appraised recently and their targets are based on children's progress. Staff training on the effective teaching of the sounds letters make has brought about an improvement to the quality of teaching and children's progress in literacy. Other checks on the quality of teaching identify clear strengths that staff can build on to help children make better progress. Checks too often concentrate on the interaction between the adults and children rather than on what the children are learning.
- The curriculum is not consistently lively and interesting enough indoors and outdoors to allow children to make the best progress across all the areas of learning.
- Opportunities for children to talk about their feelings, take part in activities based on the work of famous artists, and observe chicks hatching from their eggs promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The school's commitment to equality and diversity is strong. The home languages and faiths of the children are celebrated. Workshops and information for parents are helping them to understand how their children learn to read, recognise numbers and count, and how they can help them at home. The recently introduced 'Stay and say' sessions are beginning to give senior leaders an understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development from the parents' points of view.
- Through its children's centre the school helps parents to gain professional advice, such as that provided by speech therapists. These professionals work in partnership to help children overcome the barriers to their learning.
- Close links with Ranelagh Primary School are helping to improve the resources in the nursery. A recent joint bid for a grant for new computer resources including 'computer tablets' has been successful.
- The local authority has challenged and supported the nursery over a sustained period. It now has full confidence in the school and has reduced its level of support to 'light touch'.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors, appointed after the previous inspection, have worked assiduously with the local authority to bring continuity to the leadership and management of the nursery and to reduce a significant budget deficit. A substantive headteacher has been appointed and this year the budget has a small surplus. All are aware that the high budget deficit has impacted negatively on the resources available to the children. Governors have undergone training to enable them to monitor the budget rigorously according to new regulations. They are optimistic about the future success of the nursery and determined to do the best for the children. Together with the headteacher, they have ensured that staff working hours have been clarified and are providing greater continuity in the level of support available. Through robust performance management procedures this year challenging targets have been set, and links between pay and children's achievements established. In order to challenge and support the school fully the governors have asked the headteacher to maintain and report on a self-evaluation summary that focuses on the effectiveness of the school itself, independent of the children's centre and registered day care. This is to ensure that the school improvement plan and the performance

management targets set for staff directly relate to improving children's progress. Visits by governors have given them good insight into the quality of teaching and recent improvements to the learning environment. They are fully aware of the many changes introduced by the new senior leaders, but have yet to check them for their impact on children's progress.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	102702
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	404835

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– 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christian Moon
Headteacher	Angela Tapscott
Date of previous school inspection	8– 9 March 2011
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