

Childrens House Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100882
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	307516
Inspection date	19 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Judith Dawson

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	3-5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr K Arrowsmith
Headteacher	Ms C Lewis
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2004
School address	92 Bruce Road Bow London E3 3EU
Telephone number	020 8980 4662
Fax number	020 8981 2503

Age group	3-5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: children's achievement, the quality of teaching and learning, and the curriculum.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, discussions with children and parents, school monitoring and tracking data, and teachers' planning. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Childrens House Nursery occupies a grade two listed three-storey building established to support disadvantaged children in the 1920s. Most families in the area live in high-rise flats with little access to outdoor play areas. Forty-seven children are full time and the others attend morning or afternoon sessions. Almost 90% of the children have English as an additional language and many join the Nursery with little or no English. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2007. The Nursery has partnerships with three primary schools, a children's centre, and is proud of its relationships with parents and carers. It is working toward the Effective Early Learning award, Investors in People and Healthy Schools Status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Childrens House Nursery is a good school that is building on its strengths because of the excellent leadership of the headteacher. The school is committed to ensuring the children achieve as well as they can while learning through relevant and interesting activities. There is a dedicated and effective teaching force and the headteacher has encouraged teachers to take more responsibility for the curriculum, and school improvement. She has helped them to change their planning to focus on the development of children's skills, rather than making the activity the target for learning. This has resulted in a significant improvement in the way children learn through practical experiences. Adults discuss their planned activities with their colleagues, identifying what they expect the children to learn. Their expectations of children's abilities are becoming increasingly challenging as they have developed expertise in responding to assessment data. Teachers are very clear about the impact of their planning on children's learning. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Robust monitoring and self evaluation by the leadership team helped identify a shortcoming in the tracking of children's progress, and led to the prompt introduction of good systems that allow for early identification of any need for additional support. All children have weeks when they are the focus of daily assessments and their learning and responses are discussed with colleagues. This enables teachers to plan activities that meet individual needs, interests and any family or personal circumstances.

Many children join the Nursery with well below average knowledge and skills, especially in communication, language and literacy and physical development. Good quality bi-lingual staff support those children in the early stages of learning English well. Consequently, the children make rapid progress in acquiring English language skills. Although the building is not well designed for nursery children, the school makes excellent use of it and the grounds to provide children with plenty of outdoor physical activities. Children relish this and children's physical skills soon catch up with their peers. Because of the good teaching and well-planned curriculum, most children leave the Nursery with the expected levels of knowledge and skills for their age in all areas of learning and some exceed them. Almost all children make good progress, and for some, progress is outstanding.

Children love coming to school. Several parents commented on how happy their children are. Given the general lack of robust health amongst the children, attendance is good. All staff have consistently high expectations of children's behaviour and set high standards in their relationships with each other and the children. Everyone in school is respected and valued. This provides the climate for children to thrive and to work and play well together. Their behaviour is outstanding and many sustain concentration for long periods when they are engrossed in an activity. They are encouraged to take a pride in their work and contribute to their own Learning Journals. Their spiritual, moral and social development is a seamless part of their learning and they have high levels of respect for each other and a strong sense of justice. They show empathy with characters in stories and role-play. A group of children in the early stages of learning English became the characters in the story of the Enormous Turnip, with the voices to match. Others, when dancing, blew an imaginary feather off their hands. Children's cultural development is good and children accept the differences between them as a matter of course. There are plans to enrich the good curriculum further by providing more cultural experiences. African drums are on order! Children have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe, thanks to the emphasis on healthy eating and exercise. They move where they wish around the

school so all are expert at climbing stairs safely! However, although children are expected to have responsibility for their own actions, this does not extend to taking responsibility for their learning. They are not involved in planning what they will do or deciding what they need to learn next. Nor do they evaluate how well they have learnt.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers planning is impressive, thanks to the headteacher's high expectations of the focus on children's learning, providing children with a range of interesting activities to enable them to learn well. There is a good focus on developing children's skills for life beyond the Nursery. This gives them a good understanding of life in the adult world. One child was very indignant that the inspector sat in his shop without giving him some money, while another sold flowers with alacrity for his peers to give to their friends or teachers. A group of children discussed the names of a range of fruits and matched them to pictures. One child said, 'I can't match this because their isn't a red apple. They're all green'. The teacher's quick thinking sent him to the 'shop' to see if he could 'buy' one. Teachers plan well for different groups. Boys' achievements have been lower than that of the girls and activities are planned to stimulate their learning. The site manager provides a good role model, working with the children every morning. Both boys and girls enjoyed playing ball with him. Although each day's activities provide plenty of scope for children to learn both inside and out, no time is allowed for children to plan their time or to talk about what they have learnt.

Some children have speech and language difficulties or language delay. They have clear targets to support their learning and all adults respond to their needs. Any problems at home or events such as new babies are noted so that links between home and school are very good. Parents are always welcome and the headteacher greets families at the beginning of each session. This is much appreciated by the parents and carers. The headteacher knows the children and their families very well, and her friendly comments help parents and carers to feel well informed and part of the life of the Nursery. The 'Drop In' centre on the top floor is valued by the parents with young children. The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for the children. All parents and carers are very happy to trust their children to the school's care. Many enjoy seeing their children's achievements, contributing photographs to their child's Learning Journal. There is a good dialogue between teachers and parents and the school has recognised that many parents and carers would like to become more involved in their child's learning. The school meets all the requirements for safeguarding children and child protection and there is a strong emphasis on ensuring the building is secure and that children know how to move around it safely.

This is a school that is committed to providing the best possible education for the children while recognising the importance of the family. There is an ethos of enthusiasm and excitement in learning, generated by the vision of the headteacher. The deputy headteacher supports her well and now has well-defined responsibilities. Governance is good and governors support and challenge the headteacher well. Some governors support the school through their committees such as finance and premises, but are not very involved in the day-to-day life of the school, relying on the headteacher to keep them informed. Parent governors, however, are particularly effective in their support and suggestions and maintain effective links between the school and the parents and carers. It was very clear at the end of the inspection that the staff relish the challenges of addressing the areas for improvement. There is outstanding potential for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is addressed in the overall effectiveness section, as this is a nursery school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable children to become more involved in planning and evaluating their learning.
- Build on the good support provided by parents and carers by helping them to become more involved in their children's learning.

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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
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	1

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 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	1
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?	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	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

02 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Childrens House Nursery School,London,E3 3EU

I really enjoyed meeting you all when I visited your school. I could see how much you enjoy coming to school and how much fun you have. I am very pleased to see how well you all work and play together. You are very busy all day long and behave very well indeed. Well done. This helps you to learn new things quickly.

Your teachers are good at helping you learn and give you lots of interesting things to do. I am not surprised that so many of you enjoy playing outside. Your garden looks very good and your beans are growing nice and tall. You must be looking after them very well. You know what is good to eat to keep you healthy. The sandwiches you made looked good and I liked the way they were in rectangles or triangles. All the grown ups in school know each of you very well and are careful to give each one of you the help you need for you to learn. This means that you have learnt what you need to know when you go to the big school. Your teachers are proud of you all and you should be very proud of your school. Your are very well cared for and I know that the grown ups who care for you appreciate what the school does for you and your families.

I have asked your teachers to help you to plan what you will do each day. This way you can decide for yourselves what you want to learn or what you feel you need to do next. I want them to give you the chance to tell them and your friends what you have learnt. This will help you learn even better because you will be helping yourselves as well as having your teachers' help. I have also asked them to help your parents and carers understand what you need to learn next so they can help you. When you know what you need to learn yourselves, you can help them too!

Your headteacher is excellent at knowing what you and your teachers need. She makes sure that your school is a happy place to be where you all learn well together. All the grown ups who help to run the school are working hard to make sure your school continues to become better and better.

I wish all the older children the very best when you go to your new schools. I know that the rest of you will continue to enjoy your time in Childrens House Nursery.

Yours Sincerely

Judy Dawson

Lead Inspector