

Holmewood Nursery School

66 Upper Tulse Hill, London, SW2 2RW

Inspection dates

16–17 December 2014

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| | This inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Quality of teaching | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher and senior leaders have improved this already outstanding school. It is now one of the leading nursery schools in the country.
- Leaders and governors work closely together to ensure that the quality of teaching and children's achievement is outstanding.
- Children benefit from the excellent activities provided by leaders and teachers. As a result, children learn exceptionally well and make outstanding progress.
- The care given to children is second to none. Adults know how each child learns best and how to help each child succeed. The quality of planning to meet children's needs is exceptional.
- There are excellent links between home and school. Parents know how well their children are doing. All would recommend the school to other parents.
- The school is a hub of the community. It provides strong support for the whole family where it is needed.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding. Children play well together. Adults ensure they are well mannered and considerate to others.
- Safeguarding is outstanding. The school goes to great lengths to keep children safe.
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well. Many activities stimulate their imagination strongly.
- The indoor and outdoor play areas are used exceptionally well to promote children's language and number skills. These play areas also improve their physical and artistic skills.
- Teaching is consistently outstanding because leaders regularly check how well the adults are teaching. They provide highly effective advice when needed.
- Much teaching is through music and song. Children enjoy this and it helps them develop strong musical and language skills.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs do extremely well in their learning. The school is quick to identify their needs. Experts are on hand to provide timely support for the children.
- Children's progress in their learning is carefully checked. No child falls behind.
- Children make outstanding progress in their learning. They are prepared extremely well for moving to their next school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector looked at the children's learning in the indoor and outdoor play areas together with the headteacher and her deputy. She also observed the children eating lunch, tidying up, and taking part in a music therapy session.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. The inspector met a representative from the local authority. She also met the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor.
- The inspector took account of the 24 responses to a questionnaire from members of staff.
- There were 18 responses to Parent View, the online survey of the views of parents. The inspector spoke to a number of parents during the inspection. She also took account of the school's survey of parents' views.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents. These included the school's own views of how well it is doing, its plans for the future and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- The inspector looked at information on the children's attainment and progress. She also examined safeguarding information, and records relating to behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Natalia Power, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Holmewood Nursery School is a little larger than the average nursery school.
- The school is one of only 16 National Early Years Teaching Centres, funded by government to improve practice in early years education nationally.
- The Executive Headteacher is also head of The Triangle Nursery. The deputy headteacher manages the day-to-day running of Holmewood. The two nursery schools are in a hard federation, sharing the same governing body.
- Nursery schools are not eligible for the additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils. However, around one third of children are eligible for free school meals.
- Most children come from minority ethnic heritages. This proportion is much higher than average. Children come from a wide range of backgrounds, with no one group predominating.
- Around half of children speak English as an additional language. This proportion is much higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is around one in seven, which is above average.
- Most children attend either the morning or the afternoon sessions on four days a week, and stay all day on one day a week.
- The school is part of a children's centre. This is subject to separate inspection and the most recent report can be found on www.gov.uk/ofsted. The school's headteacher also manages the children's centre.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enable children to get as much benefit as possible from the garden by making sure that more school staff play an active part in helping the children learn there.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The long-serving headteacher has led this outstanding school through a number of changes, including federation with The Triangle Nursery. The hallmark of her leadership is her continuing pursuit of improvement. A loyal and highly effective team of leaders and staff support her. As a result, the school is now an example to other schools both locally and nationally of how nursery schools should be run.
- Leaders and governors work extremely well together to make sure that teaching is consistently outstanding and that children's behaviour is exceptionally well managed.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher share their responsibilities highly effectively. There are no middle leaders in the small staff, but teachers and support staff work extremely well together. The almost entirely positive responses to the staff questionnaire show that staff form a loyal team. Arrangements for setting targets for staff are well established, and closely linked to children's progress.
- Ways of checking children's progress are excellent. The observations that staff make of the children's learning are accurately matched to how well children of their age typically do. Staff plan highly effectively to meet the needs of each and every child. As a result, equal opportunities are promoted very well and all children make outstanding progress in their learning.
- Teaching is consistently outstanding because leaders are out and about, regularly checking how well teachers are teaching, and looking at books that record the children's progress. Leaders provide extremely helpful advice when needed.
- Parents accurately describe the school as a centre of the community. There is a very strong partnership between school and home. Families in need are supported by the school. Leaders make the most of the close links with the on-site children's centre. They know and help many families before the children start at the school.
- Parents and carers who spoke to the inspector, or who responded to the school's own survey or to Parent View, were entirely positive. All agreed that their children are safe and happy. All would recommend the school to others.
- Leaders call on a range of specialists, including speech and language therapists, to diagnose and support children with a range of additional needs. This helps children get the right support when they need it. Such care shows the school's strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all the children.
- The school is extremely well placed to continue to improve. Leaders know the school's strengths and are exacting in identifying areas for development. Plans are clear about how improvements will be made, who will be responsible for making them, and how long it will take to achieve them.
- The local authority provides the right amount of support. They make sure that training is available to staff and governors when needed. They use the school as a model when visitors, both British and from abroad, wish to see excellent early years practice.
- The topics that children learn are extremely wide ranging. Activities give them an excellent grounding in all the skills they need to learn in order to be ready for the next stage of schooling. No opportunity is missed to reinforce children's reading, writing and number skills.
- Many activities have a strong appeal to the children's imagination. Adults follow the children's enthusiasm, helping them to become immersed in topics that fascinate them. For example, a child compared a toy dinosaur with a picture in a book about dinosaurs, and exclaimed in excitement, 'It's the same! It's tyrannosaurus.'
- A single activity often develops many skills. The outdoor shop, for example, is used to promote counting and understanding of coins, and also to encourage children to write a shopping list. The indoor and outdoor play areas are used extremely well. They provide countless opportunities for children to learn literacy, numeracy, simple science, and to test their muscles on the exciting equipment.
- Activities promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development highly effectively. For example, children look after the school's chickens, cutting up vegetables for their food, and going inside the cage with an adult, to feed them. Such activities help the children to learn to care for others.
- Leaders and governors make sure that children are prepared extremely well for life in modern democratic Britain. They ensure that there is no discrimination against anyone, and that all members of the school's diverse community get on well together. For example, the children's carols by the Christmas tree led to a strong community feel, as everyone joined in enthusiastically in the singing. Leaders foster excellent relationships and the school is a peaceful community.
- Leaders and governors make sure that safeguarding meets requirements and keeps the children extremely safe.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors provide extremely effective support to the school. They are closely involved in its activities. They see its work for themselves, and record their findings to share with other governors. As a result, they have a very good understanding of the quality of teaching and how well the children are learning.
- Although there are no nationally agreed figures on nursery children’s progress, governors know how well the children are doing compared with how well children typically achieve. The figures are presented clearly, with effective analysis of how well groups, such as children with additional needs, are doing. This helps governors ensure the children learn exceptionally well.
- Governors make sure that they get excellent value for money from the staff they employ. They set them clear targets to ensure that pay is closely linked to performance. They have made wise choices of leaders to replace those who have left.
- Governors are highly effective in keeping the children safe. They are extremely well trained in safeguarding, including the safer recruitment of staff. They make sure the site is safe and secure, and that staff who work with children have had the appropriate checks.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is outstanding. Those from a wide variety of different faiths and heritages get on extremely well together. Children are ready to share the toys and craft materials and to take turns on the equipment. During group activities they sit quietly and listen to one another and to the adults. They receive such caring attention from the adults, and are offered so many exciting activities, that they are constantly engaged and never bored.
- Adults know all the children and their needs. They deal sensitively with any child needing special attention or a moment of quiet. Children with complex physical and emotional needs are catered for exceptionally well and helped to join in the activities along with everyone else.
- Snack times are used extremely well to encourage the children to be considerate towards others. The children pass the fruit around to others in their group. Those served are reminded to say ‘thank you’.
- Children who stay for lunch enjoy the healthy food, which sets them up well for the afternoon’s activities. They eat at ‘family-style’ tables, where each group has an adult to show them how to behave. Adults make sure that children use the right cutlery and have good manners.
- The school promotes children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. Gardening is a particularly valuable way of getting the children to think about the world around them and to enjoy the benefits of nature. Volunteers are extremely generous with their time, but cannot be on site all the time. The school recognises that currently not enough adults are engaged in helping the children to grow plants and look after them on a daily basis.

Safety

- The school’s work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding. The school goes to great lengths to keep children safe. Leaders check that any possible risks have been carefully considered and taken into account when arranging trips or visits, or preparing play equipment.
- Any bumps or bruises are reported to parents, and orderly records are kept.
- Adults who work with children are scrupulously checked.
- The site is safe and secure. All areas are carefully supervised.
- All staff are properly trained in safeguarding procedures, and specified governors are assigned to oversee child protection and health and safety. Any concern an adult may have about a child is rigorously checked, recorded and acted on. There are strong links with the local authority to ensure that no child falls through the net.
- Evidence seen by the inspector shows that children in need of high-level support receive the highest quality care through highly effective links with outside agencies. These children quickly settle and make excellent progress in their learning.
- Parents told the inspector that they have no concerns about their children’s safety. This is confirmed by Parent View, in which all parents agreed that their children are safe, happy and looked after well.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is consistently outstanding. The class teachers manage the work of their support staff highly effectively to ensure children have high-quality activities and learn exceptionally well.
- Adults use music and song to help the children to acquire a good sense of rhythm and to improve their language skills. For example, they have learned the words of a large number of Christmas carols. Music is also used sensitively to help children with a range of additional needs learn to take turns and listen to one another.
- Adults understand the need to develop a wide range of skills in each task. For example, a simple activity to make handprints was used to encourage the children to count the fingers on the print. When playing outdoors, children routinely attempt to write their name on a board before riding wheeled vehicles. Adults engage children in conversation and encourage them to think about their answers and use full sentences.
- Children are surrounded by plenty of books, and quiet reading corners in which adults and children can often be seen curled up with a book. This promotes children's reading habits and skills extremely well. Families are encouraged to borrow books from the well-stocked library and to continue the school's work at home.
- Children's literacy skills are promoted extremely well. Children are successfully taught to match sounds and letters to help them begin to learn to read and write. The most able children are encouraged to trace out letters with their fingers in trays of glittery sand. Outdoors, children are prepared for writing by using large arm movements while dancing with ribbons. They then draw on paper using similar movements.
- Number skills are taught highly effectively through many activities, both indoors and outdoors. For example, children hunted for treasure on the attractive terrace outside. Each piece of treasure was a wooden number block which the children proudly arranged in order.
- Activities to promote children's physical skills have just the right amount of challenge, encouraging the more timid children to take part, and helping more confident children to test themselves.
- Children's work is displayed attractively in every available bit of wall space. These displays show the breadth of what the children choose to learn about. The displays celebrate not only the work of the class but the achievement of individual children.
- The adults check children's progress carefully, recording their findings on paper and in photographs. These records go into children's 'affirmation books', and also into records of how well the children are doing. These provide a helpful link between school and home, and also clearly show the progress each child is making.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children learn exceptionally well. This is because the inviting activities, coupled with the exemplary care and attention they receive from each adult, help them develop skills in reading, writing and understand simple mathematics.
- The school carefully checks the progress of groups to make sure that all children make exceptional progress in their learning. School records show that those from all heritages do extremely well, and no group falls behind.
- School records also show that children eligible to receive free school meals do extremely well in their learning.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs make excellent progress. If children arrive with needs which have not been recognised previously, the school acts quickly to identify their needs and to set up support for them. The children receive extremely effective support through the expert involvement of a range of visiting specialists.
- Children who are at an early stage of learning English do extremely well because their needs are identified quickly. Adults use pictures and visual symbols to help them settle in quickly and confidently. They make an excellent start in learning the language.
- Adults know who the most able pupils are, and make sure that the tasks they are given have a stimulating level of challenge. More is expected of these children. The adults ask them more difficult questions. In turn, they rise to the challenge and make very strong progress in acquiring skills.
- The children arrive at the school with very varied skills and pre-school experiences. Their skills on arrival are generally below, and often well below, those typical for their age. By the time they leave, their skills are typical for their age, and this represents outstanding progress. As a result, they are extremely well prepared for the next stage of schooling.
- Home visits prepare children very effectively for starting nursery school. When the time comes for them to

leave, the school invites their next teachers to meet the children. It also takes them to visit their next school. In this way, children are prepared successfully for the move, and go confidently to their next school.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | Grade | Judgement | Description |
|--------|---------|----------------------|--|
| | Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| | Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| | Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| | Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 100554 |
| Local authority | Lambeth |
| Inspection number | 448067 |

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

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| Type of school | Nursery |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–5 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 98 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Peter Gibb |
| Headteacher | Sue Donovan (Executive headteacher) |
| Date of previous school inspection | 30 January 2012 |
| Telephone number | 020 8674 2186 |
| Fax number | 020 8674 8838 |
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