



Rachel McMillan Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100097
Local Authority Greenwich
Inspection number 285716
Inspection date 1 March 2007
Reporting inspector Sue Vale

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Nursery	School address	McMillan Street
School category	Maintained		Deptford
Age range of pupils	3-5		London SE8 3EH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8692 4041
Number on roll (school)	95	Fax number	020 8694 7853
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ms A Jefferson
		Headteacher	Ms Theresa Lane
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Rachel McMillan Nursery School and Children's Centre is on the borders of Greenwich and Lewisham. It serves an ethnically diverse community. There are 95 children on role of which approximately 80 attend full time. The largest minority ethnic group is Black African, with most of these children being of Nigerian heritage, followed by White British. A higher number than average are learning English as an Additional Language. Around a half of children are entitled to free school meals. There is a smaller than average number who are identified with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Rachel McMillan Nursery School and Children's Centre provides a good standard of education. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together as a team and have a clear understanding of the strengths of the Nursery and what it needs to do to develop further through its recent designation as a Children's Centre. There are plans to involve families, the community and external agencies more extensively.

Children begin school with a wide range of abilities and varying experience of English. Their overall standards are below what is expected when they start at Nursery. The ethos of the Nursery is a play-centred approach to learning. This means that everything centres on learning through play. This is effective and children really enjoy it and are very happy in their education. Good teaching and an interesting, varied curriculum also support their development. This means that by the time they leave Nursery, they have made good progress and achieve well. A number of children exceed expectations in their social emotional development and physical development. This provides them with a good start for the next stage of their education.

Children's personal development and well-being are excellent. They are very happy and keen to be at Nursery, although attendance amongst some families does not always reflect this. Children are encouraged to become independent and confident learners and they work and play together well.

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. Children receive a positive start to their school life because the staff have a high commitment to meeting the needs of all children. Observations and assessments of what children know and can do are good and help children to move on in their learning. Achievements are celebrated in children's 'special books.'

The curriculum is varied and captures children's interest. They have a good grasp of communication, 'Use your words,' is a phrase often heard. Mathematical skills are developed well. However, children do not have enough opportunities for developing their skills in information and communication technology. Overall they have good basic skills which prepare them for the next stage of their education.

The Nursery has maintained good standards since the last inspection and provides good value for money. The Nursery has good capacity to continue to improve and maintain its standards as its facilities for the community grow with the development of the Children's Centre.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the start already made as a Children's Centre, by increasing the further involvement of children's families, the community and external agencies.
- Develop the curriculum for information and communication technology in order to raise standards and achievement further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well, including those learning English as an additional language and those with disabilities or learning difficulties. Children settle quickly and make a good start to school life. They soon become confident and independent learners, able to choose activities which interest and motivate them to want to learn. Consequently, children achieve well and reach expected levels in mathematical and creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. They exceed expectations in their physical and personal, social and emotional development. This is because of good quality teaching which promotes basic skills well, along with an interesting play-centred curriculum. Overall standards are average, showing good progress from standards when children start at the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. In this Nursery, 'Every child does matter.' Children's moral and social development is outstanding. Spiritual and cultural development is very good. Children are very happy and keen to have a go at different activities on offer. Their behaviour is very good. This is helped by the interesting learning environment, both indoors and outside, so they are very motivated and show high levels of curiosity. They make an extremely positive contribution to the community. Attendance is satisfactory overall although children thoroughly enjoy the Nursery. Children are very good at working safely, and are excellent in their adoption of a healthy life style; they look forward to their healthy snacks. They are very well prepared for their future lives, both in school and out.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Adults ensure that there is a wide variety of activities on offer, which encourages children to want to learn. Teaching is good because adults encourage children to think for themselves and to make decisions. For example, in a story time session children were encouraged to give their own views and opinions. This approach shows them that they are valued and really supports their personal and emotional development, whilst encouraging the development of their speaking and listening skills. Children at Rachel McMillan really enjoy learning, they are proud of what they do, and eager to share their new knowledge and skills with adults. As a parent commented, 'My daughter loves learning.....the staff are very helpful and understanding of her needs.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The varied curriculum promotes interesting and practical activities both inside and outdoors. The Nursery is arranged for a free-flow of movement so that children can experience the same range of activities whether they are inside or out. As one Governor commented, 'there is always some new activity on offer which stimulates their learning.' This supports children's own freedom of choice and enhances their personal and social development. The Nursery encourages a play-centred approach to the curriculum and activities make learning fun. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. This develops a mature, independent attitude in children. There is good provision for those children at an early stage of learning English. The use of information and communication technology by children is satisfactory overall. The Nursery is investigating how to develop this further in order to enhance children's knowledge and understanding of this area of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. The care and support for the children are particularly effective. Adults consciously spend time talking and listening to the children so that they feel valued and cared for. As one parent commented, 'We are extremely happy with the care our children have received... it is a safe, fun, warm environment where we have watched our children flourish and learn through play.' Child protection procedures are fully in place and are understood and followed by staff. Risk assessments for monitoring the health and safety of the children are in place, but are not yet clearly established for trips out of the Nursery.

The academic guidance is good. Children's progress is tracked carefully through observations which are transferred to their individual profiles, to highlight areas for development. This is a recent initiative and the full impact is still under review. Children's own 'special books' celebrate their individual achievements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The leadership team, consisting of the head teacher and the deputy head teacher and the early years coordinator is strong. They have a clear vision for the development of the Nursery as a Children's Centre. Their self-evaluation is accurate. In just under two years, they have initiated many improvements at the Nursery, such as the way the curriculum is planned and the way children's progress is monitored and reviewed. Many of these changes have only been initiated in the last twelve months. First review of them shows that they appear to be having a positive impact on raising standards and achievement. For some areas, such as assessment, it is too soon to see the full impact yet. The governing body is new; governors are keen and enthusiastic to ensure that the Nursery and Children's Centre

serve the community they are in. They are quickly establishing their roles. Parents are fully included in their children's education and their views valued. The school involves other agencies well in its work but there is scope to extend this and to involve the community more in the development of the Children's Centre.

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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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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?	2

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.

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	3
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

It was lovely to meet you when I came to visit your Nursery. I enjoyed playing in the home corner with you and seeing you climbing outside.

Rachel McMillan Nursery is a good school.

There are lots of things which you do well.

- You are very happy and like coming to your Nursery.
- Some of you are very grown up and show real independence for children your age.
- There are lots of interesting things for you to try and have a go at.
- You have good teachers who look after you and care for you very well.

In order to make the Nursery even better, I have asked your headteacher to look at the curriculum for information and communication technology to see how you can develop your knowledge and understanding better in this area of the curriculum. Your Nursery also wants to do more things to encourage the use of the Children's Centre by your families and the local community.

Best wishes

Sue Vale

Lead inspector