

Robert Owen Early Years Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100102
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	307294
Inspection date	12 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms L Brown
Headteacher	Ms F Kemp
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	43 Commerell Street Greenwich London SE10 0EA
Telephone number	020 8858 0529
Fax number	020 8293 3572

Age group	3–4
Inspection date	12 February 2008
Inspection number	307294

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. This inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the provision for three to four year olds in the centre and investigated the following issues:

- the extent to which children's progress and attainment are promoted in letters and sounds, writing, and calculation
- how well teaching and curriculum are tailored to meet the needs of different groups of children, especially those learning English as an additional language and able children
- the extent to which assessment is used to help guide and support children's learning.

Evidence was gathered from observing lessons and children during lunch; talking to children and staff; checking the school's record of lesson observations as well as assessment and pupil progress records, and analysing the results of questionnaires returned by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Robert Owen is a designated children's centre catering for children from the age of three months to four years. About a fifth of children are eligible for free school meals. Quite a high number, over half, are from minority ethnic backgrounds and about 12% are at early stages of learning English as an additional language. Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is in line with age-related expectations though about a fifth of children are below these, particularly in literacy and personal and social development. About 10% of three to four year olds have a learning difficulty or disability. This is a little below national norms. The current headteacher took up the post in May 2007 after a brief period as the acting headteacher. There is no deputy headteacher in post at present.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The centre provides a good quality education that enables children to make good progress and attain standards that are above expectations by the time they leave. It also provides a warm and caring ethos in which children are well cared for and looked after. Consequently, children are happy and feel secure. Parents are fulsome in their praise of the centre's work. The following comment is reflective of those expressed by the majority: 'I feel that Robert Owen provides an environment where each child is known to all the staff and is valued and loved and made to feel that they belong.'

Children's good personal development and well-being are a result of the strong emphasis placed on this aspect of their education. As a result, children develop positive attitudes to learning and enjoy their time at the centre. Behaviour is good and children are usually only absent when unwell. They make good progress in developing social skills and learn to take turns. Most willingly share resources. Children form positive relationships with one another and with adults, though they are not always good at listening to one another. Overall, however, good behaviour and positive attitudes go a long way towards creating a positive climate for learning.

Good teaching is a key contributory factor to children's success in learning. Children develop a good range of literacy and numeracy skills as well as learning to be independent and making choices. They are good at role-play and take great pleasure in dressing up. Children's skills in counting and in beginning to make simple calculations are developing well. However, they do not always make as much progress in some aspects of literacy, such as writing and learning about letter sounds. This is because opportunities to promote these skills in lessons are sometimes missed. Teaching provides good match of work for individual children's needs. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve particularly well. Children learning English as an additional language make good progress in picking up new words and phrases. Good links with external professionals ensure that children are well supported, especially those who are more vulnerable. Overall, the good progress made by children in literacy and numeracy and the positive personal qualities they develop prepare them well for the next step in education.

Lessons are well planned so that staff know exactly what they want children to learn in each session. In some, excellent use of questioning extends children's language skills and makes them think more deeply about their work. Sometimes, though, talk is overly led by adults, therefore limiting the opportunities for children to speak. Children's work is assessed thoroughly so that staff know exactly how well they are doing. Based on this assessment, clear learning aims are set for each child and all staff working with that child are aware of these. In addition, children are beginning to discuss their work and think about how they might improve it through the use of 'profiles', a new initiative where key pieces of their work are collected to form a personal record.

A good curriculum is built around the interests and capabilities of individual children. Able children make largely good progress as a result. However, the curriculum is not yet sufficiently adapted to provide additional activities that extend able children's learning even further. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, including visits and visitors, leads to good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the centre's work on Chinese New Year has been enthusiastically received by children. Children are taught the value of healthy eating and enjoy the fruit provided mid-morning. They also take pleasure in cutting up the fruit, taking care to do so safely. The excellent outdoor area is used well throughout the day and encourages

children to be physically active. Children have good opportunities to contribute to their local and wider community through collections for Harvest Festival and raising funds for charity. Opportunities for helping in the centre are sound.

The success of the centre is down to good leadership and management. The headteacher provides a clear direction for development where the needs of children come first. She and governors have established a good working partnership. Governors provide healthy challenge to senior staff and a clear strategic steer for the centre's future development. Other managers provide sound leadership. There is good overview of children's progress and detailed examination of how well they are performing across all areas of learning. Teaching is regularly checked. However, the information from such checks does not always have a sharp enough focus on how teaching can be further improved. Nonetheless, the centre has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and an effective plan to make the centre even better. The plan focuses well, for example, on improving children's knowledge about letters and the sounds they make. This is beginning to have a positive impact on their learning. Consequently, the capacity for further improvement is good. There is good focus on involving parents in their children's learning as well as providing services to meet their needs. Overall, the centre promotes a strong sense of community.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

As a Nursery school, the Foundation Stage is completely covered by the Overall Effectiveness section.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make more use of opportunities in lessons to help children learn about letters and related sounds and to develop their writing.
- Develop the curriculum to provide additional activities to extend the learning of able children even further.
- Ensure that checks on teaching result in clear guidance on how to improve it further, and hence improve children's learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

22 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Robert Owen Early Years Centre, London, SE10 0EA

I enjoyed visiting your centre, and talking to you as well as watching you work. I particularly enjoyed having lunch with some of you. I would like to thank you for making me feel welcome. The centre gives you a good start to your education and prepares you well for primary school.

Some of the best things about the centre include the following:

- you enjoy your time at the centre immensely and love dressing up
- during your time at the centre you learn a lot and make good progress
- there are lots of interesting things for you to do and you have a brilliant outdoor area in which to work and play
- teaching is good and you enthusiastically join in the activities provided
- staff take good care of you and help you with your work
- your headteacher makes sure the centre is well focused on your needs and she is well supported by other staff.

There are very few things that need to be improved. These are:

- giving you more opportunities in lessons to learn about letters and letter sounds and writing
- making sure that those of you who are quicker learners are given extra opportunities to learn even more
- making sure that the centre is clear about how teaching could be made even better.

It was very nice to meet you and I wish you well for the future.

Gulshan Kayembe

Lead inspector