

Martenscroft Nursery School & Sure Start Children's Centre

33 Epping Street, Boundry Lane, Hulme, Manchester, Greater Manchester, M15 6PA

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
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 at Martenscroft have a wonderful start to their education because teaching is excellent.
- A dedicated and highly skilled team of teachers, early years practitioners, local musicians, artists and museum staff work very closely together to provide exciting learning experiences. As a result children want to learn and they are achieving highly.
- The headteacher has high expectations of all staff. She has a deep understanding of young children and how to ensure that they are taught very well. She shares this very successfully with teachers and early years practitioners.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very skilfully to ensure that the school keeps getting better and better. The school is now well-placed to support other schools and early years settings to improve.
- Staff from across the whole site work together very confidently as one team. They love being part of Martenscroft. Children's behaviour is excellent and great attention is paid to making sure that all children are safe. Children, staff and families respect one another.
- This is a school that places great importance upon listening to children, and observing and supporting their learning very closely. The school makes very sure that children are ready for their future lives.
- Children's writing and drawing are valued immensely in beautiful displays throughout the school.
- Parents praise the school very highly. They value the many opportunities to become informed and involved in their children's learning. Consequently, the school is much respected in the local community.
- The work of the governing body has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Members are having a big impact upon helping the school to keep being excellent. They have the knowledge and skills to be able to help governing bodies at other schools to improve.
- Leaders make full use of information about children's achievement to set the right priorities for the school. They support all staff very well, including giving staff first-rate opportunities to attend training. However, some objectives that leaders set for the school are not measurable enough to be certain that even more could not be achieved.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning and teaching in four nursery sessions and spoke to children. Some teaching was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with six members of the governing body, a range of staff, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents, including school records, of the quality of teaching, records of teacher targets, data about children's progress, self-evaluation and the school development plans.
- The inspector spoke to some parents and carers and considered 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own annual survey of parents in 2014.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Martenscroft is an average-sized maintained nursery school.
- The school brings together early years education and care with support for families on one site. The school's headteacher and governing body are also responsible for an early years setting, and for a children's centre (designated August 2003). Neither of these were part of the school inspection. Their reports can be found on the Ofsted website.
- The school was designated as an Early Excellence Centre in 1999. It was one of the Early Years Teaching Centres funded by the Department for Education between 2011 and 2013. The school is now part of a 'Being Two' project funded by the Department for Education. This involves the school in training and supporting early years workers in other settings who are working with funded two-year-olds.
- The school has recently taken up a place on the board of the Manchester School Alliance Teaching School.
- The headteacher is new since the previous inspection.
- Approximately three-quarters of children in the school are from a range of minority ethnic groups. More than half of the children speak English as an additional language.
- There was one child at the time of the inspection that had an identified disability. The proportion of children who receive extra help from school staff because they have been identified as having special educational needs (school action) is above average. The proportion that is supported by external specialists because of their needs (school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs) is above average.
- The school has three specially resourced places for children with special educational needs. Children have a range of learning difficulties. All are included in the classes with other children.
- As this is a nursery school, there is no pupil premium funding or sports premium funding from the government. No child is educated off-site in alternative provision.
- The school has achieved the Eco Schools status (Bronze Award).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain excellence across the work of the school by ensuring that objectives for improvement are measurable wherever possible.
- Share the expertise of the staff team and governing body by developing more opportunities for them to support improvement at other schools and early years providers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children at Martenscroft begin school with skills and knowledge that are significantly less than typical for their age. Many children show weaknesses across the areas of learning, most significantly in mathematics and their understanding of the world. The headteacher ensures that all staff know the achievement of their individual children, and different groups. She checks that teachers and early years practitioners make full use of this information when planning their teaching. As a consequence, children make outstanding progress at the school. Groups of children, such as those who are eligible for free school meals, develop their knowledge and skills very well. The more able children make rapid progress in their learning because staff adapt activities skilfully to give them the extra challenge needed.
- Staff focus their support very closely upon how much children are free of emotional upset, able to be spontaneous and feel at ease. As a result all children grow a lot in their confidence during their time at Martenscroft, and they want to learn. This work is helped greatly by staff working to the school's mission statement, expressed partly as, 'Everyone is given the opportunity to express their individuality.'
- Excellent support for speaking and listening and for children's personal, social and emotional development underpins the outstanding progress children make in their reading and talking skills. Learning through stories, rhymes and conversation are at the heart of every day at nursery, and the children love books and learning new sounds and words. All children benefit much from this approach, including children who speak English as an additional language.
- Children who have special educational needs make similar progress to other children in the school because staff get to know their needs well, and use this when planning teaching. Children with special educational needs who have a specially resourced place at the school make good and sometimes outstanding progress. This is because they are given skilful individual support as well as extensive opportunities to be part of the wider group.
- The school promotes equality very well through discussion, stories, festivals, books, photographs, music and artefacts. For example, positive books about disability, and about different faiths, are included in the corridor book areas for children. Print in a range of languages is displayed well on the walls and in books for children. As a result children from minority ethnic groups make great progress in their learning during their time at the school.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Children attending Martenscroft gain the very best start to their education because the quality of teaching is excellent. Some children may spend less than one year at the school. However, in a short space of time, children are taught many important skills and gain much new knowledge. As a consequence, they are prepared for further learning at primary school and beyond.
- Teachers and early years practitioners observe, record and use their understanding of children's development very skilfully to plan the next steps for children. Much thought is given to the planning of teaching, including how to question children to extend their understanding. Staff ensure that activities are meaningful and relevant to children's interests and fascinations. This makes it easy for children to become absorbed in lessons each day and helps them to take big steps forward in their learning.
- Children know that their thoughts, ideas and creations are valued very highly. Staff are genuinely interested in what children think, do and understand. This is shown by the very high quality of displays of children's writing and drawing across the school. It is also shown in the high-quality documents published by the school, and in video clips such as on the school's website.
- Under the leadership of the headteacher, outstanding teaching in the school has strengthened even more since the previous inspection. The planned experiences and activities for children are among some of the very best that you would want for young children. For example, children

were observed by the inspector at a weekly music session with two musicians from the Royal Northern College of Music. Before arriving at the lesson, children brimmed with enthusiasm as they remembered the joy of previous experiences. Within the lesson, children were totally engaged in listening, experimenting how to make music and learning new language. Children were thrilled by the experience and behaved exceptionally well. The more able children and those with special educational needs made great progress in their learning. There is no better word to describe the lesson than 'magical'.

- Children's mathematical skills and knowledge improve hugely during their time in the school. This is because the teaching of mathematics is playful and linked extensively with musical activities, stories, and exploration of real places and objects. For example, children participated in a recent project with professional artists exploring St Anne's Square in Manchester city centre. The project included many opportunities to use mathematical language as they explored and were challenged to think. They learned about the size, shape and scale of the city square and its architecture.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- All adults work very well to help children learn self-control, be confident and to understand school routines and expectations. Children relate very positively to their key person from the staff team and feel part of their special group at daily group times.
- Children within the school are very happy and at ease. Many of them spoke to the inspector with confidence and one even asked, 'What language do you speak to your mum?'
- The headteacher places a key emphasis upon prompt and regular attendance by children at school as important preparation for future life. Children arrive at school punctually. Absences are followed up carefully with families. Consequently, attendance has improved steadily since the previous inspection and is now good.
- The whole school site is clean, tidy, comfortable and attractive. Children show great respect for this and look after their school with great care. The nursery is impressively calm; with children and staff deeply involved in play and learning together. All staff model thoughtful behaviour very well. Children from different backgrounds respect one another and mix successfully. There are no records of bullying, racism or exclusions at the school. The behaviour of all children is outstanding.
- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding. There is excellent access to training and team discussions to ensure that staff know how to support families and protect children from harm. All parts of the site checked by the inspector were very safe. The challenges presented for children to learn how to manage risks are excellent. For example, children have many opportunities to climb and balance outdoors, which enables their physical development to improve hugely. Adult supervision and guidance during lessons is excellent. Children are helped to have the confidence to 'have a go', as well as to consider, 'Is this safe?'

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is knowledgeable about child development and high-quality teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most importantly, she shares this clearly and successfully with staff. Her vision is shown by her comment to the inspector, 'It excites and motivates me when we see children and adults do well.' The headteacher has a deep passion for art, music, and working in partnership with other organisations. This means that children get an excellent range of opportunities to learn and develop at Martenscroft.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have made an outstanding school better still. They give staff excellent support and access to training opportunities. The school is now at a point whereby it could share its expertise much more with other schools and early years providers.
- Middle leaders in the school have a good overview of their areas of responsibility. This is because they are being given time and opportunities to undertake their roles and clear support

as required. The headteacher holds them to account very clearly for their work to improve the areas of learning for children across the school.

- During the inspection, parents keenly sought out the inspector to tell him how wonderful Martenscroft is. They said that the school is very much respected in the local area. All parents value the many opportunities that they have to hear about their children's time at school, as well as learning how to better support them at home.
- The school is given light touch support from the local authority because of the outstanding outcome of two previous school inspections, and the expertise of the headteacher. Given the high ambitions of the school to keep on improving, the headteacher and members of the governing body have benefitted from the additional support that they have asked for.
- The whole staff team across the site work very well together. They have high morale and absolute confidence in the school's leaders. Staff are proud to be part of Martenscroft. They told the inspector that their training and the way in which their performance is managed, is inspiring and challenging them to do better. The impact of this is very evident in the constantly improving quality of teaching and children's learning. Information about children's achievement is checked and used very carefully by leaders to ensure that they set the right priorities for the school. However, some of the school's objectives for improvement are not measurable enough to demonstrate that even more could not be achieved.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - From being the only recommendation for improvement made at the previous inspection, governance is now a strength of the school. Members of the governing body have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching because they participate in shared observations of the school with leaders. They meet staff and the headteacher regularly to discuss aspects of teaching and learning.
 - Members of the governing body know the data about children's achievement in detail. They have a clear understanding of how this is used in the school. They know what is done to reward staff, and how the headteacher tackles any work that needs to be improved. As a consequence, the governing body is bringing a significant benefit to the improvement of the school. Members of the governing body have the skills and knowledge to help other nursery schools to improve their own governance.

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	105384
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	439935

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Metcalfe
Headteacher	Liz Hardy
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2011
Telephone number	0161 2261266
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