

Vanessa Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100316
Local Authority	Hammersmith and Fulham
Inspection number	307355
Inspection date	12 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Sean O'Toole

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	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Janet Watts
Headteacher	Mrs Allison Banbury
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2002
School address	14 Cathnor Road London W12 9JA
Telephone number	0208 743 8196
Fax number	0208 743 0946

Age group	3-4
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is located in a mixed area with some socio-economic deprivation. Just over third of the children have White British backgrounds. About a third speak languages other than English at home and about a third of these children are at an early stage of learning English. A small percentage have learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

It is evident that the children are at the centre of the school's work. Consequently, they thrive physically, academically, socially and emotionally and have the confidence to cope with future challenges. Parents are most impressed and one, summing up the views of many, said, 'The staff have a strong regard for the child's happiness and well-being.'

Many factors contribute to the school's success, not least the high quality of leadership and excellent management at all levels. An unrelenting drive for the best has led to substantial gains since the previous inspection in providing high quality care and learning. Governors also play their part in asking probing questions and rigorously evaluating the school's progress in meeting the targets in its improvement plan. Long- and short-term goals are clearly stated and provide an excellent basis for the school to improve further.

Staff raise the children's self-esteem and inspire confidence so that even the most vulnerable enjoy learning. Through high quality teaching and a challenging curriculum, children have wide-ranging opportunities to explore and investigate. Underpinning the children's success is the staff's excellent knowledge of early learning which contributes to outstanding achievement. Staff are especially successful in promoting physical, personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. The school has correctly highlighted the improvement of children's mathematical vocabulary and skills through all of the areas of learning as an area for development. By the time they leave the school, most children are working at levels which are in advance of those expected for their age.

High quality care and exceptional links with parents ensure that new entrants settle quickly. The children have excellent relationships with adults and their behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. Their knowledge of staying safe and healthy is enhanced substantially through the excellent programme for the teaching of swimming and the emphasis on healthy eating. Staff recognise the importance of helping the children to develop excellent personal qualities and are keen for them to do well and to take responsibility. This is reflected in the way that staff have encouraged greater cooperation and collaboration during tidy up time.

Parental delight with the school speaks volumes. One parent's comment captured what many regard as the essence of the school. 'Vanessa is an inspirational early learning setting with excellent staff...imaginative resources and a strong focus on personal, social and emotional development.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

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

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for the children to develop and use mathematical vocabulary in all of the areas of learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children starting at the school have a wide range of abilities; overall, their attainment is in line with that expected for their age. From their earliest days in school, they grow in confidence in making choices about their learning. They make excellent progress and all groups achieve exceptionally well. As a result, standards in all of the areas of learning are in advance of those expected for the children's age, although there are some gaps in their knowledge and use of mathematical vocabulary. Boys and girls work very well together and quickly gain the confidence to tackle the very challenging and interesting curriculum. They take a keen interest in reading and writing and enjoy retelling stories they have heard.

Because of high quality individual support, those with learning difficulties make excellent progress. Staff make sure that the more able children are given sufficient challenge. Children who start school with little or no English benefit from intensive support and quickly learn to communicate. Children's physical, personal, social and emotional skills are well in advance of those expected for their age. These skills are enhanced by the regular programme of swimming that boosts their knowledge of water safety and adds to their self-esteem.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Regardless of their ability, the children make exceptional progress in their personal skills and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Each day starts with a buzz as the children rush into school, register themselves and settle to work. They maintain high levels of concentration and love to show their work to adults. There is an excitement about learning and it is obvious that the children are highly motivated. They show much consideration to others and their behaviour is exemplary. The children enjoy taking responsibility and are always ready to listen, help with tidying up and share equipment. Their knowledge of healthy and safe living is exceptional and they enjoy the healthy school meals, choose nourishing snacks and join in all physical activity with much energy. Because of their excellent relationships with adults, the children have a real sense of belonging and clearly love their teachers. Their grasp of early reading and writing and well-developed skills in playing together, equip them excellently for the next stage in their schooling.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Each session is planned meticulously to take account of the needs and interests of the children. Staff have a thorough knowledge of how young children learn and make sure that activities are challenging and interesting. They achieve an excellent balance between direct teaching and allowing the children to learn independently. Individual support for those who struggle with some aspects of learning, or who are new to learning English, is exceptional and staff draw on the expertise of specialists to ensure that the children's needs are met. Thorough preparation ensures that children have excellent opportunities to acquire basic skills. During one outstanding session, the children discussed the benefits of healthy eating, learned new vocabulary and had the confidence to taste some foods they had not eaten before. One recent initiative has been to improve how staff question the children. It has worked well and staff often pose interesting

questions that stimulate thinking and move learning on effectively. Staff record the children's achievements in detail and use the information to plan the next steps in learning. This ensures that sessions are challenging and pitched at just the right level.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The children thrive on the variety and challenge offered. One of the main goals of the school's curriculum is to ensure that children become independent and inquisitive learners. Staff are highly successful in the curriculum they provide which includes a wide choice of trips and a focus on practical activities. The children become very successful in expressing their ideas and feelings and enjoy the opportunities to take part in community events. Individual plans to support those with learning difficulties are of high quality and all staff use them effectively. Parents speak highly of the opportunities available to learn alongside their children. The school's approach to family learning makes a substantial contribution to children's enjoyment and to helping the parents to play a full part in their children's education. As one said, 'I wish my school had been as much fun.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The Nursery is an oasis of calm and purpose in which the children thrive and make rapid gains in their learning. Health and safety matters receive immediate action and all staff are fully aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding children. Staff have exceptional understanding of the needs of individuals and find many ways of meeting them. Through the exceptional use of assessment they pinpoint the next steps in learning and keep a regular check on progress. This is especially the case for those with learning difficulties who receive skilful support and guidance. Parents value highly the personal care and support given to their children. One said, 'My son has a severe disablement and has received wonderful support from the school and, as a result, is far more confident, sociable and engaged.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The excellent leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by a dedicated and hard working staff, contributes much to the children's success. These strengths are underpinned by the highly effective governors who not only provide support but also offer challenge. The governors have taken responsibility for providing high quality guidance to parents in response to their request for more information about the next schools. Since the last inspection, the school has been transformed; standards have risen, children make excellent progress and there is a high level of ambition for further success. Parents are effusive in their praise for the ways in which the school provides a vibrant ethos that puts the children at the centre of all decisions.

The headteacher clearly knows the staff's gifts and talents and uses them to good effect when delegating responsibilities. Her purposeful style of leadership inspires confidence and has created a high performing team who willingly use their initiative and respond to challenge. Thorough self-evaluation, rooted in robust analysis of performance data and knowledge of individual children, has enabled the school to leave no stone unturned in the pursuit of excellence. As one parent said, 'I am impressed how the pupils, headmistress and the staff all

work in harmony and provide an excellent backdrop of a very happy environment for the children to enjoy.'

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Vanessa Nursery School, London, W12 9JA

Please see attached.

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

22 November 2007



Dear Children

Inspection of Vanessa Nursery/London/W12 9JA

You go to a really special school and I had a fantastic time when I came to see you. Thank you for helping me to find out about it. I enjoyed talking to you and looking at lots of your work. It was lovely to see how happy you are and how well you get on with each other. When I spoke to your mums, they said how much they liked your school. One even told me that you wanted to come on Saturday and Sunday.

There are many wonderful things about your outstanding school.

- ☺ You are really good at learning how to play together.
- ☺ It was great to see how hard you work and how much you enjoy school.
- ☺ You are very good at listening to your teachers.
- ☺ You love learning to swim.
- ☺ The teachers care about you and work hard to make the Nursery a fun place.
- ☺ I was very impressed by how good you are at concentrating for a long time.
- ☺ Everyone in the Nursery helps to make it a special and caring place.
- ☺ Your headteacher and the governors have done a fantastic job of improving things at the school.

I have asked the teachers to help you to get even better at learning new words about numbers and shapes.

I know that you love coming to school and hope that you will always be as happy to learn.

Best wishes

Sean O'Toole
Lead inspector