

# Maxilla Nursery School

4 Maxilla Walk, off Kingsdown Close, London, W10 6NQ

## Inspection dates

9–10 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- Children, their parents and staff think very highly of this happy, supportive nursery school. It is at the hub of the local community.
- Children make outstanding progress in their learning, whether they attend for three, four or five terms. Their achievement is outstanding.
- The quality of the teaching is outstanding. Adults know the needs and aptitudes of each child, and no opportunity is missed to provide activities suited to their needs and abilities.
- The school promotes the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well, so that the children approach their learning with excitement and wonder.
- Behaviour is outstanding. The children are eager to learn and get on extremely well with one another. Adults patiently teach them to compromise and to take the feelings of others into account.
- The exciting outdoor areas are used to their full potential, to help the children use their physical skills and to explore the natural world around them.
- The school keeps the children extremely safe, while allowing them to take safely managed risks to explore their environment.
- The strong focus on reading and story-telling gives the children an excellent start in learning literacy.
- Children with a range of additional needs are catered for extremely well through highly effective partnerships with external agencies.
- Leadership is outstanding. Leaders and governors work in highly effective partnership to ensure that the teaching is of the highest quality. There is a clear link between the pay teachers receive and the progress made by the children.
- Leaders, managers and middle leaders work together highly effectively to ensure that the systems for checking how well the children do in their learning are highly organised and understood by all the adults.
- Governors know the school well and play a full part in its success. They hold the school to account, and to take the initiative in improving it, for example in raising attendance.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed the work of the nursery jointly with the headteacher, looking at the children's learning in the indoor and outdoor play areas. She also observed the children eating lunch, tidying up, and undergoing focused language support. She also attended an assembly.
- Meetings were held with the senior teacher, the manager in charge of special needs, a representative of the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body and the chair of the curriculum committee. The inspector took account of the views of staff in 15 questionnaires.
- There were seven responses to Parent View, the online survey of the views of parents, too few for conclusions to be drawn. The inspector spoke to a number of parents during the inspection and took account of parents' views in 29 paper questionnaires submitted during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including: the school's own views of how well it is doing; its plans for the future; information on the children's attainment and progress; safeguarding information; and minutes of meetings of the governing body.

## Inspection team

Natalia Power, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Maxilla Nursery School is part of a children's centre on site, which is subject to separate inspection. A breakfast club that meets on site is run by an outside organisation and is also subject to separate inspection.
- The majority of children attend full time, while others attend for part of the week. Children start school in the term after they turn three, and remain at the school for three, four or five terms, depending on their age on starting. Turnover among children and staff is very low.
- The school is federated with a nearby nursery school. Staffing and leadership are separate, but there is a single governing body.
- Around half of the children attending the nursery school are entitled to free school meals.
- A large proportion of children come from a wide range of heritages, and over one third of children speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of children supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. These needs include speech and language difficulties, and the school works with a range of agencies, such as speech therapists, in order to meet these needs.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that every adult always encourages the children to speak as much as they can, to give them as much practice as possible in speaking fluently.

## Inspection judgements

### **The achievement of pupils** is outstanding

- Children start school with language, number and social skills which vary considerably, but which are often well below the levels typical of children of their age. They make outstanding progress in their learning and, by the time they leave Maxilla, they have usually caught up with others of their age and are ready for the next stage of their schooling.
- The strong focus on promoting the children's language skills pays dividends in helping them to express themselves fluently. For example, children were encouraged to tell a story through drawing on large sheets of paper. The teacher helped them by explaining her own story as she drew. The task enabled the children to organise their thoughts and put them into words.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Children are patiently taught how to turn the pages in a book and how to read from left to right by following the words with their fingers. They have plenty of opportunities to exercise their arms and to make marks on paper. Such activities prepare them extremely well for learning to read and write.
- Number skills are also developed extremely well, for example in such activities as buying and selling vegetables from a scaled-down market stall.
- The most able children have plenty of chances to develop their skills. In assembly, for example, children celebrated the skills of others, and one boy spoke confidently to the whole school, saying, 'I want to be a fireman because I like helping people. I am very good and I am like a father to my little brother.'
- Children with a range of additional needs do exceptionally well in their learning. Some children have not yet received a formal diagnosis of their particular needs. However, the school quickly identifies the kind of help they require to make similar progress to all other children, and works closely with the parents and with outside agencies to ensure that they receive it. The speech therapist, for example, not only provides support herself but also trains the adults to provide support tailored to individual children's needs.
- Children with severe delay in learning make exceptional progress through structured programmes that develop their physical skills as well as their learning skills.
- Children for whom English is an additional language make extremely fast progress. The school quickly assesses their needs, ensuring that difficulties in speaking English do not mask any other difficulties they may have. Tailored programmes are put in place, based on the children's individual needs, and these are highly effective in promoting outstanding learning.
- The school's provision for children of all abilities and with a range of additional needs demonstrates its commitment towards equality of opportunity. Expectations of what each child is capable of achieving are high, ensuring that there is no discrimination.

### **The quality of teaching** is outstanding

- Children make rapid progress in their learning because the teaching they receive is of the highest quality. Adults understand that children learn best through doing, rather than through being told. Through careful planning, targeted at the children's individual needs, they provide every opportunity for children to learn a huge range of skills.
- Just occasionally, adults tend to put words into children's mouths, instead of letting them find their own words. This is because they are so keen to help the children, rather than letting them talk at their own pace.
- All activities promote learning exceptionally well. For example, children learn the science of colours, by looking at objects reflected in a mirror through translucent panels in primary colours.
- Boys learn as well as girls, because the activities appeal to their interests. For example, boys enjoyed making aeroplanes out of pieces of wood, using real tools and nails, and painting them carefully. They were able to give a full account of what they were doing in vivid language, because they were so excited by the task. One boy said, 'I made a Tiger plane. I banged it with

two bangs.’

- Children learn physical skills exceptionally well. While the school does not receive the additional sports funding for primary schools, children benefit from football coaching from a visiting sports coach, and he provides them with a valuable male role model, too. They use the outdoor play areas exceptionally well. For example, they climb slopes and trees in the garden, where it is safe for them to do so, and have exciting opportunities to build pathways of wooden blocks and balance along them.
- Teachers develop the children’s love of language through songs, rhymes and story-telling. They listened enthralled to a story that was expertly narrated and acted out by the teacher. Such an appeal to their imagination makes a strong contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- The children’s behaviour is outstanding. They are eager to learn. Their love of school is reflected in their attendance, which is high for a school in the non-compulsory sector.
- Children get on exceptionally well with one another. A wonderful example of this was when a group of children cooperated in building a long railway line and shared their perception of it as ‘the central line’. Pairs of children sit together peacefully at the computer, working on the same program. With children this young there are, of course, occasional tiffs and tears. However, adults sort things out peacefully, encouraging - children to see things from others’ point of view, not just their own. As a result, there is a harmonious ethos in the school, and school records show there is no bullying or name-calling.
- The school’s work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding. For example, the adults always insist that children use safety goggles when using tools, and ensure that they are well supervised at all times. Children feel safe and ready to explore, secure in the knowledge that the adults manage any small risk exceptionally well. This makes them confident to explore the large outdoor spaces and to test their bodies in climbing and balancing. Parents confirm in their wholly positive responses to the parent questionnaire that they are confident the school keeps their children safe.
- The school promotes the children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. For example, children develop a sense of wonder and awe when planting vegetables and eating the produce. The inspector noted the concentration on the faces of the children as they learned about seed potatoes and how they grow, and then carefully planted them in the vegetable bed.
- No opportunity is lost to instil good manners in the children. It was impressive to see children sitting at family-type tables for lunch, learning to use knives and forks and passing the food round the table. The adults encouraged them to say ‘please’ and ‘thank you’, and to ask for what they wanted in complete sentences.
- At the end of the day children take responsibility for tidying up, and then join in cooperative play. For instance, some shared in holding up a large cloth resembling a parachute, so that others could run under it. Such activities encourage children to take turns and to think of the needs of others.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- Leadership is outstanding because of the clear direction given by the headteacher, ably supported by her middle leaders. Working closely with the governors, they have created an ethos where children learn extremely well and behave exceptionally well.
- Leaders make sure that the children have work tailored to their needs, and that their progress is regularly checked.
- Leaders, middle leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and where they would like it to be in the future. The school has successfully met the

recommendations of the previous inspection. Planning is now much sharper and more tightly focused on the children's learning. The children have many more opportunities to choose their own activities. As a result of such actions, the school is extremely well placed to sustain its improvement.

- A strength of leadership is its management of how well the teachers are performing. Leaders and governors check the work of the adults for themselves, and their focus is relentlessly on how the children are learning and how this can be made even better. As a result, the quality of teaching and of children's learning is second to none.
- School leaders have successfully created a strong and stable team, and this is clear from the almost wholly positive staff questionnaires. One parent commented, 'The staff look after the children well because they are happy themselves.'
- The local authority knows the school well and provides light-touch support where necessary.
- Links between school and home are exceptionally well managed by school leaders. Parents and carers report that they feel supported as well as the children. Parents and carers also told the inspector that they know what their children are doing day by day and how much progress they are making. Their love of the school is reflected in their wholly positive responses to the questionnaire. Most parents took the opportunity to add comments explaining why they think so highly of the school.
- The curriculum provides activities for the children which prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage of schooling, not just in terms of their basic skills, such as literacy and numeracy, but in learning about the world around them. In one such activity, for example, children were first carefully introduced to the meaning of 'mini-beasts' and then, amid much excitement, were taken into 'the secret garden' to look for insects and other small creatures. They joined in the hunt with enthusiasm and were able to identify a centipede by comparing it to pictures. This activity stimulated the children's language, and one said, 'Oh, so what I saw under the log was an insect.' Another child said, 'It's long, it's got legs.'
- When the time comes for the children to move on, transition arrangements are outstanding. The school's records for each child go to their next school. The children visit their new school with the adult they are most familiar with, taking their learning books with them. After half a term they are invited back for a party and their parents are asked to consider how well Maxilla prepared them for the next stage. It comes as no surprise that many parents comment, in the words of one, 'They always remember their time at Maxilla and want to come back.'
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors know the school very well. They take an active interest, visiting the school and helping out with the children wherever possible. They have an excellent understanding of the children's achievement, and use this understanding to ask searching questions in order to hold the school to account. Governors play an active part in school improvement. For example, the improvement in children's attendance is due in no small part to their initiative in setting out for parents their responsibility to get their children to school regularly and on time. Governors have an excellent knowledge of the quality of teaching. They have an accurate understanding of the link between teachers' pay and the progress made by children, and this ensures excellent value for money. Governors are very well trained and highly knowledgeable about safeguarding issues and safe recruitment. They carry out their statutory obligation to keep the children safe and to ensure equality of opportunity for all extremely effectively.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100475
<b>Local authority</b>	Kensington and Chelsea
<b>Inspection number</b>	430828

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	55
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Deborah Walker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christine Barton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8960 3981
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