

Columbia Market Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100884
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	307517
Inspection dates	10–11 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Clive Lewis

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 (total)	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Mason
Headteacher	Mrs Nicky Jones (acting)
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2004
School address	Columbia Road Bethnal Green London E2 7PG
Telephone number	020 7739 4518
Fax number	020 7729 8635

Age group	3–5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average sized nursery school. Children come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, and the majority speak English as an additional language. An acting headteacher has been leading the school for the last four terms. Following the recent retirement of the substantive headteacher, the governing body are now in the process of recruiting a new headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Columbia Market Nursery provides a good education for its children. The main reason for the Nursery's success is the high level of motivation and dedication of its staff and governing body. Children of all abilities and backgrounds settle quickly into school life and get a good start to their education in the Nursery. This is because an extremely good partnership is in place between the school and parents, who are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Typical views are, 'It's a really caring school who put the children at the centre of everything they do,' and, 'I feel that the staff will do anything to ensure my child's well-being'.

Achievement is good. When children begin school, they start with skills that are below those expected for their age, particularly in their language and personal and social skills. As a result of the whole-school focus on these areas, by the time the children join Reception classes, their skills are broadly in line with those expected of their age in all areas of learning. Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength of the school and is outstanding. They are happy and keen to be at nursery, and this is reflected in their good levels of attendance. Behaviour is outstanding. This is because staff manage the children very thoughtfully and consistently. Children have very positive attitudes to their learning. They really enjoy their time in school because their individual needs are routinely met through recognising the uniqueness of each child. In this safe and secure environment, children become independent and confident learners who are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Children enjoy the many rich and exciting activities planned for them both indoors and outdoors, and talk very enthusiastically about the many things they do at the Nursery. They understand about healthy and safe lifestyles because the school encourages them to eat well and take regular exercise in the exciting outdoor areas. The well-planned and exciting learning opportunities help to meet all children's needs well and keep them actively engaged in their learning.

Children who speak English as an additional language achieve well because they are supported successfully. Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good links that the Nursery has with a wide range of outside agencies which provide good support for children and their parents. Staff know their children well. They make careful and detailed observations which are then used to enable them to plan activities which children enjoy. A recently introduced assessment and tracking system is now providing staff with more detailed, accurate information about children's progress. However, it is not yet being used to its full advantage to track the progress of different groups within the school or to quickly identify weaknesses in provision and modify the curriculum in response. Staff have a good understanding of the new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum and plans have been adapted to reflect the changes. The quality of equipment particularly in the outdoor area, is exceptionally good and is utilised very well by the staff.

Children are well prepared for the next stage of education because of their very successfully developed personal and social skills. The school has very strong transition systems, both to welcome children to the school and to ease their transfer to Reception classes in local schools. The school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. It actively embraces and celebrates the community it serves, and successfully reaches out to all families. Everyone is treated with unconditional respect and resources are carefully selected to reflect different cultures.

Leadership and management are good. Strong leadership from the acting headteacher has ensured that all staff are working together to improve provision. Senior management have a good and accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and are taking effective steps to improve it. Leaders of areas of learning have begun to develop their roles, but they have yet to develop a complete view of strengths and weaknesses in their areas. This is because they have not had the opportunity to observe their colleagues teaching. The school has a good understanding of how well it is doing and its self-evaluation is mostly accurate. Its capacity for future improvement and the value for money it offers are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen the role of leading teachers in monitoring the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility.
- Improve the analysis of assessment and tracking data, and ensure this is used effectively by all staff.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Good quality teaching by caring, supportive staff ensures that most children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language, make good progress towards the early learning goals. Children of all backgrounds and abilities achieve well and thrive. This is because the staff work closely with parents and outside agencies to successfully nurture and support the children's all round academic and personal development. They provide a good range of opportunities both within and outside the Nursery which excite and interest children well. Consequently, by the time they leave the school, most children have made good progress in developing skills in communicating, literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology that will help them in their future education. They develop well as active and independent learners, learning to work with others and take turns. They develop a good understanding of the wider world through their play activities and through the experiences offered by visits and visitors to the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Behaviour around the school is outstanding and children behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others. They understand the dangers of, for instance, playing in the sandpit, and know how to stay safe without becoming fearful. They understand and adopt healthy habits, for example independently washing their hands before lunch. The school's outstanding and stimulating outdoor environment ensures that children are encouraged to be constantly active, and they make good progress in their physical skills as a result. They are aware of healthy choices in what they eat, deciding for themselves what they want to eat for lunch, for example.

Children play well on their own and with others. They participate enthusiastically in learning activities, demonstrating a good understanding of what they are learning. They take responsibility for choosing their activities, justifying their choices and explaining what they are doing. They use all their senses to actively explore and solve problems. Relationships with each other and with adults are very good. Children have very positive attitudes to their learning, and participate enthusiastically in choosing from the wide range of interesting and exciting activities available for them both indoors and outdoors. Children from very different backgrounds

work and play together in harmony. They make friends, work and play collaboratively, and learn to show respect for each other.

Quality of provision

Effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start and develop positive attitudes to learning. This is because teachers and staff have a good knowledge of the learning and development requirements of young children and are confident in helping them to learn effectively both indoors and outdoors. They plan effectively to ensure that each child is suitably challenged by the learning experiences that they provide. All staff are involved in observations of children's work and performance, and record their progress in children's individual profiles. The newly adopted assessment and tracking system is beginning to provide staff with detailed information on the progress of individual children, although the analysis of the data has not yet developed sufficiently to allow the school to quickly identify weaknesses in provision and make amendments to the curriculum. Children work well with adults and when undertaking tasks independently. All adults are well deployed to support learning. Activities are well matched to the full range of children's needs, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language.

Effectiveness in promoting children's welfare

Grade: 1

The staff are very committed to providing high-quality care. This is effective in promoting all children's social, physical and economic well-being with a high level of consistency. Staff demonstrate a very good understanding of the welfare requirements and associated guidance for children of this age group. Behaviour is managed very well. Staff promote good health and well-being well, and teach children about being safe. They encourage children to develop the habits and behaviour appropriate to good learners. Arrangements for safeguarding children are robust and regularly reviewed. The setting, particularly the new outdoor environment, is outstandingly well equipped, safe and secure, and provides a supportive environment which enables children to thrive. Any children at risk are identified early and the school works very effectively with parents and carers, other agencies and providers to ensure that all children are cared for well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Senior management is focused on helping all children to make good progress in their learning and development. The acting headteacher has successfully maintained and encouraged very good and enthusiastic teamwork through a difficult and continuing period of transition. As a result, there is a strong common sense of purpose, among all adults working in the school, to work together to do the best for all the children. She has introduced a number of improvements to provision, including a new assessment and tracking system. Leading teachers are very enthusiastic and keen to improve standards in their areas of learning. However, they do not currently have a full view of provision as they have not yet had the opportunity to observe the quality of teaching in their areas of learning.

The school is very inclusive, so that all children have their welfare needs met and achieve as well as they can regardless of their background. The school has exceptionally good links with parents, who responded enthusiastically to the request for their views on the school. Vetting procedures for all adults who work with children are robust. Resources are well used to improve outcomes for the children. The impact of the school is seen in the good or better progress made by most children in all the areas of learning, and in their sense of security and well-being.

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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 is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do children in the EYFS 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/or disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?	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	2
The extent to which 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 effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

05 January 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Columbia Market Nursery School, London, E2 7PG

Thank you for helping me to find out about your school. I enjoyed watching lessons and talking to some of you. You attend a very happy and friendly school. You go to a good school because:

- you all do well with your work and try hard
- your behaviour is excellent
- you really enjoy all the things that you do at school
- your headteacher and teachers have good ideas about ways to improve your school
- the teaching is good and staff work very hard to make sessions fun and interesting
- the school has a very good partnership with your parents
- the staff care for you really well and listen to you thoughtfully.

I have asked your school to look at how they can make things even better. The most important things are to:

- make better use of all the information they gather about each of you and the way you learn
- observe each other teaching so they can help you to do even better.

Continue to enjoy all the wonderful things you are learning at Columbia Market Nursery.

Yours faithfully

Clive Lewis

Lead Inspector