

Inspection of a good school: Margaret McMillan Nursery School

Hornsey Rise, London, N19 3SF

Inspection date:

19 October 2021

Outcome

Margaret McMillan Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming, inclusive school where children are happy. They get off to a good start. This is because leaders have high expectations. The curriculum provides a variety of well-planned activities to support the children's wider and physical development. For example, children are eager to explore the large garden within the school grounds. They thrive in the vast outdoor spaces.

Leaders know children's families well and have built strong relationships with them. Parents and carers are positive about the school. One parent commented, 'staff are super friendly', a view shared by other parents.

Children are well looked after. Staff have created a caring and warm environment. They make sure that children are safe and teach them to be kind. Children learn how to work together and make friends.

Children are polite and well mannered. They follow simple rules. Children behave well and are considerate towards each other. This contributes to a calm environment.

Leaders are committed to developing children's artistic and cultural awareness. Children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, music, and dance. Enabling them to explore, be creative and play. Children are confident to try new activities. This is because staff promote children's independence, resilience, and curiosity.

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

The school's curriculum matches the expectations of the early years framework. It is well thought out, and it is linked to the needs and interests of the children. This includes for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders know what they expect all children to learn and remember. However, not all staff know how the curriculum builds on children's knowledge and understanding.

For example, some staff do not ask relevant questions to check the children have made connections with prior learning.

The curriculum prioritises communication and language. For example, staff provide opportunities for children to develop their language skills by singing songs. Children learn nursery rhymes as part of their daily routines.

The learning environment is rich and supports children to develop a love of reading. Reading books are well selected and staff read regularly to the children. Children enjoy listening to stories and, as a result, they are motivated to become independent readers. Staff engage children actively in reading through conversations and role play. They use magnetic story props, costumes, and puppets to enhance storytelling. Children create their own reading books, which they happily share and read with others.

The curriculum provides opportunities for children to explore the world around them. They are curious and use their imagination to develop ideas. Children are confident when talking to adults about what they are learning. For example, children could explain that they had found snails in the 'wet and wild' garden as part of their snail hunt. They could identify what the snails had eaten.

Early mathematics is well planned and is designed to engage the interests of the children. They begin to develop their understanding of number through stories and number rhymes, for example counting the number of wheels on the bus, or the legs of 'Incy Wincy Spider'.

Children build structures with bricks and blocks. They learn to identify shapes while working out what block should go next or which brick will fit in to a space. Children can explain confidently the structures they have built. Leaders plan activities to develop mathematical language such as 'bigger than' and 'smaller than'. Outdoor play provides regular opportunities for children to rehearse and develop their mathematical understanding.

Physical development is high priority. Staff plan interesting activities for children to develop their gross and fine motor skills. For example, children learn to weave wool on to a frame. Staff support children with their balance on large outdoor play equipment so that they develop their confidence and coordination skills. Leaders also recognise the importance of supporting the social, emotional, and mental well-being of all the children. Opportunities are provided to plant and grow vegetables in the garden. They learn and understand the connections between good food choices and healthy living.

Children behave very well. There are hardly any disruptions to learning. Children learn how to manage their own feelings and those of others. Relationships with staff are strong, warm, and supportive. Staff model and guide children to look after each other.

Staff enjoy working at this school and are proud to be part of the community. Staff speak highly of how leaders and governors take account of their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors are supportive of vulnerable children and families. They build strong relationships with parents and carers. They help when necessary. Leaders work in effective partnership with outside agencies so that children are safe. They take prompt and appropriate action to protect children.

Staff are available at the start and end of the school day, so that parents and carers can discuss any concerns. As a result, staff identify children who may need extra support and report concerns quickly.

Leaders ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out in line with safer recruitment guidance. All staff receive regular safeguarding training.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders should ensure that all staff have a good understanding of how the curriculum is sequenced. This is to ensure that staff build on the children's prior learning. For example, when they are working with children, staff should listen attentively. They should respond to what the children say with relevant questions to check their understanding. This will help staff to prepare children for their next steps.

Background

When we have judged a 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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2013.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 the school and 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	100384
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10200114
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Peter Stanton-Ife
Headteacher	Mary Hart
Website	www.margaretmcmillan.islington.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Margaret McMillan Nursery School is larger than average compared with schools of this type.
- The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is also much higher than average.
- There are six places which are specially resourced for children with complex special educational needs.
- Children at this Nursery do not attend any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and staff. The lead inspector had a telephone

conversation with the chair of the governing board. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead.

- Inspectors did deep dives in the following subjects during this inspection: literacy, mathematics and physical development.
- Inspectors visited lessons, spoke to children about their learning, and met with staff.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were considered through conversations with the inspectors and responses to Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors also checked safeguarding records, documentation and the school's single central record of staff suitability checks.

Inspection team

Dawn Titus, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Maureen Okoye

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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