

Effra Early Years Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100551
Local Authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	323293
Inspection date	21 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Steven Hill

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	2-5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brent Ludewick
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Hitchins
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2006
School address	35 Effra Parade London SW2 1PL
Telephone number	020 7733 8425
Fax number	020 7733 6791

Age group	2-5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the centre and investigated:

- the progress that children make, particularly in the Nursery
- the effectiveness of key workers in ensuring provision is matched to the needs of individual children throughout the centre
- the effectiveness of links with parents and the community, and between the different elements of provision within the centre.

Evidence was gathered from observation of different aspects of the centre's provision, particularly children in lessons and at lunchtime, formal and informal discussions with staff, parents and governors, examination of the school's records and other documentation, and questionnaires filled in by parents.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence 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 the report.

Description of the school

This children's centre provides for 120 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) aged 3-4 in the maintained Nursery. Up to 26 younger EYFS children (known as under-threes) are provided for in day care, managed by the governing body. The governing body also manages breakfast and after school clubs for up to 46 children. A creche is often provided for the young children of parents who attend adult learning courses in the centre. Members of staff also provide 'drop in' sessions for mothers and toddlers on a regular basis. About half of Nursery children are full time, so there are about 90 children in the Nursery unit at any one time.

Children come from a widely diverse range of heritages, with Black African, Black Caribbean, White British and Other White being the largest groups. Almost a half of the children speak English as an additional language, with many at the early stages of learning English. A high proportion of children are identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with the vast majority of these having speech, language and communication problems.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The centre has gone from strength to strength since the last inspection, and provision for children in the EYFS is outstanding. As a result, their personal development and achievement are excellent.

Children who start at the centre in the under-threes provision get an exceptionally good start to their education. Staff have fully implemented the recommendations from the last inspection. The close liaison between this provision and that in the Nursery means that they share many of the same impressive strengths. The breakfast and after school clubs share and maintain the same values and ethos, so that children who receive this 'wrap around' care benefit from seamless provision through the day.

At the heart of everything the centre does are its exceptionally good links with parents and the community. From the time when many parents first visit the centre - at the extremely popular 'parents and toddlers drop-in' sessions - staff work incessantly to involve them in their children's learning and welfare, and in the life of the centre and wider community. The greatly respected outreach worker makes a considerable contribution to this, particularly in involving the whole range of people in the diverse community that the centre serves. The centre's contribution to community cohesion is outstanding. Parents greatly appreciate the centre's work, one reporting that it has 'created an excellent community and is always very welcoming'.

Provision to promote children's welfare is excellent throughout the centre. All suitable safeguarding procedures are in place. Building on their links with parents, staff have a very good knowledge of children's social and emotional needs. A range of very successful induction procedures, including home visits, and continual consultation with parents greatly enhances this. All members of staff, in particular children's key workers, use this knowledge to ensure that each individual's needs are met very well, so their personal development is excellent. The centre uses a huge variety of links with other agencies to enhance the high-quality work of its own staff. This is particularly effective in supporting the development and progress of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enabling them to play a full part in the life of the centre. Several parents wrote to stress this strength in the centre's work.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at Effra, and the different elements of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Their behaviour is excellent and they have very positive relationships with each other and with the adults. The trust and respect they have for their key workers are major elements in their feelings of safety and their happiness in school. Key workers' relationships with both children and their parents underpin much of the centre's success. Typically, one parent said of her child's key worker, 'She's fantastic, we just love her!' Children play together very well, sharing ideas and equipment. The centre's work in celebrating the diversity of the community means that children come to a very good understanding of the richness of a variety of cultures. This promotes the positive, racially harmonious ethos that pervades the centre.

Lunchtime in the Nursery is a particularly impressive social event, with children sitting in small groups with adults to share a meal. The good manners, common sense and calm behaviour they display would be a credit to much older children. Adults take full advantage of this time to enhance children's speaking and listening skills through sensitive questioning about their day. They promote healthy eating habits by tempting children to try the variety of high-quality food on offer.

Children's excellent personal development gives a firm basis for their equally strong academic progress. They do very well in the under-threes class, making great strides in the light of their starting points. Nevertheless, children start in the Nursery with attainment that, while varying considerably between individuals, is considerably below that expected nationally. Exceptionally good provision to help them learn and develop means that their standards are generally above those expected by the time they leave for Reception classes in a variety of local schools. Keys to this progress are high-quality teaching, a wide-ranging and exciting variety of activities, which enthuse them about learning, and, crucially, a very careful match of tasks to their individual needs. This latter is possible because key workers' great understanding of children's emotional needs is complemented by a similarly thorough knowledge of their academic progress. High-quality assessment and recording procedures undertaken by each child's key worker, shared regularly with other staff, are central to this.

Children take a great delight in participating in the variety of high-quality activities that the adults prepare for them indoors and out. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is a particular strength that is developing children's skills very well. The outdoor areas are of high quality for the Nursery, for the under-threes and for the 'wrap around' care sessions. A good balance is kept between those activities that are directed by adults and those where children choose things for themselves. Staff are particularly adept at intervening, when relevant, in children's play to challenge them to think things through, developing their understanding and their thinking skills very effectively.

Key workers continually monitor and record the progress that their charges make. A strong feature of this is the use of digital cameras to record children at play, and the subsequent discussion of the photographs with children to probe their understanding. The resultant notes provide a clear record of children's progress through the centre. Key workers use these to plan the next steps in learning, and to draw up targets for children that are regularly shared with them and their parents. Children new to speaking English rapidly become more confident in the language through their everyday interactions with classmates and staff, and the excellent specific support they receive. Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their progress tracked particularly carefully, and staff draw on a range of expertise from within and beyond the centre to ensure their particular needs are met. As a result, they make the same excellent progress as their classmates.

Currently, the centre is working to update its assessment systems to be a better match to recent national guidelines. This is also bringing the assessments made in Nursery and for under-threes more closely into line with each other, providing a more seamless record of children's progress. The deputy headteacher has been working to transfer summary data onto an ICT-based system to give a clearer overview of the progress of individuals and groups, and has started to train staff in the use of this.

The centre's many strengths stem from excellent leadership and management. The clear vision of the headteacher has focused the whole school community on a common approach to promoting children's achievement and personal development, based on the centrality of links with parents and the community. As a result, all members of staff in the breakfast and after school clubs, in the under-threes and in the Nursery, have an extremely well-integrated approach that results in high standards for children. Self-evaluation is of high quality. Children's progress and development are tracked carefully and any problems are quickly picked up and dealt with well. The rigorous and regular monitoring of provision ensures that members of staff get feedback on any issues and are able to continually revise and improve their practice. An extensive programme of professional development has enabled staff to update and improve their skills

and qualifications. Governors know the centre extremely well, share its aims and are well able to hold it to account for its performance. Staff and governors are continually looking to improve provision, and to enhance even further the excellent links to the community. As a result, the centre is very well placed to build on its strengths to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Consolidate the use of the new assessment systems across the centre, and ensure that all members of staff are confident in using the ICT systems to deal with data.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do children in the EYFS 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/or disabilities make progress	1

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
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?	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 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	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

30 January 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Effra Early Years Centre, London, SW2 1PL

Thank you for chatting to us when we visited you. We enjoyed our day in your wonderful centre. We learned a lot about it, and these were the most important things.

Effra is an outstanding place for children to be.

You all learn a lot because your key workers are so good at helping you.

You have plenty of exciting things to do.

You enjoy learning, and your behaviour is brilliant.

The adults look after you very well, and keep a very careful eye on how you are doing.

The adults get on well with your parents, so they know all about what you need in order to help you to learn more.

The adults are very good at organising things, and want to make the centre even better.

The most important thing they are going to do next, is to have even better ways of keeping a check on how you are learning, and the progress you are making.

We hope you all carry on having a lovely time at Effra.

Yours faithfully

Steven Hill

Lead Inspector