

Low Hall Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103027
Local Authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	376799
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Harms
Headteacher	Claire Toberman
Date of previous school inspection	30 March 2009
School address	Low Hall Lane London E17 8BE
Telephone number	020 8520 1689
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Email address	lowhall.nursery@sch.lbwwf.gov.uk

Age group	3–5
Inspection date(s)	10–11 November 2011
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who observed 14 learning sessions or part sessions taught by two teachers, four nursery nurses and four teaching assistants. The inspection team examined the school's policies, assessment information, children's work, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. They held discussions with the headteacher, staff, parents and carers and members of the governing body. The inspectors analysed 70 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and 16 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effective are the school's strategies to develop children's English language skills?
- To what extent does the school help parents and carers to support their children's learning?
- How successful has the school been in improving attendance?

Information about the school

Low Hall is a small nursery. The children come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Over a quarter of the children are at an early stage of learning English when they start. An above average proportion of children have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school incorporates a children's centre which offers extended provision, but this provision is inspected separately. The local authority has recently changed the point of entry for nurseries so that all children now start in September rather than September or January as was previously the case.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Low Hall continues to be an outstanding nursery. Through highly effective leadership and strong teamwork among the staff, the school has successfully maintained and built on the outstanding performance identified in the previous inspection. Children make extremely good progress in all areas of learning because of high quality teaching and the exciting learning activities provided. All groups of children thrive in a very positive and harmonious community. Excellent partnerships have been established with parents and carers, who are delighted with the care and education provided. Their comments included, 'Low Hall Nursery is just superb', 'Low Hall is excellent with children and their families' and 'Undoubtedly an outstanding set-up from children's and the families' point of view.' The school is particularly successful in helping parents and carers to support their children's learning.

Teachers, nursery nurses and learning support assistants plan extremely well together in order to provide high quality learning experiences which are well matched to children's individual needs. The Nursery rightly places considerable emphasis on developing language skills and children make rapid gains in this area. Children also make exceptional gains in areas such as creative, mathematical and physical development. They make outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of excellent care, guidance and support, and the first class relationships between adults and children. Children demonstrate considerable confidence and independence. They learn and play very well with their peers. Children feel extremely safe in the Nursery because of strong attention to safeguarding. They adopt healthy lifestyles by choosing healthy foods and participating in exercise. Community cohesion is promoted successfully and children's spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Children show considerable respect for others and are supportive. Behaviour is almost always exemplary and children make valuable contributions to the nursery community.

An experienced and established headteacher provides considerable vision, drive and educational direction. She is very well supported by other key leaders. All leaders and staff show a passionate determination to do the very best for all children and their parents. Very productive partnerships with other agencies contribute to the school's success. Self-evaluation is systematic and effective action is taken to bring about improvements. With changes in the point of entry, the school is aware of the need to strengthen the induction arrangements for younger children and their parents. Since the previous inspection, the school has built on its outstanding practice and made further improvements, including raising children's attendance rates to above average. Low Hall demonstrates an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the induction arrangements for the younger intake of children, and their parents, as outlined in the school's clear improvement planning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

Children's achievement is outstanding. They enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are generally below levels expected for their age. A significant proportion enter with low English language skills. Children thoroughly enjoy the wide range of exciting learning activities provided and make exceptionally good progress. By the end of their time at the Nursery, attainment is above the levels expected for their age. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive very well-targeted support and make rapid progress. The wide range of exciting activities on offer and the high quality teaching enable both boys and girls to perform exceptionally well. Successful planning and creative teaching ensure that the most-able children are challenged and extended.

In communication and language skills, children make outstanding progress because adults promote speaking and listening very well through all activities. The strong emphasis on language work and specialist support enables children who are learning English as a new language to make exceptional progress. Children love books and the stories read to them. For example, a group were fascinated by the story and the wonderful rhymes of the Shoe Baby. They listened with great interest and responded enthusiastically to the teacher's animation, expression and skilful questioning. Children acquire and practise mark-making and early writing skills very well because of the wide range of opportunities created. They make exceptional gains in mathematical development and problem solving. Children had fun in investigating how different fruits travelled down a length of inclined guttering. They tested lemons, limes and grapefruit. They enjoyed the well-planned activities and games that extended their skills of counting and calculation.

Through sowing seeds and planting trees, children have gained a very good knowledge and understanding of what plants need to grow. Beans, onions, potatoes and cabbages are all grown in well-organised raised beds and an apple tree was planted during the inspection. Children thoroughly enjoy exploring with colours. They created spattered firework patterns using red, orange, yellow and white paints on black sugar paper. Their balancing and climbing skills are developing extremely well with the clear guidance from adults. They ride the wide range of vehicles with increasing coordination and control.

Children feel extremely safe and know who to turn to if they are upset or need help because of the high quality relationships established with very caring staff. They enjoy healthy snacks. Children know that fresh fruit is good for you and understand the importance of drinking milk and water. They participate enthusiastically in regular exercise in the outdoor learning area. High expectations from adults and excellent relationships lead to exemplary behaviour. Through the celebration of Eid, Divali and Chinese New Year, children develop an appreciation and very good understanding of

different cultures and faiths. They are very keen to come to the Nursery and attend regularly. Outstanding progress in basic skills and highly developed personal and social skills prepare children very well for their next school.

These are the grades for children’s outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Children’s achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Children’s attainment ¹	2
The quality of children’s learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children’s behaviour	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Children’s attendance ¹	2
The extent of children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Inspirational teaching leads to outstanding learning and considerable enjoyment for children. Adults have a very secure knowledge and understanding of how children of this age learn. Assessment procedures provide a clear overview of each child’s attainment and this information is used very well to plan the next steps of children’s learning. The learning experiences and progress of individual children are carefully recorded in their green books with detailed annotations and photographs. These books are shared with parents and carers. There is a highly effective balance of adult-led activities and those chosen by children. Children have plenty of opportunities to explore, be creative and learn independently. The outdoor areas are well organised with exciting and varied activities. As a result, children are very active and purposeful learners. Children’s learning is further enhanced by visits and visitors. For example, children thoroughly enjoyed a recent trip to Epping Forest.

The high quality care, guidance and support and the very positive ethos are at the heart of the Nursery’s success. The well-organised, extremely safe and welcoming environment is much appreciated by children, parents and carers. In partnership with other agencies, the school is very successful in supporting those children, and their families, who need extra help. Parents commented, ‘Family support is in a class of its own’ and ‘Staff really know the children and their families.’ Guidance and support are

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

carefully matched to the needs of children and families. There are effective procedures to monitor and promote good attendance. About 15 children take advantage of the well-organised breakfast provision, which is much appreciated by working parents and carers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets children’s needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers promote high quality provision and outstanding outcomes for all groups of children. Great teamwork and a ‘can do’ attitude among the staff contribute to the Nursery’s outstanding success. Leaders and staff rightly place much emphasis on developing very strong partnerships with parents, carers and other agencies in order to enhance children’s learning and development.

Members of the governing body have a very clear understanding of the school’s performance and make an active contribution to the life of the school. There are highly effective policies and procedures to protect and safeguard children. The monitoring and evaluation of these procedures are robust and thorough. All staff are well trained in safeguarding, and safe practices for children are promoted extremely well through the learning activities.

The school strives to meet and exceed the needs of parents and carers and works very closely with them. Parents and carers are successfully encouraged to participate in their children’s learning. Equality of opportunity is one of the school’s many strengths. All children are highly valued and have full and equal access to the outstanding provision. The school is highly inclusive and tackles discrimination very effectively. Community cohesion is promoted exceptionally well and staff have a very clear understanding of the diverse community the Nursery serves. The learning activities provided successfully extend children’s knowledge and understanding of people’s different cultures and faiths within the United Kingdom and the wider world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1

The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

The inspection team received a much higher than usual response to the questionnaire. Almost all parents and carers returned the questionnaire and all those that did are happy with their children's experience at the school. They are especially pleased with the safety in the school, the sense of enjoyment, leadership and management, the quality of teaching, the promotion of healthy lifestyles and the meeting of children's particular needs. The inspection findings reflect these very positive views. The results of this survey indicate that parents' and carers' concerns about the Nursery are very few. However, the school is not complacent and the headteacher and staff continually strive to meet and exceed the needs of parents and carers. A very small minority do not feel that unacceptable behaviour is appropriately dealt with. During the inspection, children's behaviour was mostly exemplary and there are effective procedures to deal with any inappropriate behaviour that might occur.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at New Hall Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 76 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	80	12	17	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	84	10	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	43	61	25	36	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	63	25	36	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	53	76	16	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	45	64	25	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	71	19	27	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	42	60	22	31	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	50	71	19	27	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	63	19	27	1	1	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	50	32	46	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	54	77	15	21	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	57	81	13	19	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its children’s needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 November 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Low Hall Nursery, London E17 8EB

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and sharing your learning with us. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we have found. Your Nursery is outstanding.

These are the main strengths.

- You really enjoy learning and the exciting activities provided.
- The nursery areas are attractive and welcoming places to learn in.
- You are making outstanding progress because of the excellent teaching.
- You behave really well and get on extremely well with others.
- You know all about how to be healthy and fit.
- You feel very safe because the adults look after you really carefully.
- You show a very good knowledge of different festivals and how people live in different communities.
- The headteacher leads your school exceptionally well. She is very well supported by other leaders and staff.
- You are very well prepared for your next school.

There is just one thing to help the school improve further.

- The headteacher and staff are working hard to help the youngest children to settle quickly into Nursery.

You can all help by continuing to do your best. We wish you all success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts
Lead inspector

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