

Ethelred Nursery School and Children's Centre

10 Lollard Street, London, SE11 6UP

Inspection dates

14–15 January 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Children are cared for exceptionally well. This ensures their happiness.
- Leaders and managers make sure that teaching and children's achievement maintain a high quality.
- Leaders continually look for ways of making the school even better. This pursuit of excellence has ensured that the school continues to improve.
- Governors provide exemplary support to leaders. They are fully involved in all aspects of the life of the school and make sure its excellent work continues.
- Children's behaviour is highly cooperative. Children are taught to think of others. As a result, they get on extremely well with one another.
- Such consideration for others reflects the school's extremely strong promotion of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is a safe environment. Children are kept very safe.
- Parents and carers love the school. They say it is a community that supports families as well as children.
- Adults provide a wealth of opportunities for children to learn and develop excellent skills.
- Adults give children wonderful opportunities to use their imagination.
- There are plenty of opportunities for children to learn through music and song.
- Children are prepared extremely well for moving to their new stage of schooling.
- The school takes full advantage of its location in Central London. The many trips and visits broaden the children's minds and prepare them exceptionally well for life in modern Britain.
- Children make outstanding progress in their learning, because teaching is exceptional and challenges children to think for themselves.
- All children do extremely well. No one falls behind. This is because leaders keep a watchful eye on how each child is learning and take prompt action.
- The progress of groups of children is carefully checked. As a result, those with a range of additional needs do as well as others.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector looked at the children's learning in the indoor and outdoor play areas together with the headteacher and her deputy. She also observed the children eating lunch, tidying up and taking part in a music session taken by a visiting teacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The inspector met two representatives from the local authority. She also met the Chair of the Governing Body and vice chair, and three other governors.
- The inspector took account of responses to a questionnaire from 25 members of staff.
- There were 19 responses to Parent View, the online survey of the views of parents and carers. The inspector spoke to a number of parents and carers during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents. These included the school's own views of how well it is doing and its plans for the future, and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- The inspector looked at information on the children's attainment and progress. She also examined safeguarding information, and records relating to behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Natalia Power, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ethelred is an average-sized nursery school.
- Nursery schools are not eligible for the additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils. However, over half of children are eligible for free school meals.
- Most children come from minority ethnic heritages. This proportion is higher than average. Children come from a wide range of backgrounds, with no one group predominating.
- Over half of children speak English as an additional language, and this proportion is much higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is around one in five, which is above average.
- Most children attend either in the morning or the afternoon sessions on four days a week, and stay all day on one day a week.
- The school is part of a children's centre. This is subject to separate inspection and the most recent report can be found on www.gov.uk/ofsted. The school's headteacher also manages the children's centre.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that the excellent work the school does in noting down the progress of groups of children includes the most able children. This will help the school to demonstrate the excellent progress, that these children are making.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The stable and well-established leadership team has a huge impact in making sure that children learn extremely well and behave highly cooperatively. Leaders' focus is on inclusion, so that no one feels left out. As a result, the school is a hub of the community. Leaders ensure that everyone gets along extremely well and that all children have equal chances to learn well.
- Leaders are supported extremely well by a loyal team, as the highly positive responses to the staff questionnaire show.
- The headteacher continually seeks ways of improving the school and making the children's experience better. Even though the school has been graded outstanding in each of the three previous inspections, she and the other leaders continue to make improvements. For example, they have introduced more rigorous ways of checking progress. The school notes down the progress made by the various groups in the school. This helps them to identify quickly any group at risk of falling behind.
- Such vigilance helps such groups as those who speak English as an additional language to make excellent progress. The most able pupils also make excellent progress, but their achievement is not recorded separately. This makes it harder for governors and leaders to check on how well the most able are doing.
- Children learn extremely well because the quality of teaching is high. Leaders play a vital role in ensuring its quality. They check how well the adults are helping the children to learn, and give them valuable advice. They check that the advice is followed, so that children continue to learn well.
- The local authority provides considerable advice and expertise in ensuring that the teaching is of the highest quality. It also helps leaders to share ideas and ways of working within a group of similar nursery schools in the locality.
- All the adults work together as a highly effective team. With the small number of staff, there are no middle leaders as such, but the senior teacher and the special needs coordinator, who is also the deputy headteacher, work in highly effective partnership. Planning meetings are extremely effective in ensuring that all adults know what to do to meet the needs of each child.
- The range of activities offered to children is very wide. Children learn exceptionally well because they have outstanding opportunities to learn simple science, mathematics and language skills in both the indoor and outdoor play areas.
- Music is a strength of the school. The inspector enjoyed seeing how children learned a range of skills through singing and playing percussion instruments.
- The school goes to great lengths to give the children as rich an experience of life in modern Britain as possible. Adults take full advantage of the school's central location to take them to the theatre and to art galleries. They also bring the countryside to the children, not just by encouraging them to make use of the school's own garden, but also by taking them to the local 'roots and shoots' wildlife garden.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. Leaders and governors leave no stone unturned in ensuring that children are safe. For example, even though the children are very young, leaders have given much thought to such issues as female genital mutilation. They are ready to act if they have concerns about any girl or her family.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors told the inspector they are ready to serve the school because they love it. This reflects their enthusiasm and involvement in the life of the school. They know it very well, and are clear on how well the children are doing in their learning and how much progress they are making. They check the figures with the local authority, and compare figures with other nursery schools to ensure that children at Ethelred continue to do extremely well.
 - Governors take a great interest in the teaching and activities offered to children. They regularly visit to see the work of the school for themselves. They know how well most groups of children are doing. As a result, they are able to check how groups are learning. Governors agree that it would be a good idea for the school to show separately how well the most able are doing.
 - Governors work closely with the local authority to check that the progression of staff along pay scales reflects the progress made by the children. Governors set staff clear targets they must reach to progress, and have not been afraid to tackle any underperformance. This ensures that they receive the best value for money.
 - Governors play an important part in ensuring that the school community is harmonious and that discrimination is not tolerated. The governing body reflects the diversity of the community.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is outstanding. Those from all faiths and backgrounds get on extremely well together. Their behaviour is extremely well managed. On the rare instances when a child is thoughtless, adults deal quickly and extremely effectively with the incident. For example, the inspector saw one incident where one child pushed another. The adults listened carefully to the concerns of the child who had been pushed, and then made sure that each child involved understood the point of view of the other. The incident ended with the children hugging each other.
- The outstanding behaviour reflects the excellent care the children receive at all times. In turn, the children feel pride in their school and willingly help to tidy up. The inspector was touched by seeing how a child with physical and cognitive difficulties was carefully helped to play his part in tidying up the room, which he did willingly.
- New children who have difficulty settling in to school routines are treated with great sensitivity. One crying child, upset because he had never stayed to lunch before, was quickly settled at the lunch table with a jigsaw puzzle. It was not long before he was being helped by another child. He soon cheered up.
- Children behave extremely well because they are kept very busy with the range of exciting activities on offer. They take turns on the play equipment and are ready to engage with the adults.
- Children who stay for lunch eat at tables with adults making sure that they behave well and have good manners. Children are encouraged to learn good manners, use the right cutlery and avoid speaking with their mouth full. When they finish lunch, they clear away their own plates, and this encourages independence and public-spiritedness.
- The school promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Parents and carers are regularly invited in to help the children understand and celebrate the festivals and food of different cultures. Children learn to take turns by using sand-timers to help them understand when to hand over to another child. Activities promote children's imagination highly successfully and their work displayed on the walls shows the variety of imaginative tasks they take part in.

Safety

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding. The site is safe and secure. All adults who come into contact with the children are rigorously checked.
- Leaders check that all possible risks have been carefully considered and taken into account when arranging trips or visits. Adults even receive guidance on helping children to avoid stepping in animal waste when out and about.
- School records confirm that any minor accidents are reported to parents and carers. Orderly records are kept.
- Children who have food allergies are safe at lunchtime, because the foods they are allergic to are written clearly on their place mats.
- All staff are properly trained in safeguarding procedures. A high proportion of staff have received training in paediatric first aid. Leaders and governors have undertaken recent safeguarding training, including in safer recruitment.
- Children in need of high-level support receive the highest quality care through effective links with outside agencies. These children quickly settle and make excellent progress in their learning.
- All parents and carers who spoke to the inspector or who responded to Parent View agreed that the school keeps their children safe and happy. Some told the inspector that the school looks after the whole family, not just their children.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding and leads to the children making great strides in learning new skills.
- Adults miss no opportunity to promote children's skills. For example, mathematics is promoted whenever possible. Children are encouraged to count the number of candles on 'birthday cakes' made out of playdough, or the goals scored in table football. Much of the teaching is through music. The song 'There were ten in the bed' was greatly enjoyed by the children for its own sake. The activity also helped them to count and then subtract the photographs of their classmates on a picture of the bed.
- Literacy is developed extremely well. In one particularly successful activity, the adult introduced children to the idea of syllables by getting them to bang drums according to the number of syllables in the names

of animals. This activity proved so popular that more and more children joined the group, helping them to develop an important language skill.

- Reading is treated as a particularly important activity. The high-quality books chosen for the children stimulate their imagination and develop their vocabulary.
- Adults create a fairy-tale world for the children, helping them to act out traditional stories, such as 'The gingerbread man'. In this activity, the children chose their roles with enthusiasm (the fox being a popular choice) and were transported into a different world. Such activities promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well.
- Adults encourage children to speak fluently and to explore their feelings. In one session of 'circle time', for example, children chose from pictures of faces showing different emotions and used these to explore their own feelings. One chose a sad face and said that other children had not played with him during one activity. The adult used this as a way of encouraging the children to discuss how the child could be helped in the future. Another child chose a tired face and said she was tired because of 'too much fun'.
- All the adults play an important part in observing the children and checking their learning. These observations and pictures of the children go into their 'learning journey' books. These provide a valuable record, shared between school and home, of the excellent progress made by the children.
- When the time comes for the children to move to their next school, they are prepared extremely well for the change and have acquired excellent and wide-ranging skills.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Through highly effective teaching, directed at improving the learning of each individual, children make outstanding progress in their learning.
- The adults challenge the children to learn as much for themselves as possible. For example, even in high winds, a child was determined to stay outside to find out how far his toy car had rolled down a slope. He measured the distance himself and found out that it was easier to measure if he placed the tape so the numbers went up and not down.
- Though there are no nationally agreed figures on young children's achievement, the school carefully records how well each child is doing against national descriptions of skills expected at certain stages of children's lives. Such research by the school shows that children arrive with very varied language, number and social skills. These skills are often below or even well below the levels typical of children of their age. By the time they leave, most children are achieving in line with others of the same age across the country. This represents exceptional progress.
- Children from all backgrounds and heritages do extremely well. No group falls behind.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs make excellent progress. The school acts quickly to identify their needs and to set up highly effective support that successfully meets these needs. The school draws on the skills of a range of visiting specialists, some of whom are close at hand at the children's centre.
- Children who speak English as an additional language are supported highly effectively. Adults engage them in conversation, helping them to put names to objects and giving them visual clues, such as pictures. This level of attention helps the children learn English quickly.
- The most able children make very fast progress. Teachers ask them suitably challenging questions and expect a high level of work from them.
- Children who are eligible for free school meals make extremely rapid progress in their learning. School figures for children who left in 2014 show that those eligible for free school meals did better overall than those who were not.

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	100552
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	449526

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	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susannah Wiltshire
Headteacher	Glenda King
Date of previous school inspection	21 March 2012
Telephone number	020 7582 9711
Fax number	020 7587 0711
Email address	admin@ethelred-nursery.lambeth.sch.uk

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