

Alice Model Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100887
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	276411
Inspection dates	28–29 September 2006
Reporting inspector	Bernice Magson

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 on roll	
School	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sarah Helm
Headteacher	Mrs Lynn Cottle
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2003
School address	14 Beaumont Grove London E1 4NQ
Telephone number	020 7790 5425
Fax number	020 7790 5425

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Alice Model Nursery School is situated in Stepney, a culturally diverse area of London. The nursery serves an area of high social deprivation and provides full or part-time education for its children. New entrants are admitted in September and January. Most are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a large majority speaks English as an additional language. A small minority has learning difficulties. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Alice Model Nursery is a good school providing a good quality of education. Children achieve well, and standards are improving each year. The school received a Quality Mark in 2005 in recognition of the improvement in standards in English and mathematics.

Children enjoy school and make good academic progress and very good progress in their personal development and well-being. When children start school most do not have the skills expected for their age. They quickly gain in confidence and self-assurance because staff understand their needs and offer praise, encouragement and guidance. Teaching and learning are good. Activities led by the teacher are well-planned and children learn rapidly, but some independent play experiences are not challenging enough. Children's performance is monitored carefully and this means that teachers know what children need to achieve next. Teachers encourage language and communication skills across all subjects, but use few real-life experiences to help children's learning in mathematics. The curriculum is well-balanced, with a wide range of challenging activities for indoor and outdoor play except in mathematics. Most children achieve national expectations for their age by the end of their time in Nursery.

There are good procedures to support children with learning difficulties and the most vulnerable children. Bilingual speakers give good quality help to children learning English as an additional language. Parents appreciate all the school has to offer and they are pleased that their children are happy and feel safe and secure.

The newly appointed headteacher is eager to maintain the good progress made so far and, with a committed team of staff and governors, shape the future direction of the school. Together their leadership and management are good and the school is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide a wider range of play experiences to help children have a better understanding of number concepts.
- Provide more consistently challenging opportunities for independent play in all areas of learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When children start school most are at a very early stage of learning English and many have poorly developed personal and social skills. The school's emphasis on encouraging children to observe and think for themselves and to become confident and assured learners underpins everything they do. As a result all children make equally good progress in the areas of learning and very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Teachers have identified that some children find it difficult to relate their learning to real-life experiences because of limited language skills in play, such as in mathematical development. Bilingual speakers help these children achieve. Good support is provided for the children with learning difficulties, and this helps them to make good progress and achieve their individual targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. They have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well. Children have a good understanding of right and wrong. In all activities children work enthusiastically and with confidence. They demonstrate good levels of concentration and a determination to succeed. Relationships are very good. Many children recognise the needs of others and understand how to take turns. Through vigorous exercise in the park or on wheeled toys in the outdoors children understand how to be healthy. They are developing their understanding of healthy foods at lunch and snack-times. In the garden children are growing fruit and vegetables and can talk about the benefits of eating them. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is outstanding. Through an excellent range of visits and visitors they learn to play together, care for others and appreciate important features of their own and others' cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

All adults work together effectively and provide a consistent and caring, but challenging approach. Learning is rooted in high quality first-hand experiences with strong links between different aspects of the curriculum, which enable children to develop their language skills. However, when planning independent play activities, teachers do not provide enough links between subjects to extend children's learning in number and mathematical vocabulary. Teachers are skilled practitioners and when they closely direct activities they use a range of teaching methods to interest and motivate children to learn. For instance, a group of children at very early stages of language acquisition dressed up as owls and sat in a nest (made from a tyre) as they read the book *Owl Babies*. Through imitating the teacher and repeating sounds they learned of owl behaviour. 'I like the sound!' commented one child. Assessment and recording are a priority in all classroom activities and teachers have a good understanding of each child's needs. Learning targets are set for children to achieve. Teachers give good help to those children with learning difficulties and the more vulnerable, intervening sensitively when required, so that these children can participate and learn equally with others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum which meets the needs of all children. It covers all areas of learning and, in activities led by teachers, provides a good variety of relevant and challenging tasks. The curriculum is less well matched to the needs of different groups in some independent learning experiences. There is a good emphasis on the acquisition of language skills although too few opportunities are planned to practise mathematical knowledge through practical activities. The curriculum provided for children at an early stage of learning English is good and the needs of children with learning difficulties are met well. Opportunities to promote children's personal, social and emotional development are integrated very effectively into the wider curriculum. Displays and photographs around the school show the breadth of the children's experiences. Parents are very happy with the range of opportunities and join many visits, such as to Kew Gardens or Clacton-on-Sea. As one parent commented, 'It's so nice for children to

learn while they share a day out with friends.' Toy and book libraries enable all children to develop learning further in the home.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care and support of children are excellent. The headteacher and staff ensure that children feel welcome and are safe and secure. Adults are skilled at listening to children, valuing their comments and responding skilfully to their needs. The school teaches children how to make the right choices when looking after themselves. Child protection, risk assessment and health and safety issues are managed effectively. The school has the confidence and trust of parents developed initially through visits to the home and extended through parental inclusion in workshops and meetings. When required, outside agencies are used to give children additional support, for example in health and speech therapy. All these features encourage children to do their best. The guidance provided for children is very good. Assessment data are analysed and targets are set for each child. Advice and progress are shared regularly with parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is keen to maintain the school's ethos and vision. At this early stage in the school year she is still developing her understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Already there is a good partnership between the headteacher, staff and governors and they are all involved in deciding how well the school is doing. Together they are preparing a programme to improve the quality of provision further. Monitoring of the school's performance is good. The school improvement plan is reviewed annually and funds are allocated according to need. The school is effective in evaluating the quality of provision and children's learning outcomes to ensure that best value is always achieved. Management systems are very effective, including the management of provision for pupils with English as an additional language and for those children with learning difficulties. The school is well placed to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed finding out about all the interesting things you do. Wasn't it exciting when the owl, hawk, spider and python came on a visit to school? Do you think that they enjoyed it too?

What I really liked about your school is:

- you enjoy school and are very good at all times
- you play together well and work hard
- all adults take good care of you and help you to learn
- you go on many interesting trips
- your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this Nursery.

What I have asked your school to do now is:

- To find more ways for you to practise counting and playing number games
- To make your own play activities more exciting.

Best wishes for the future

Bernice Magson Lead inspector