

Grove House Children Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101860
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	307828
Inspection date	26 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Linda McGill HMI

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Diana Pagan
Headteacher	Mrs Himisha Patel
Date of previous school inspection	23 October 2003
School address	School Passage North Road Southall UB1 2JG
Telephone number	020 8571 0878
Fax number	020 8571 1208

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. She evaluated the centre's overall effectiveness and investigated three particular issues. These were: to confirm that children reach good standards and that their achievement is outstanding; to evaluate the effectiveness of the centre's 'key person' approach to promoting the learning and welfare of individual children; and to evaluate the impact of the centre's leadership on the outcomes for the children. To do this she spoke with the headteacher, staff, children and the chair of the governing body, looked at the school's assessment and tracking records and other relevant documents, and analysed responses to the questionnaire for parents. She also observed teaching and learning indoors and out. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but no evidence was found to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Grove House Children Centre serves the ethnically and linguistically diverse area of Southall. As well as nursery education for 100 children aged between three and four, it offers a wide range of services to families in the local community. This includes extended day care, an infant and toddler centre, adult and family learning and psychological services. The centre's facilities are used by a local childminding network and by a support group for families of autistic children, among others. Grove House is part of the local extended schools partnership. It has received accreditation for Investors in People and Effective Early Learning, and recently for 'I CAN' Early Talk, which recognises the centre's work in developing children's language and communication skills.

The majority of the children speak a language other than English at home, and many are in the early stages of learning English. About one fifth of the children have additional needs, such as speech and language, emotional or behavioural difficulties, or medical needs. Attainment on entry to the centre is lower than that expected of typical three-year-olds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Grove House Children Centre gives its children an excellent start to their education. Parents rightly value its outstanding work very highly. A substantial proportion of the parent group returned their questionnaires and the overwhelming majority of responses were extremely positive. There were three main themes to their comments. Parents appreciate the fact that their children are happy, have fun and thoroughly enjoy their time at school. They are pleased with the success that many children have in learning to speak English with confidence. Finally, they value the warm, supportive and encouraging relationships that the teachers and other nursery staff have with the children. 'My son has excelled in his learning' and 'I am most pleased with the care, education and all the provision that is made for her' were typical comments.

The children reach high standards, and their achievement is excellent. By the time they leave to go on to primary school, many already have acquired the skills and knowledge expected of older children. Those who have learning difficulties also make excellent progress, relative to their starting points and capabilities. All children, including those who are learning English as an additional language, do particularly well in broadening their vocabulary and in developing good speaking and listening skills. They love listening to and acting out stories. They also achieve highly in their personal development, learning to cooperate, work in groups and get along happily with others. Children develop confidence and a real thirst for learning; they are eager to explore the world around them. They learn to reason as they think about how to solve problems, and make a good start in their mathematical development. All of this prepares them very well for the next stage in their education and, importantly, for life.

The children do so well because the staff put them at the heart of what they do. Home visits and induction meetings enable the staff, children and their families to get to know each other and help make sure that starting at nursery is a happy event. The staff regularly consult with parents to discuss each child's current needs and interests. The learning activities are planned around these 'all about me' assessments. This means that children are able to explore things that are important to them in great depth. The rich and exciting curriculum also has breadth and relevance; good use is made of all the local area has to offer and the children's own backgrounds. Projects such as the 'Teddy Bear's Picnic' add stimulus as well as promoting healthy eating. Visitors, for example a storyteller, and the creative use of information and communication technology enrich the curriculum and broaden children's horizons.

Teaching is outstanding. Each member of staff is a 'key person' for a group of children. The key persons know their children very well. They set two targets for each child's learning every term, based on what the child needs to learn next in order to make progress towards the early learning goals. The key person tracks progress towards these targets meticulously, and keeps detailed records and portfolios that illustrate clearly what children have learned. The quality of the adults' interactions with children is excellent. The staff are particularly skilled at helping children develop their speaking and listening skills and have a thorough understanding of the best ways to support bilingual learners. Through their thoughtful modelling of language and behaviour, and in particular knowing when to ask questions and when to allow children space and time to think, they give children the means to succeed. Staff create a vibrant, stimulating environment which encourages the children to participate in a wide range of activities and to sustain their interest. During this inspection, children did not tire of hoisting a bucket up and down using a pulley or acting out the story of the Three Little Pigs, maintaining their concentration for some considerable time.

The children thoroughly enjoy their time at school and their behaviour is superb. They take care of their resources - they even enjoy tidying up. They play energetically but safely in the small garden, looking out for one another. The children are learning about caring for those less fortunate than themselves. They and their families recently raised a substantial sum of money for charity by participating in a sponsored 'pedal push'. Attendance levels have dropped a little since the last inspection, and are satisfactory.

The care, guidance and support that the centre offers its children are outstanding. The strong emphasis on helping children succeed in their learning is matched by concern for their welfare. The centre does a great deal to ensure that the children are safe and well cared for, and therefore able to thrive and to learn. It works well in partnership with a very wide range of external agencies and other schools to meet the needs of vulnerable children and to support their families.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are strong and thoughtful leaders who, along with the other members of staff, have an unswerving commitment to providing the best for the children. They have effectively built on the centre's long-standing successes and are fine tuning aspects of its work, for example, in setting targets for groups of children as well as individuals. Their approach to monitoring and evaluating the centre's work is rigorous. For example, close analysis of the children's attainment and progress has helped to pinpoint a few particular areas that are not as strong as others. There are appropriate plans to develop practice in order to ensure that standards rise still further. There are clear criteria against which success will be judged, but quantifiable targets would give them an even sharper edge. The centre successfully raises the aspirations of members of staff as well as the children; two of the nursery nurses are undertaking training to be teachers. The governing body has a good knowledge of the centre's work and its members support the centre well.

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

- Strive to improve attendance.

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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	3
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

07 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Grove House Children Centre, Southall, UB1 2JG

I know how much you enjoy stories, so here is a short one, just for you.

Not long ago, a lady went to visit a nursery centre. She had heard that children had fun there, had interesting things to do and learned lots of things. She decided that she had to go and see for herself.

While she was there, she sat in the classroom and the children showed her the models they were making, a monster in a jar (it was not real!) and the minibeasts that they had found. She went outside and saw children climbing, pouring water along drainpipes, pulling buckets up and down and mixing pretend cake in giant-sized pots with giant-sized spoons. She saw the big bad wolf huff and puff as he tried to blow the house of bricks down. She heard children talking happily with each other and with their teachers. She saw the grown-ups taking really good care of the children and playing with them, teaching them things. Last of all, she read lots and lots of letters from the children's mums and dads which told her how happy they were with the nursery.

The lady thought, 'this is really excellent. I will write a report to tell everyone in the world how good it is.' So she went off to her computer to do just that.

This is a true story. The lady was me, and the children were you. Your mums and dads will have the report that I have written. It says that Grove House is an excellent place, because you learn so much while you are there.

I had a lovely day at Grove House and really enjoyed meeting you and the adults who teach and look after you.

Yours sincerely,

Linda McGill Her Majesty's Inspector

p.s. Tell your mums and dads to bring you to nursery as often as they can. It is too good to miss!