Chelsea Open Air Nursery School and Children's Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100474
Local Authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	285807
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Maria Arana
Headteacher	Mrs Kathryn Solly
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2001
School address	51 Glebe Place Chelsea London SW3 5JE
Telephone number	020 7352 8374
Fax number	020 7376 8350

Age group	3–5
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2007
Inspection number	285807

.

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Chelsea Open Air Nursery is a popular choice for parents with three or four applications for every place. Children come from a wide range of backgrounds. The proportion eligible for a free school meal is above average. Over half the children are from minority ethnic backgrounds and close to half speak English as an additional language. Most of these children are beginners in English when they start at the nursery. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average as is the proportion with a statement of special educational need. Attainment on entry is below average though children arrive with a wide range of attainment. The nursery was designated as a Children's Centre in March 2006 and provides breakfast, after school and holiday clubs for 3 - 8 year olds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Chelsea Open Air Nursery is an outstanding school. Parents are right to describe it as a magical place that they and their children love. Children receive a unique and exceptionally stimulating start to their education. The quality of teaching is excellent leading to excellent progress and above average standards. Children's personal and social development, speaking and listening skills and creative development in particular show significant improvement even after only a few months. The curriculum is excellent. It is tailored to the individual needs and interests of each child. As a result, it is exciting and creative and captures children's imaginations and sense of fun. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities flourish because they are given a curriculum that matches their needs and interests exceptionally well. Equally good provision for children with English as an additional language means they make rapid progress in learning English.

The success of the nursery is down to the outstanding leadership of the headteacher who is relentless in pursuing her vision of putting the child at the heart of the school's work. She inspires staff to give of their very best and to have only the highest expectations of themselves and the children they work with. The overall leadership and management of the nursery are outstanding. Governors make a significant contribution to its work and provide an informed steer for its future development. They have made a significant contribution to the development of the building and supporting the school to become a Children's Centre. However, the school building remains difficult to work in and parts of it are in poor condition. Staff work around these difficulties so that children's learning and safety are not affected in any way. However, this creates additional work for them.

Though children have a reasonable range of experiences in relation to using information and communication technology (ICT), this is not as extensive as in other areas of the curriculum and largely due to the limited number of computers and interactive white-boards available. The outdoor area compensates considerably for the weaknesses in the main school building. It offers a rare and distinctive opportunity for children to extend their creative and physical development in an environment that successfully combines natural resources, such as gardens and mature trees, with more conventional equipment and materials. As a result, children's personal development and well-being are excellent.

They love coming to nursery and join in enthusiastically with all that it has to offer. Behaviour is excellent and children learn to care about one another. They also learn good eating habits and how to keep physically fit. Children feel safe at the school. The excellent care, support and guidance mean that they are very well looked after. Children are given outstanding support and guidance on how to make their work better and to understand how their actions affect others. Overall, given the exceptionally good progress that children make in their learning and their personal development, they could not be better prepared for the next stage in their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop ICT provision to enable children to have equally rich experiences in this area as other areas of learning.
- Improve the quality of the building so that it supports rather than detracts from the work of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding. Children make at least good progress across all areas of learning and exceptionally good progress in communication, literacy and language, creative development and personal and social development. They reach above average standards by the time they leave. Able pupils do very well and develop their capacity for more in-depth thinking. For example, through the lessons on philosophy, they learn to ask searching questions about the world around them. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities progress through their targets at a very good rate and make exceptionally good progress across the range of areas of learning. Children with English as an additional language are encouraged to use their home languages and this helps them to build English language skills alongside extending their mother tongue. As a result, they achieve outstandingly well across the curriculum as well as making rapid progress in learning English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. They become confident and self-assured youngsters able to make their own decisions. A key feature of the nursery is the speed with which children become independent and self-sufficient. They learn equally quickly how to look after themselves, for example, they know that they have to wash their hands before eating and change into dry clothes when wet. Children's social skills develop exceptionally well so that they work very effectively with others and co-operate remarkably well with adults and one another. Children are very aware of what constitutes right and wrong and do their best to behave well and to be nice to others. They learn to get along with those who are different and to appreciate different cultures, faiths and languages. Children take enormous enjoyment through participating in the wide range of activities available for them and are willing to try new things. Their attendance is good. The nursery fosters a strong sense of community and belonging. This is promoted not just by the adults but also by children making one another welcome and contributing to the community through looking after others and helping one another. Overall, the excellent progress made in personal and social development and basic skills, such as literacy, mean that children are exceptionally well prepared for the next step in education. The values children learn here are of enduring worth and will undoubtedly sustain them in future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are excellent. Planning is exceptionally detailed taking into account each child's needs and interests. Activities are stimulating and exciting and enable children to be actively engaged. Most importantly, the activities are fun and children want to participate. High expectations are a key feature of the teaching and children rise exceptionally well to challenges presented to them. As a result they make outstanding progress. Staff use language with great care often providing excellent examples of speaking and listening for children to copy. Questioning is probing and relentless encouraging children to extend their own use of language as well as to think for themselves. A key feature of the teaching which makes learning

so successful is that staff do not do things for children but teach them how to do things for themselves. Overall, the child-adult interactions are of very high quality. Teachers make good use of the ICT that is available but children's access and use is hampered to some extent by limitations in equipment. Low ceilings and the age of the building make it difficult to install computer equipment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum meets children's needs outstandingly well and is at the heart of the success of the school. The nursery undertakes detailed analysis of each child's needs and interests and the way in which they best learn. The curriculum is then tailored individually for each child. Rich learning opportunities provide unforgettable experiences for children. The outdoor area is unique and exceptionally well used to provide a stimulating resource through which all aspects of the curriculum are taught. For example, the garden is used to teach children about growth and living things, the tree with the huge horizontal branches provide stimulus for climbing games and the amphitheatre allows children and adults to perform. It was very successfully used to enable children to become irrigation engineers when they designed and created a pipe structure to take water from a large tank at the top of the amphitheatre to plants at the bottom. Visits and visitors are frequent and enhance the curriculum exceptionally well. A visiting poet for example, enables children to create their own rhyming poems and learn about the rhythm and sounds words make. Provision for personal and social development is particularly strong and permeates every activity. The curriculum also builds on the rich cultural, linguistic and religious diversity within the school to help children learn about each other from one another. Very good use is made of parents to read books in different languages to children.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are excellent. Children are exceptionally well looked after and procedures for child protection and health and safety are very thorough. The key worker system, where every child is attached to a specific member of staff, is highly effective in ensuring that the personal and academic needs of each child are very successfully met and provides an excellent link between home and school.

Assessment is outstandingly good and staff maintain detailed and informative records of progress. Clear targets are set for improvement based on regular assessments and observations of individual children. These include specific targets for those with learning difficulties or disabilities or English as an additional language.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the school are striking in their unerring focus on making the school the best that it can be. There is a strong culture of self-review and self-criticism which leads to continuous innovation and improvement. Marked progress has been made since the last inspection as a result. The school has an accurate view of itself and how good it is though there is a tendency to be over modest. However, this is a reflection of the very high standards set by the headteacher. Other leaders know what they are expected to do and there

is a strong ethos of working together. Performance is very well managed. Overall, the capacity to improve is excellent. Governors have excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and work very well in partnership with staff. They are aware of the issues of the building and have had plans for improvement drawn up. Some of these have been carried out but funding shortages mean that the final phase has yet to be started. In the meantime, staff work around the difficulties of an old building.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	**School Overall**

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners 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 disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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 effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

[1] Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

25 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Chelsea Open Air Nursery School and Children's Centre,London,SW3 5JE

I enjoyed my time at your school and, like you, I particularly liked the outside area. I would like to thank you very much for making me feel welcome, especially when I had lunch with you. The nursery provides you with a wonderful education.

Some of the best things about the nursery include the following:

- You are given lots of interesting and exciting things to do which help you to learn new things every day.
- You enjoy your time at the nursery immensely and are always willing to take part in whatever is going on.
- Children with special needs or those who are learning English do very well at the nursery.
- You are always willing to help one another and work together very well.
- The staff are excellent in the way they work with you and help you to learn.
- Your headteacher is exceptionally good at her job.

There are very few things that need to be improved. These are:

- More opportunities to use computers.
- A better quality building to work in.

It was very nice to meet you and talk with you. I wish you well for the future.

Gulshan KayembeLead inspector