

# Maxilla Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100475
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kensington and Chelsea
<b>Inspection number</b>	307398
<b>Inspection date</b>	8 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sean O'Toole

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	51
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Catherine Atkinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Christine Barton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 September 2004
<b>School address</b>	4 Maxilla Walk Off Kingsdown Close London W10 6NQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8960 3981
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8960 4164

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated how well leaders and governors ensure consistency in teaching and learning. He focused on how well children make progress, especially in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and how the children develop personal, social and emotional skills that equip them as effective learners. He also looked at the ways in which leaders and managers help to improve the school through strategic planning and by ensuring that systems and procedures are robust and effective. Evidence was gathered from the analysis of children's work, teachers' assessments, observation of lessons, parents' questionnaires, and discussions with the headteacher, governors, parents and children. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

## Description of the school

The school serves a mixed area. About a fifth of the children have White British backgrounds. Half of the children speak languages other than English at home and are at an early stage of learning English. An average proportion have learning difficulties relating mainly to speech, language and communication and four have statements of special educational needs relating to autism or complex learning needs. The school has had high turnover of teaching staff and recently appointed a headteacher following a long period of interim leaders.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In recent years, the school's work has been disrupted by several staff changes and lack of a substantive headteacher. Following this period of uncertainty, the school is now improving steadily and has the capacity to move on. The new headteacher has begun to tackle several issues and has already ensured that robust procedures are in place for safeguarding children. She has also improved the school's security. Parental opinion is very positive. Several commented on the recent improvements and the dedication of the staff. One said, 'I feel the headteacher has put into place a lot of positive changes which were needed.' Parents correctly praised the school for its friendly and caring atmosphere. These qualities enable the children to make good gains in their personal, social and emotional development and to be prepared well for the next stage of their education. Children like coming to school, they rush in and quickly settle to activities, often with their parents, and enjoy the opportunities to make choices about their learning. This relaxed and purposeful environment contributes to the development of children's learning skills and supports their health and well being by helping them to feel safe and secure.

Staff focus on meeting the needs of each child, and this is particularly good in relation to care and support. Vulnerable children with specific learning needs, such as those with autism and underdeveloped speech, are well supported and make good progress. Those children who are at an early stage of learning English also benefit from good support that enables them to play a full part in the Nursery's activities. They make good progress and quickly learn to communicate with their friends because of the thorough ways that staff encourage the sharing of ideas and feelings. Overall, most children make satisfactory progress and by the time they leave are working at the levels which are close to those expected for their age although in communication, language and literacy their skills are below those expected. This is especially the case regarding knowledge of letters and sounds where there are insufficient opportunities for children to practise these skills.

One parent wrote, 'The children always look happy going into school' and this is evident in their good behaviour and kind and thoughtful consideration of others. Parents also praised the staff for the ways in which they encourage the children to be socially confident. The children are good at making choices, concentrate for long periods and clearly enjoy themselves but the staff do not always capitalise sufficiently on this enthusiasm. The teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. A strength in the teaching is the way that staff relate to the children and encourage them through praise. They also manage behaviour well. Although the staff regularly observe the children and produce attractive portfolios of their work, they do not make sufficient use of the information to plan challenging activities. Staff do not use assessment well enough to plan and match activities to the differing abilities and needs of the children. Although activities are often interesting, they do not focus sharply on the development of key skills and knowledge.

The headteacher has recognised that more remains to be done to enhance the school's work not least in crafting a sharply focused strategic plan. In the past, plans did not identify the most important issues and this led to lack of direction. The new headteacher has identified the school's strengths and weaknesses and has begun to prioritise issues. She has the full backing of the staff, the new Governing Body and parents. There is a strong commitment to working together to raise standards and improve provision.

The Nursery, nestled under the A40 Westway, is at the heart of its community and keenly involves parents and outside agencies in its work. This means that children and their parents benefit from a wide range of support services. The strong emphasis on helping each child to thrive regardless of ability and background lies at the heart of its work. As one parent said, 'It has a real family feeling about it.'

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

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 improve their communication skills especially in developing their knowledge and understanding of sounds and letters.
- Improve aspects of teaching by making more consistent use of assessment to pinpoint children's next steps in learning.
- Sharpen up strategic planning making better use of information about performance to identify and tackle the school's next priorities.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	3
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

19 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Maxilla Nursery School, London, W10 6NQ

Thank you for being so helpful and making me feel welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed watching you and it was great to see how much you enjoy working outside. It was good to see that you are helpful and kind to others. Thank you for looking after me when the fire alarm rang and for making sure that I was safe. It was lovely to hear you talk about your teachers and to see how much you like them.

Some of the things happening in your school are good.

- The staff really care about you and look after you well.
- You are good at playing together, having fun and taking turns.
- You are kind and to everyone and make the school a happy place.
- The outdoor area is great fun and you use it well.
- You are good at listening.
- The adults are good at giving extra help to those who need it.
- Your mums and dads really enjoy starting the day with you at school.

I have asked the adults to make the school even better by giving you more time to learn sounds and letters. You can help by practising them as much as possible. I have also asked them to find other ways of checking on how well you are doing and to make sure that their plans for the future are clear.

I hope that you will always enjoy school as much as you do now.

Best wishes

Sean O'Toole

Lead Inspector