

Inspection Report

KAY ROWE NURSERY SCHOOL

Unique Reference Number: 102701
LEA: Newham

Headteacher: Ms H Snow
Chair of Governors: Mr M King

Lead Inspector: Jane Wotherspoon HMI
Inspection Dates: 22 September 2004

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INTRODUCTION

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of Kay Rowe Nursery School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Description of the school

Kay Rowe Nursery School caters for up to 120 children between the ages of three and four. At the time of the inspection, 81 were on roll. Three children attend full-time, the rest for half days. The school serves an area of extensive social, cultural and ethnic diversity and twenty-four different languages are spoken at the school. Many families are new to the country with several seeking refuge or asylum who do not always settle in the area. The school's records show that there is a wide range in what children can do when they start school but, overall, attainment is below that expected. About 40 per cent of the children come from homes where English is not the first language. Almost half of these speak little or no English when they start school. A small number of children have special educational needs. The school offers a range of extended services in partnership with other providers including ten full-time nursery places with day care, parent and toddler groups, parents' workshops, and training for child minders. The school has bid successfully to become a Children's Centre.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Kay Rowe Nursery School is very effective at giving children an excellent start to their education. Inspectors agree with the school's assessment of its overall effectiveness. The children make good and often very good progress in this lively, vibrant environment where each individual is well cared for and valued. The children's very positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning are fostered strongly. The quality of provision is very good with a stimulating range of things to do that make learning fun. The school is led very effectively by a headteacher who is modest about what she does. She is determined to realise her vision to extend what the school offers to children, their families and the wider community. The school gives very good value for money.

Grade: 1

Improvement since the last inspection

The last inspection, in 1999, identified no major areas of weakness and noted many strengths in teaching, and in what children achieve. These have been sustained. Minor issues have been tackled very effectively.

Grade: 1

Capacity to improve

Staff are dedicated to doing the best they can for the children. They are not complacent about what has been achieved so far and evaluate critically the effect of what they do. The school's capacity to make improvements is outstanding because of the high quality leadership.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

Within this very positive picture the school should:

- build on its effective use of assessment information to evaluate the achievement of different groups of children
- improve the consistency in the way that adults talk to and question children when taking part in activities they have chosen
- track children's choices of activities to ensure they are varied and challenging.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

The children make good progress across all areas of learning. The school's records show that by the time they leave the nursery, the majority reach the standards expected for their age. They make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and in developing their spoken language. Inspectors agree with the school's assessment of the children's progress in these key areas of learning. Children with special educational needs, particularly those with complex needs, make very good progress.

Many children start school speaking little, or no English but make rapid progress. They take part regularly in role play, including using their mother tongue when appropriate, and this

helps them to gain confidence in becoming fluent speakers. Staff ensure that the cultural heritage of all children is valued and shared through stories read in languages other than English. Such activities help to develop the children's familiarity with their own language as well as with English. All the children love stories and listen exceptionally well, joining in with familiar phrases and actions. They take home books and story tapes, in a range of languages, to share with their families.

Outside, the children ride bicycles with a good level of control, balancing well and steering around obstacles and each other safely. Using their imaginations, they 'take a taxi to Luton airport to fly off on their holidays' or 'go to the garage to wash the car and fill it up with petrol'. Many children are dextrous, handling small items with good co-ordination and use tools such as knives and cutters safely, for instance when making shaped sandwiches. They are making good progress in looking carefully at the things around them and, for example, watched with fascination as ice melted on a tray.

The children are very keen to come to school and arrive cheerfully at the thought of the exciting things they are going to do and learn. Behaviour is very good. The children concentrate on activities for periods of time that are unusually long for their age. They are remarkably sensitive to each other's needs and are learning to accept that they are all different. They try to include everyone in their play. For example, an older boy leading a younger child to an activity was heard to say, 'Come on! Take my hand'. Older children are gaining confidence and independence. They willingly take responsibility for looking after the nursery's resources and for helping to tidy them away.

Grade: 1

QUALITY OF PROVISION

The school believes teaching to be good and inspectors agree with this overall judgement. Many elements of teaching are very good. Adults know the children extremely well and are very sensitive to their personal, social and emotional needs. Relationships are excellent. Adults meet the diverse and often complex special educational needs of children very successfully by using a range of high quality resources imaginatively. An impressive example was a story session in the sensory room which told of a bear travelling to the moon. Moving images of the moon and stars were projected on a screen while shimmering silver braids with fairy lights twinkling like stars trailed on the carpet, and pictures from the book were laid out on silver foil for the children to see. The creative use of these visual props added much to the children's enjoyment as well as to their understanding of the story.

Likewise, the needs of learners of English as an additional language are met by skilled bilingual staff who are adept at switching between speaking English and their mother tongue to encourage the children to learn new words. This was expertly achieved in a dramatic role play of 'Mr Gumpy's Motor Car'.

Assessment procedures are very well established and individual profiles give a clear picture of progress in all areas of learning. This information is used very effectively to plan sessions led by adults which have a clear focus on what the children will learn and how the activities can be adapted to meet the specific needs of individuals. A striking example was a mathematical activity in which children guessed the number of hidden objects and counted them accurately. Planning for the activities that children choose could be more sharply focused. The way that adults talk to children and question them while they are involved in these activities varies in quality. The many excellent examples of adults asking questions which challenge children to be creative and to extend their imaginative thinking could be shared to raise all teaching to a high quality.

The work on offer to the children is very interesting and stimulating. Staff monitor children's choices informally and there is scope to strengthen this evaluation. Children have the chance to use a variety of high quality resources. The environment has some excellent features, notably in the outdoor area. This has been designed imaginatively so that the activities mirror those that are planned indoors. Half-termly themes offer very good opportunities to link together the six areas of learning and to give children a wide variety of experiences. Role-play is prominent and adults exploit this to develop the children's imagination and language skills. The strong emphasis on developing communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development is wholly appropriate.

Without exception, adults show a strong commitment to every child's success in making them feel part of Kay Rowe Nursery. Children and their parents are greeted warmly with a friendly smile at the start of the day. Excellent systems for helping children to settle quickly to nursery life involve their families. Child protection procedures are well known and help to ensure that children are kept safe. They are monitored and supervised closely. The school has well-established relationships with local agencies and support services, including the 'Sure Start' team, and draws successfully upon their specialist advice. Overall, inspectors judge provision to be very good.

Grade: 1

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher is an inspirational and innovative leader. Her clear vision coupled with a deep commitment to caring for the needs of the children and the community has recently been rewarded with the proposed change of status to a Children's Centre. The learning needs of the children are at the centre of all decision-making. Staff are encouraged to develop their roles and responsibilities and are managed sensitively to do this. They move fluidly and calmly between activities and classroom spaces, always aware of the children and of each other. Sessions are managed seamlessly and skilfully as staff co-operate in their work. This is a real strength.

Parents are full of praise for the school and the staff. Several spoke with pride and excitement about the range of courses and activities now on offer in the attractive well-resourced community room which is used widely. They feel genuinely consulted about their training needs and appreciate the openness and quality of communication they receive. Some are thrilled to be involved in helping the school with translations for displays. This is valued by the staff and another great strength. Children and their parents learn together at Kay Rowe Nursery.

The senior management team know the school's strengths and have identified areas for development through checking the quality of provision. Priorities are stated clearly in the school improvement plan. Now the new building is close to completion, the headteacher is keen for the school to strengthen approaches to measuring the effect of changes on improvements to children's learning. The recent evaluation showing that children who attend 'drop-in' sessions settle more quickly to Nursery routines provides a good example. Greater use could be made of assessment data to check the progress of different groups of children. The school has recently been given a delegated budget and is in the process of developing appropriate financial procedures. Members of the new governing body are enthusiastic and supportive. They have attended initial training to develop their roles and responsibilities and have plans for further courses to increase their expertise of governance. The school modestly judges leadership and management as good. Taking account of the many strengths reported above, the inspection team judges them as very good.

Grade: 1

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