

Maytree Nursery School and Children's Centre

155 Clarence Crescent, London, SW4 8LN

Inspection dates

21–22 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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, ably supported by her leadership team, has created a wonderful school. Children learn a huge amount in a happy environment.
- Leaders and governors make sure that children with a range of abilities and needs make outstanding progress. Activities are attractive to the children and promote fast learning.
- Ways of checking children's progress in learning are highly effective. Progress is checked group by group, so that no child is overlooked. This process is meticulous and leads to children doing the best they can.
- Governors play an important part in making sure that children are kept safe. They make sure that the quality of teaching is strong and that children's achievement is remarkable.
- As a result of strong leadership and governance, the school has improved since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching has improved, and children do better than ever.
- This is a caring school. The adults know each child. Parents and carers love the school. They told the inspector that the school supports them as well as their children.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding. They play harmoniously. This is because they are taught to be considerate to others.
- Safeguarding is a high priority. Children are kept extremely safe without being wrapped in cotton wool. They are taught how to keep themselves safe.
- Teaching is exemplary. The adults plan successfully to meet each child's needs. They make sure that each activity challenges children to do their best and builds strong character qualities.
- Adults miss no opportunity to develop children's language and number skills.
- Adults encourage children to be independent wherever possible, and to make sensible choices.
- The school promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development highly effectively. Children have excellent opportunities to lose themselves in stories. The school makes sure that they explore the natural world.
- The school is highly inclusive. It celebrates diversity; children, staff and governors come from a wide range of backgrounds and heritages. Children are taught to get on extremely well with one another. They are prepared highly effectively for growing up in modern Britain.
- Children learn extremely well in their time at the school. No group falls behind. The exciting activities promote fast learning for all, including the most able, those who speak English as an additional language, and those with a range of additional needs.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector looked at the children's learning in the indoor and outdoor play areas together with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. She also observed the children eating lunch, tidying up and taking part in group reading sessions. The inspector visited the breakfast club and after-school club, and observed a staff planning meeting. She observed a whole-school singing session and a Forest School event.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The inspector met two representatives from the local authority. She also met the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, and one other governor.
- The inspector took account of responses to a questionnaire from 23 members of staff.
- There were 25 responses to Parent View, the online survey of the views of parents and carers. The inspector spoke to parents, grandparents and child-minders during the inspection. She received one letter. The inspector took account of the school's own survey of parents and carers of children who left school in July 2104.
- 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 records relating to behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Natalia Power, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Maytree is an average-sized nursery school.
- Nursery schools are not eligible for the additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils. However, around half of the children are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Most children come from minority ethnic heritages. This proportion is higher than average. Children come from a wide range of backgrounds, with no one group predominating.
- Around half of the children speak English as an additional language, and this proportion is higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is around one in three, which is considerably above average.
- Around half of the children attend full time. The others attend either in the morning or in the afternoon on four days a week, and stay all day on one day a week.
- The school takes a small number of children who have not yet reached their third birthday. These children share all the activities provided for three- and four-year-olds.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school care.
- The school's leaders and governors manage two nearby children's centres and a one o'clock club on a different site. These are subject to separate inspections and the most recent reports can be found on www.gov.uk/ofsted.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that children's snack times give them as many chances to learn a range of skills as their other activities do; encourage children to learn independence by cutting up the fruit safely; and give them the chance to serve other children wherever possible, to help them learn to be as considerate of others during snack time as they are while playing and learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has been extremely effective in driving improvements since the previous inspection. She is ably supported by her senior leaders, the governors and the loyal staff, and the school has improved key areas of its performance.
- There are no nationally agreed ways of checking children's progress in the nursery sector. The headteacher of Maytree has devised new ways of checking children's progress that are so clear and helpful that they have been adopted in other nursery schools in the local authority and beyond.
- Children's progress is meticulously checked. This ensures that all groups do extremely well, and that no child falls behind in his or her learning.
- Leaders have created a school in which all its stakeholders are happy and feel supported. Parents, grandparents and child-minders who spoke to the inspector could not praise the school enough. They told the inspector that the school supported them in times of need, as well as their children.
- The excellent links with external agencies and with the children's centres run by the headteacher make the school a hub of the community. Families and individuals needing support are quickly helped through the strong community links. As a result, children, particularly those with a range of additional needs, do extremely well in their learning.
- Leaders continually ensure, through rigorous checking, that the quality of teaching is extremely high. There are clear systems for helping staff to move along the pay scales and to tackle any potential underperformance should that occur. Through the leaders' excellent example, other adults learn to improve their own practice. The inspector noticed how an early years educator helped to train a volunteer who was new to the school. When the volunteer wiped a child's face after an enjoyably messy activity, the educator suggested that the child should do it himself, to learn independence. This example shows how leaders' determination to give children the highest quality teaching is spread throughout the staff.
- In the small staff there are no middle leaders, as such. The special needs coordinator, who is part of the senior leadership team, is an excellent leader of provision for children with a range of disabilities and special educational needs.
- The local authority provides extremely valuable support to the school. Advisors work closely with leaders to ensure that judgements of the quality of teaching are accurate and helpful to those observed. This results in teaching of the highest quality.
- The activities offered to the children are exciting and wide-ranging. Every inch of the indoor and outdoor play areas is planned to give children the most stimulating learning experiences. Children can choose from a breath-taking array of activities. The adults are on hand to develop their language skills and to ensure that they learn to concentrate and not flit from one activity to the other without gaining excellent skills.
- Leaders have an excellent impact on children's behaviour. Their rigorous planning, shared with staff, plays an important role in promoting children's outstanding behaviour. Children simply do not have time to misbehave, as they are so busy.
- Leaders make sure that the school is fully inclusive. All members, children and adults alike, respect one another. Relationships are extremely good. The wholly positive responses to the staff questionnaire show how much staff enjoy working there.
- School records show there is no discrimination against anyone. The school celebrates diversity and those from all backgrounds and heritages get on extremely well with one another. In this inclusive ethos children grow up with healthy attitudes. This prepares them successfully for life in modern Britain.
- The school follows safeguarding procedures meticulously. As a result, the children are kept very safe and not exposed to dangers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is largely new, though some members, such as the Vice-Chair, provide continuity and a valuable link with the past. Governors are keen to make a difference. They visit the school and check its work for themselves. They see how the children are learning and share their findings with other governors. In this way they ensure that the quality of teaching is high.
 - Governors are extremely well-informed about how well the children are doing in their learning through thorough reports on children's progress. Minutes of meetings show that they are ready to question leaders to ensure that the school's work continues to improve.
 - Governors ensure that they get excellent value from their staff. They check the quality of teaching from all adults, leaders, teachers and support staff, ensuring that they know how to move to the next level and that any underperformance is quickly addressed. Such vigilance keeps the standard of

teaching and of care for the children extremely high.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is outstanding. They get on extremely well with one another. This is because adults are always at hand, urging children to share the play materials, and sorting out any minor disagreements before they get out of hand. As a result, children are ready to take turns using the equipment and to watch out for others when riding wheeled vehicles.
- The school is an extremely caring place. Parents and carers who spoke to the inspector made such comments as, 'The staff love the children' and 'This is a family'. Several told the inspector how the school had helped their family or put them in contact with others who could help them. The work of the school does not end at the door of the nursery. There are excellent links with the community that help children and their families get the support they need.
- Adults take care to teach children good manners. This is clearly seen at lunchtime, where adults sit with the children, making sure they mind their manners and say 'please' and 'thank you'. Children are encouraged to be independent and to make sensible choices in selecting from the dishes in front of them.
- Children who come to the breakfast club or who stay for the after-school club have an enjoyable range of activities. For example, the inspector enjoyed seeing the concentration of two boys attending the after-school club as they carefully cut up vegetables for the pizzas they were making for their tea.
- Singing is used highly successfully as a lovely way of bringing the school community together. The inspector enjoyed hearing the children singing their favourite songs, led by the enthusiastic adults.
- Though there are no nationally agreed figures on children's attendance at nursery schools, the inspector noted that, in her experience, attendance at Maytree is healthy and reflects the children's enjoyment of school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding. Governors and leaders check that the site is secure, and that all risks have been thought about in advance of trips and visits. For example, the preparation for a trip to Streatham Common for a Forest School event included every possible risk, such as what to do if children ran away from a barking dog.
- Leaders and governors make sure that those who work with children are rigorously checked. They make sure that adults are trained and know what to do if there is a medical emergency.
- Leaders are highly aware of risks from food allergies. Their caution on this matter, however, results in them being a little too wary of allowing children to handle some types of food. As a result children do not gain as much from snack times as they might. Children do not always get enough chances to cut up food safely and to hand it to others. This is a rare instance of children not having enough independence.
- When it comes to physical adventure, on the other hand, the school is ready to allow children to test their bodies by climbing low branches or using playground equipment. Children are well supervised and taught to keep themselves safe while choosing activities that challenge them without letting them get into danger.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is exemplary in quality. The adults know the children extremely well and plan successfully to meet their needs.
- Adults miss no opportunity to develop children's skills. Whenever children talk about things that interest them, adults are careful to ask questions that encourage children to think about their answers and develop their language skills.
- Many of the activities develop children's number skills. For example, children were encouraged to throw beanbags through a hoop to hit numbers on a wall. Children were challenged to aim for the highest numbers. The teacher extended their learning by asking such questions as 'is nine bigger or smaller than ten?' to help them think in a more mathematical way.
- The school promotes reading exceptionally well. The children love the well-chosen storybooks, and the adults read aloud with expression, bringing the stories to life. Reading sessions are carefully managed to bring groups of children together. For example, a group of the youngest children willingly joined in all the actions and catch phrases in Jill Murphy's 'Peace at Last'. They were helped to act out the story with the help of toy bears. This activity gave them a love of reading and promoted their language skills

successfully.

- The school promotes writing successfully. Children are encouraged to 'write' their names to book a wheeled vehicle, and an adult is always at hand to help the child with forming letters.
- Staff carefully choose activities to encourage the children to challenge themselves and to build their character. For example, an adult supervising children climbing the low branches of a laurel tree encouraged them to get to a safe height and not to give up.
- The school promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development highly successfully. Many activities have a powerful appeal to the children's imagination, and none more so than Forest School. The aim of this is to introduce children to the countryside in their own environment. In one activity observed by the inspector, the children sat on logs in the school's garden and made their own drinks of hot chocolate, supervised safely by the adults. After their experience of outdoor 'camping', they were so excited that they rushed up to their teacher and said, 'We had hot chocolate in the garden! We made it!'
- Adults keep a watchful eye on the progress made by the children in their learning. They observe the activities and keep accurate written and photographic records. These are collected in the children's 'special book', and form an important tool for measuring how much they learn in their time at the school. The parent of a child whose older brother had also attended the school told the inspector how his son still enjoyed looking through the pages of the book and remembering the events and people in it. These books are a valuable link between school and home.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children make excellent progress in their learning during their time at the school. This is because the adults are careful to get the best out of each child through questioning and well-chosen activities.
- Story-time sessions are used extremely skilfully to provide excellent challenge to groups of children. For example, a group at an early stage of learning English were taught the names of colours in an enjoyable way. While they read 'Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?', the adult showed them matching colours on pieces of felt to reinforce their learning.
- The most able children also benefit from the additional challenge which staff offer to them in their story-time session. The session, taken by the deputy headteacher, was demanding, while remaining child-friendly. The children were enthralled by 'Jim and the Beanstalk', a modern retelling of Jack and the Beanstalk, with a Jim, not Jack, meeting the giant. There was a great deal for the children to think about, not least how Jack and Jim begin with the same sound.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs do exceptionally well at the school. School records show that the school fully addresses their needs, working in close cooperation with a wide range of external agencies. The inspector observed a music therapy session that was highly effective in developing these children's speaking and listening skills. Children identified various objects in a bag and then sang appropriate songs, such as 'Incey-Wincey Spider' for a toy spider. The children joined in the singing, and this helped their coordination. Staff also encouraged the children to speak as much as possible, and to listen to the others. The adult taking the session used signs and gestures to help reinforce spoken language, helping the children to understand and learn.
- All children make strong progress from starting points which vary greatly, but which are generally below or well below those typical for their age. Boys do as well as girls, and this is because activities promote their learning. The inspector enjoyed seeing boys 'cooking' in their outdoor mud kitchen, and talking about their experience.
- Children known to be eligible for free school meals make strong progress in their learning, and school figures show that there is no difference between how well they do in comparison to others.
- Because of the challenging activities for each child and the way the progress of groups is checked, no group falls behind. Each child makes strong progress in acquiring language, number and social skills, learning to test their bodies, designing artwork, and learning about the world around them.

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

Unique reference number	100553
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	448009

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	2–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bruce MacInnes
Headteacher	Rachel Hedley
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2012
Telephone number	020 8671 3298
Fax number	020 8674 0791
Email address	office@maytree-school.org.uk

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