

Columbia Market Nursery

Columbia Road, Tower Hamlets, London, E2 7PG

Inspection dates 6 October 2015

Overall effectiveness **Outstanding**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders, including governors, are highly ambitious for the school. They have successfully secured key improvements since the previous inspection.
- Year-on-year improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have made sure that all groups of children make rapid progress.
- Teaching is outstanding because staff have a deep understanding of every child's skills, understanding and interests. They use assessment information expertly to plan exciting activities to move learning on at a fast pace.
- Both the curriculum and the school's culture of valuing and celebrating diversity contribute significantly to the promotion of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Children make excellent gains in their learning and personal development, both inside and outside the classroom. They are confident and inquisitive learners.
- Outstanding personal development, behaviour and welfare have been sustained since the previous inspection. Children quickly settle into their new school. They thrive on new challenges because adults forge strong bonds with them and their families. They feel safe, secure and valued. As a result, their behaviour is exemplary.
- The school is extremely vigilant in making sure children are kept safe. Parents have absolute trust in the school's ability to safeguard their children.
- Partnerships with parents are outstanding. The school has myriad ways to engage parents in their child's learning. Regular meetings, visits to the classrooms and diaries are used to maintain highly effective communication channels.
- Children's learning and personal development is monitored closely, so that activities build well on what they already know and can do. This provides an overview of the progress made by different groups. Nonetheless, it is not focussed sharply enough on the progress made by more-able children.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine the system for tracking the progress made by different groups, so that it is clear what progress more-able children make in order to secure high levels of attainment in literacy and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The acting executive headteacher focuses constantly on further improvements. She has garnered all evidence to swiftly identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement. She knows precisely what needs to be done next and by whom. Her high expectations and ambition for the school are shared by all staff. Both the acting headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher provide strong and clear direction. They are rapidly building on the already effective work of the school.
- The school's ethos of inclusivity and tolerance is tangible. Equality and respect are a golden thread which runs through everything the school does. The diverse community which the school serves is reflected in the many ethnic backgrounds of the children and their families. Differences are not only valued but celebrated. Major religious events, such as Eid, are community events where relationships are strengthened between families and staff.
- The acting executive headteacher has redefined all staff roles and responsibilities. Building on the effective work of middle leaders, further improvement strategies continue to raise children's achievement. Recent work on the teaching of phonics has resulted in better outcomes in children's early reading and writing skills. The recent focus on developing staff's confidence in teaching early mathematical skills is securing more opportunities for children to develop and extend their mathematical thinking and problem solving.
- Team work and relationships are exemplary. The acting executive headteacher leads by example and continually reflects on the impact of her work. This has added an extra dimension to the professional development of staff. Weekly meetings provide the forum for colleagues to reflect on their own and each other's practice. Strong practice is valued and shared. Colleagues are confident that they will have the right type and level of support when required. Whole school and individual strategies for improvement are constantly reviewed and adapted to make sure that the school continues on its rapid journey of improvement. This open and transparent culture inspires staff to achieve even more.
- Self-evaluation is based on regular checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Staff are provided with clear improvement points to improve their practice. Key priorities are identified to drive the school forward. Children's progress is rigorously checked, including that of most groups. However, more-able pupils' progress is not monitored systematically to make sure that all make the progress they are capable of in literacy and mathematics.
- Judicious teaching appointments and well-targeted training and support have resulted in a strong teaching profile which has secured year-on-year improvements in children's achievements.
- Partnership work is exceptionally strong. The school forms an effective and supportive relationship with parents. Parents are totally satisfied with what the school offers their children. They have every confidence that their child is kept safe and nurtured, and is helped to become a successful learner.
- The curriculum is relevant and exciting. Activities not only build on what children can do, but use children's own ideas and interests. This secures high levels of motivation and engagement. The quality of the curriculum is enhanced by the forest school and the large outdoor area which promotes children's language and communication and physical development and well-being exceptionally well. More recently, lengthening the time adults work with specific groups of children has enabled their learning and progress in all areas of learning to be deepened and extended.
- The curriculum, as well as developing positive relationships, promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Children are expected to make choices, and to share and collaborate with each other. They learn about the consequences of their actions and distinguish between right and wrong. They learn about democracy through discussions about the school's rules. Staff capitalise on the rich heritage of the children, and they regularly celebrate the different festivals and cultures. Schemes such as the toy library, 'stay and play', and focused topics for parents to complete at home provide a wide variety of activities to enhance children's development and progress still further.
- The governance of the school is robust. Governors are well informed about the school's work. They share the same high expectations as leaders and staff. They use their skills and experience effectively to provide the right level of challenge and support to leaders. They ask searching questions and follow up any issues routinely. Governors are determined to appoint only the highest calibre of staff, and to date have done just that. They use the expertise and knowledge of the local authority well. The local authority brokered the arrangement of the interim appointment of an outstanding headteacher of a nursery as acting executive headteacher. This has proved to be an astute move to make sure that the school

continues on its upward trajectory. Governors make sure that pay is linked to good or better performance. They know how well all groups of learners are achieving, including those children in receipt of the early years' pupil premium funding. They oversee the impact this funding has on their progress. Governors know that the gardening project designed to promote language and communication resulted in these children achieving as well as all children in the school. The governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met, particularly with regard to the safeguarding of the children.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff and governors work together to make sure that the school is a safe haven. Children are well supported and kept exceptionally safe. Policies and procedures, including safeguarding training, are all up to date and meet statutory requirements, including Prevent and e-safety training. Staff are alert to all potential dangers in order to safeguard the children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Leaders and all staff have an in-depth understanding of how to effectively promote the development of nursery children in all areas of their learning. Staff are highly competent at playing alongside children to intervene, model and deepen their learning. Through play, staff systematically promote key skills, asking questions to promote and extend children's thinking.
- This is also particularly so in developing children's speech and language skills, especially for those children who start the nursery with skills much lower than is typical for their age. This tailored support successfully helps these children to communicate effectively. Adults paraphrase children's language and introduce new words to extend their vocabulary. They use a variety of techniques to sustain their concentration, incorporating key words and concepts through singing, for example.
- Classrooms and the outdoor areas are vibrant and reinforce the children's learning effectively. They are well resourced with displays, which promote key concepts and language. Children are encouraged to be independent and display their own work.
- Early reading and writing skills are developed successfully. The school's focus on promoting children's phonics skills is paying dividends. Children confidently select books to share with each other. They enjoy retelling stories that adults have relayed to them to develop their language still further. Children delight in 'writing' their own stories and confidently make marks using a wide variety of tools both inside and outside the classroom.
- The recent focus on developing mathematical learning in as many activities as possible means that children accurately develop and reinforce their counting skills. For example, children dress up as pirates, design treasure maps and walk the plank, counting to 10 as they do so.
- Adults capitalise on every opportunity to develop children's learning. When tidying up, children are encouraged to count the beads as they put them away. They begin to understand positional language when instructed to look behind them to put away the bricks.
- The cornerstone for these exciting and enjoyable activities, where children choose what they are going to do in any of the three classrooms or outside, is meticulous planning. As well as being responsive to children's interests, adults continuously assess children's learning and progress. There is daily dialogue between all staff, to make sure that children's next steps are identified, any concerns highlighted, and that, over time, children have access to all areas of learning to promote their development. Photographs and observations are recorded and used to build up a comprehensive profile of the children's strengths, and targets for them to work on. This is shared with parents on a regular basis.
- The teaching of disabled children, and those with special needs, or who are at the early stages of learning English, is outstanding. Their needs are carefully assessed, both academically and personally. The special needs leader, who is also the acting deputy headteacher, is adept at helping staff to remove any barriers to learning. Teaching makes sure that these children achieve small but significant milestones in their learning. Personalised activities and resources for each child ensure progress at an appropriate pace for their individual stage of development. Speech and language therapists also work with the children on a one-to-one basis.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Children's happiness and well-being are top of the list of the school's priorities. Transition arrangements are excellent. Positive and strong relationships are forged prior to children starting school. Home visits and pre-school visits enable staff to gain an insight into the child's interests, abilities and needs. Those parents who are anxious or have a child with specific needs have second visits. Staff model effective play and how to interact positively with their child.
- Children quickly develop exceptionally strong relationships with their key worker, other adults and children. Children are valued as individuals. They have a voice, which enables them to become confident learners. Staff believe that the 'sky is the limit' for every child. This enables children to flourish as leaders as well as team players. Children have respect and tolerance for each other and all adults.
- All staff take the children's well-being and safety very seriously. They have all been suitably trained to make sure that the children are kept safe. They know the potential dangers that face children, and are aware of the current local and national priorities relating to extremism, radicalisation, and how to keep safe when using electronic devices.
- Children are taught to manage potential risks such as picking up coats on the floor because they could trip someone up, and to play safely outside when using spades or balancing carefully on the slide. They are helped to recognise and to tell an adult if someone is doing something to them that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Children are taught how to live healthy lifestyles. They know which food is healthy and that they need to drink water regularly, especially if it's hot outside. Children are taught how to care for living things. They carefully raise ducklings and look after their skeleton, 'Skelly', making sure he goes to bed early, singing 'Twinkle twinkle little star' to him.
- Children's mental health is also promoted very well. Children have many opportunities to explore their thoughts and feelings. They are helped to calm down, by holding a soft toy, or are sung to and rocked. Those children who need tranquillity, including disabled children and those with special educational needs, calm down and relax in the sensory room.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Adults model good behaviour and have high expectations. Children's behaviour is usually exemplary. There have been no incidents of inappropriate behaviour which merit recording. Observations show high levels of engagement and sustained periods of concentration and perseverance. When disputes occur, children are taught to negotiate, to turn take and to empathise with each other.
- Children are encouraged at all times to be independent learners. They choose what activities they wish to engage in and when they will take their snack. They all enthusiastically join in the tidying-up time.
- Learning behaviours are closely monitored. Staff check the children's interest levels and ability to persevere, so that children develop key learning attitudes.
- Although children do not have to attend nursery, there is a clear expectation that they attend regularly. The school is vigilant if a child does not attend, with a first-day phone call to parents to find out why their child is not in school.

Outcomes for pupils are outstanding

- All children make rapid progress from varying starting points, which are for many below those typical for their age. This is particularly so in communication and language, physical and personal development.
- As a result of outstanding teaching, accurate assessments and high expectations, all groups of learners achieve exceptionally well. By the end of the year, almost all children achieve the expected level for this age. Over one in two children achieve attainment levels which are well beyond this, including in early literacy and mathematics. Children are well prepared for the Reception Year.
- Observations confirm that after only attending school for a few weeks, current children are making

outstanding progress. They have begun to master vital skills to make them effective learners. Children have responded well to the classroom routines and adults' high expectations for behaviour and work.

- Staff make sure that learning and progress are fast in key areas of learning. Both the classroom and outside areas provide daily opportunities for children to practise and refine their physical dexterity, balance and agility. The forest school is an exciting place to make mud pies, and to explore and investigate nature first-hand. Children carefully scoop up a worm in a leaf and gently put it into the wormery. They observe with sustained concentration what happens next to the worm.
- Although there is an attainment gap between boys and girls, both groups make rapid progress in their learning. Likewise, there is little difference in the progress made by those children who are eligible for the early years' pupil premium and other children. Targeted support using this funding has made sure that any gaps are closing quickly.
- Those who find learning difficult, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make as much progress as all other groups. There is a significant emphasis on developing children's language and communication skills, including those children who speak English as an additional language.
- More-able children make at least good progress in all areas of learning. A high proportion of these children reach attainment levels expected by the end of the Reception Year, especially in language and communication. However, too few children achieve these high levels in literacy and mathematics.

School details

Unique reference number	100884
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10005539

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–4 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tonje Petterson
Acting Executive Headteacher	Lynn Cottle
Telephone number	02077394518
Website	www.columbiamarket.towerhamlets.sch.uk
Email address	admin@columbiamarket.towerhamlets.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	February 2012

Information about this school

- Columbia Market Nursery is an average-sized nursery school.
- Children are taught in three classes. They attend on either a full- or part-time flexible basis.
- Children are from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds. The largest group is White British, followed by Bangladeshi heritage. Almost one in two children speak English as an additional language. A small minority of these children are in the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs is broadly average. Most of these children have speech and language difficulties. Some children are on the autistic spectrum.
- A small number of children are supported through the early years' pupil premium funding (EYPP). The EYPP is additional government funding given to schools for disadvantaged children who are eligible for free school meals or are children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school provides extended care each day. This includes a breakfast club and after-school club, as well as a holiday club.
- There have been significant changes to staffing since the previous inspection. All three class teachers have been appointed in the last few years. At the end of the academic year 2014-15 the long-standing headteacher retired. In September, an acting executive headteacher, who is a national leader in education (NLE), was appointed from an outstanding nursery school. The assistant headteacher became the acting deputy headteacher at the same time.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection converted from a short inspection to check whether the school continued to provide a good quality of education and if safeguarding was effective to a full inspection as there was insufficient evidence to support this by the end of day one.
- The inspector observed a wide range of learning activities in all three classes and in the outdoor learning area. These included two visits to multiple lessons. Some of the observations were jointly undertaken with senior leaders. Children's learning diaries were scrutinised.
- Discussions were held with the acting executive headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher and middle leaders who are also teachers.
- The inspector met with the Chair of the Governing body and two further governors. A telephone discussion was held with the local authority representative.
- Parental views were gathered through informal discussions and a meeting with several parents. The views of 16 parents expressed through the Parent View survey were also considered. A review of 15 staff questionnaires returned during the inspection were also considered.
- Numerous school documents were scrutinised, including information about achievement, records relating to behaviour and leaders' monitoring and planning for improvement.
- A review of safeguarding records and procedures was carried out.

Inspection team

Mary Hinds, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2015

