

# McMillan Early Childhood Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102365
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hillingdon
<b>Inspection number</b>	323629
<b>Inspection date</b>	9 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike Thompson

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 (total)	132
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Christine Glazebrook
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Ludmila Morris
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 April 2006
<b>School address</b>	Judge Heath Lane Hayes UB3 2PD
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8573 4427
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8569 0486

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## Introduction

Two Additional Inspectors carried out this inspection. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the centre and investigated the following issues.

- How effective teaching and the curriculum are in promoting the development of children's skills in communication and mathematics, and in ensuring consistently challenging activities for the more able.
- To what extent the school is able to demonstrate highly effective governance and leadership of day-care provision.

The inspectors gathered evidence from data about children's attainment and progress, from documentation provided by the headteacher, observations of teaching and learning, and of the 'wraparound' care provided for children outside the normal session hours. The inspection also included the day care that is provided in a separate unit adjacent to the Nursery. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with representatives of the governing body, and members of staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the centre's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the centre's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The centre provides for the large majority of Early Years Foundation Stage children in the maintained Nursery, which is for children aged 3 years and over. In addition, the day care unit caters for a small number of children up to three years old. In the Nursery, there are also 12 'wraparound' day care places for childcare outside the Nursery's opening hours. The centre serves a socially and culturally diverse community. About 75% of the children are from minority ethnic groups. Of these, the proportion having a Somali heritage is rising and currently comprises about 10% of the roll. A small proportion of the children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These are wide-ranging, but a small number of the children have autistic spectrum disorders, speech and language problems and some have challenging behaviour.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The McMillan Early Childhood Centre is highly effective. Throughout the centre the unique qualities of each child are successfully celebrated and nurtured. In the Nursery, children achieve outstandingly well, both academically and in their personal development and well-being. This occurs because they are exceptionally well taught and looked after. Children in the day care unit also make excellent progress in their personal development because of the high-quality provision for their welfare. In contrast to the Nursery, the children's learning in the under 3 day care unit is consistently good rather than outstanding because staff are not quite as skilled as educators and sometimes miss opportunities to develop children's knowledge and understanding. The parents' overwhelmingly positive views of the centre are fully justified. They are summed up very well by one parent who wrote, 'McMillan is definitely a great place for children's early years!'

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below what is normally expected of three-year-olds. For example, many have a limited ability to concentrate on the activities provided for them. In addition, some have few or no skills in communicating in English. From these low starting points, children make outstanding progress and, by the time they transfer to local primary schools, the attainment of a large majority of the children matches national expectations. There are many factors which, together, result in the children achieving so well. The most significant of these is that the school is exceptionally well staffed. At times there may be as few as four or five children to each adult. This means that important work in developing children's skills in English, for example through the good modelling of correct pronunciation, has a real impact. Skilled bilingual staff also play a successful role in this work. The 'key workers' in particular are highly skilled and have a good understanding of the ways in which very young children learn. The staff show great expertise in working with the children, and are particularly good at looking at what needs to be done to help each individual to improve. The quality and detail of the day-to-day assessments carried out are such that planning for learning is tailored for each individual. The Nursery, therefore, fully satisfied inspectors that it is highly effective in promoting the development of children's skills in communication and mathematics, and in ensuring consistently challenging activities for the more able. All the children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is a second language, make excellent progress overall. The Nursery is very good at providing its children with really interesting and exciting things to do, and has a very good range of equipment to help do this. Consequently the children are always keen to learn. For example, equipment for information and communication technology, such as remote-controlled vehicles, is regularly used. During the inspection, a teacher provided good levels of challenge for children as they took turns in using the controls to manoeuvre a car into a 'garage'. Computers are also popular, although there are not enough of them. A particularly noteworthy feature of the curriculum is the emphasis placed on first-hand experiences to enhance children's learning. These include regular visits to places of interest. For instance, the nursery rhyme about 'The Grand Old Duke of York' was brought to life when children tried walking up the steep conical mounds at Northala Fields park. There are clear and well-established routines, which help develop children's confidence as learners. Planning ensures a good balance between the activities directed by adults and those chosen by the children themselves.

One of the key factors underpinning the high-quality provision for welfare and learning is the centre's excellent partnership with parents and its outstanding contribution to promoting

community cohesion. Staff and parents make very good use of the contacts they have at the beginning and end of each session to discuss the children's progress and needs. Nursery staff carry out extremely useful home visits as part of the admission process for every child. Where necessary, bilingual staff members take part in these visits so that the fullest possible picture of each individual can be put together before the child's first session. This information forms the starting point for the superb, well-illustrated profiles of each child that record the individual's achievements in great detail. A parent support worker, employed by the centre, plays a vital role in helping vulnerable parents and their children and thus helps minimise the adverse impact of home circumstances on children's achievement. Parents are supported by the centre in many other ways. For instance, the 'Triple P' sessions help parents to develop their parenting skills, with a particular focus on managing their children's behaviour. The Pals (Playing and learning to socialise) sessions help children who are experiencing difficulties in managing their behaviour, including those who are reluctant to communicate with others. The popular toy library and 'learning bags', well-organised by two members of staff, provide parents with excellent activities and ideas to help enrich their children's learning at home. Comments such as, 'My child really likes this game and doesn't want me to take it back' typify the appreciation shown by many parents. The extended day care provided for a small number of Nursery-age children is one of many high-quality, caring facets of the centre's provision that make a real difference to parents in bringing up their children.

Children's excellent personal development and well-being underpin everything that the Nursery does. This has a very positive impact on children's progress. Part of the reason for children's excellent achievement is that they greatly enjoy attending. Unfortunately, not all children attend regularly enough, despite the centre's very careful monitoring and the exceptional support it provides for families. The headteacher reports that extended holidays to the Indian sub-continent during term time account for a number of absences. The children behave exceptionally well and get on very well with one another. During the inspection, the inspectors saw no evidence of the challenging behaviour identified by the headteacher as something staff have to deal with. Children feel safe and very happy, and know that there is always someone to comfort them if they feel sad. They develop confidence and independence in response to high expectations of the staff. They respond very well to the excellent promotion of healthy lifestyles and safe practices. Children's achievements in acquiring basic skills prepare them very well for the next stage in their education. With the strong support of their parents, they make an outstanding contribution to the community in a variety of ways, including a number of fundraising activities for various charities.

Children in the under 3 day care unit make very rapid strides in their personal development because of the high quality of pastoral care. At lunchtime, for example, the staff are very effective in encouraging children to eat well. The excellent arrangements for children to have a period of rest during the day reflect the safe and caring environment provided. The staff are good at helping children to learn through play, but sometimes miss opportunities to develop learning even further. For example, the children loved playing with a train set, and adults showed good techniques in developing imaginative play by encouraging the children to talk about where the train might be going, and why. However, the opportunity presented to link this experience to a story and help promote a love of books was not taken. There is also room for the development of more informal opportunities for children to learn basic skills in counting or to solve simple problems, and greater use could be made of the outdoor area. The unit is well led and managed. However, a formal approach to self-evaluation is yet to be developed.

As in the Nursery, a very strong partnership with parents contributes a great deal to children's development and love of learning.

In the Nursery, the headteacher and all staff with responsibilities for leadership provide the very clear direction which contributes significantly towards children's high levels of achievement and their outstanding personal development. An extremely strong feature of the Nursery is the commitment and teamwork of the staff in responding to the wide-ranging needs of the children. For example, most of the staff have received training in assessing and supporting children with speech and language problems to help address the needs of the children with these difficulties. This level of commitment amply illustrates the centre's outstanding capacity for continuous improvement.

Governors have a reasonable understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for improvement, and ensure that all legal requirements are properly met in both the Nursery and the day care unit. However, they are sometimes too reliant on the headteacher for information. This means an element of self-evaluation is sometimes missing.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that provision for day care is strengthened by focusing more on the promotion of children's learning and establishing a formal self-evaluation process.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	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

<b>How well do children in the EYFS achieve?</b>	1
The standards[1] reached by learners	3
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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?</b>	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	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

<b>How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?</b>	1
<b>How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?</b>	1



## Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?</b>	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	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	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

**Annex B**

**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

25 February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of McMillan Early Childhood Centre, Hayes, UB3 2PD

Thank you very much for being so helpful when your inspectors came to visit your school. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at all your lovely work.

We think that your Nursery is excellent and your day care unit is good. Together, they make an excellent early years centre. Here is a list of what we liked best.

- You are really lucky that you have so many clever grown-ups to look after you and teach you.
- All of the grown-ups in the Nursery are really good at teaching you and giving you lots of exciting things to do.
- You learn a lot because you always try your best.
- You play well with each other and are good at taking turns.
- The grown-ups are really good at making sure that you have everything that you need and that you are safe.

Even in a wonderful centre like yours there is always something that could be better. So, what needs to be done next is for the grown-ups in the under 3's day care unit to think a bit more about what children could learn when they are playing, and work out a plan to help the day care unit become as excellent as the Nursery.

Yours faithfully

Mike Thompson

Lead Inspector