

Inspection of a good school: Acacia Nursery

Cecil Road, Leytonstone, London E11 3HF

Inspection date:

8 October 2019

Outcome

Acacia Nursery continues to be a good school.

There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now.

What is it like to attend this school?

Acacia Nursery is a happy, welcoming school. Children from many different ethnic backgrounds, faiths and cultures play very well together. We saw 'care, courtesy, commitment, consideration and cooperation' – the school's '5 C's' – in action. Right from the start, parents, carers and children happily enter the classes, with smiles on their faces, ready to start the day ahead.

The school is a hive of activity, where all children are included. All are encouraged to 'have a go'. Children are taught the importance of doing their very best and that it is fun to keep trying. This is because adults make sure that the indoor and outdoor environments are exciting learning places.

We saw children behaving exceptionally well and learning safely together. This was because all adults have high expectations for every child. Adults prioritise making time to talk with and listen to children. Adults quickly get to know children's interests, likes and dislikes. Engaging conversations between adults and children, and children with their peers, are usual. This is because staff support children in sharing what they already know. The uniqueness of each child is cherished. The school is a place where safe and trusting relationships are nurtured and valued.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Together, staff, leaders and governors have focused on developing an ambitious early years curriculum. They have researched what makes a strong educational programme. Their well-considered curriculum is a strength of the school. It orders the knowledge and experiences children need to be ready for primary school. So, all adults are clear what needs to happen for children to learn well. As a result, all children make large gains in their learning. They are very well prepared for primary school.

Adults make sure that the school is a joyful place because of the wonderful exciting learning environment on offer. There are many rich opportunities for children to talk about their learning. During conversations, adults take every opportunity to include talking about safety, for example when cooking around the firepit or demonstrating how to use a knife safely. Even the youngest children show care when chopping fruit or pulling carrots from the ground.

Leaders and governors have built on the good base reported on at the last inspection. Links with a national teaching school provide opportunities to share strong practice. Leaders have reduced unnecessary staff workload, maximising adult-child interactions. Adults have an excellent understanding of the purpose of assessment and use it well to help children learn.

The teaching of communication and language and early reading is particularly strong. Phonics is woven seamlessly into story time. We saw children introduced to new ideas, words and sounds and enjoying stories, songs and rhymes.

Adults are skilled in adjusting their approaches to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They benefit from access to specialist support and training. Adults use their training well to provide many ways for children to engage successfully. We noticed how absorbed children are in what they are doing. There is a constant element of decision-making as children at play choose what equipment or resources to use. We saw children considering what seeds to plant and what ingredients to use in their cooking and why.

'Stay2play' and other regular workshops enhance a strong feeling of community. Staff use their knowledge of the community when providing learning. They welcome parents and grandparents. For example, a parent who works as a professional footballer teaches football skills to the children. Also, children are developing a deep interest in the past from opportunities to talk with older generations. Broadening these opportunities will help children to make more connections in their learning, helping them to know and remember more, particularly in their understanding of technology and its use in the world.

In technology, children are accessing age-appropriate learning experiences. They show a keen interest in technological toys. However, more opportunities to explore and operate a greater range of technological objects will help them in their learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors are clear about their responsibilities to make sure that children are safe. They have established clear rules on the use of mobile telephones. These rules are shared with visitors on arrival. Staff are well trained and kept up to date on a wide range of risks. They use their training well to swiftly identify children and families who would benefit from extra support. School records are up to date. Where necessary, they include the support and engagement of external agencies. The school is well placed, and well informed, to manage and provide help which is in the best interest of the child.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In technology, children across the school are accessing age-appropriate learning experiences and show a keen interest in technological toys. However, this could be further extended so that they have more opportunities to explore and operate a greater range of technological objects. Additionally, the school should broaden the opportunities provided, through its partnership with parents and others, for older children to recognise that technology is used in many places beyond the home and school.

Background

When we have judged a maintained nursery school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 1–2 March 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	103030
Local authority	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10110469
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sophia Khan
Headteacher	David Livie
Website	www.acacianursery.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	1–2 March 2016

Information about this school

- The hard federation which was in place during the last inspection ceased on 30 August 2016. However, the governing body continues its strong relationship with the Arbor Academy Trust.
- A service-level agreement with the trust, sponsored by an outstanding primary school, is in place to manage and provide leadership of the school. Two trustees sit on the governing body.
- The school benefits from its links with the other two schools in the trust, which include a national support school and a teaching school. The three schools share an executive principal. The executive principal is the chief executive officer of the trust and a national leader of education.
- The school offers before- and after-school provision for children who attend the school, managed by the governing body.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

- This is the first section 8 inspection since the school was judged to be good in March 2016.
- We met with the headteacher and the executive principal. We also met with the chair of the governing body, a governor who is also a trustee and a representative from the local authority.
- We considered communication and language, early reading and understanding the world as deep-dive subjects during this inspection.
- As part of the deep dives, we held discussions with senior leaders and other staff about the design of the curriculum and how it is being implemented. We visited classes, watching children at play and the interactions between them and adults. We spoke with teaching staff. This was done formally in meetings and informally through incidental conversations prompted by observing the children learning. We looked at children's work in books and on display.
- We looked at how leaders make sure that children are kept safe. We reviewed a range of school documentation, including the single central record of employment checks. We reviewed leaders' records and work with external agencies to keep children safe. We spoke to members of the safeguarding team and other adults. We watched and spoke with children in the indoor and outdoor sessions and at lunchtime.
- We considered how well leaders develop and adapt the early years foundation stage curriculum so that it meets the needs of all. We observed children's behaviour and their attitudes towards learning.
- We spoke to staff and discussed how well leaders consider their well-being, including steps to help them manage their workload.

Inspection team

Jean Thwaites, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Dawn Titus

Ofsted Inspector

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