



**Office for Standards
in Education**

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY240948

DfES Number: 585471

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 22/06/2004
Inspector Name Madeline Watson

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type
Setting Name Heathside Prep School
Setting Address 16 New End
 London
 NW3 1JA

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Heathside Preparatory School is an independent coeducational school which was established in 1993. The 3 and 4 year old children are accommodated in the early years department of the Lower School. The Lower School provides for children aged from 3 years to 7 years, between the hours of 8.45am and 5.00pm, on 5 week days during term time. Some of the youngest children attend part time or for shorter hours. The children enrolled generally live in north London and reflect the cosmopolitan nature of the area.

There are twenty 3 and 4 year old children enrolled and in receipt of the nursery education grant. Some of the children are bilingual and some are learning to speak English as an additional language. None of the children have special educational needs. The children have sole use of 3 large classrooms, as well as shared use of some specialist rooms, a small outdoor play area and daily, whole school, activities on Hampstead Heath.

Five well qualified and experienced teaching staff provide care and education for the children. Specialist staff provide additional learning opportunities in art, music, ballet, karate and chess.

Since the last Ofsted nursery education inspection in 1998, there have been no significant changes.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

Heathside Preparatory School very good quality nursery education provides for children. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. The quality of teaching, leadership and management, as well as the partnership with parents and carers make a significant positive impact on the provision.

The quality of teaching is very good. All the teachers plan a rich and balanced variety of activities both indoors and outdoors, and take special care to ensure they are appealing and appropriate for each child. They ask good questions and extend activities to further challenge children. Resources are interesting, of good quality and well organised to enhance children's independence. Staff build positive relationships with the children, listen carefully to what they say and build the children's self esteem and enthusiasm for learning.

The system for planning the learning activities and assessing children's progress are appropriate and used well. Teachers know the children well, use parental input and good record keeping to support assessment and to ensure planning leads on to next steps for learning.

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The school offers children a well resourced and interesting learning environment. The two Headmistresses lead a committed staff team. Meetings, observations and the assessment records are used well to regularly monitor the quality of the learning programme.

Partnership with parents and carers is very good. Parents are given useful information about the learning programme and their children's progress on a regular basis. They have informal daily contact with teachers to discuss their children's progress. They are encouraged to settle-in their children, help out with library sessions and cultural celebrations, as well as to participate in social events.

What is being done well?

- The children are offered an excellent variety of first-hand learning experiences which increase their awareness and understanding of life in the local and wider communities. Activities involve going on outings to shops, a fire station, wildlife park and restaurant; having visitors including police, 'the animal man' and parents to talk about their work, other languages and religious and cultural ceremonies; the 'walk to school week'; classroom activities such as cookery, growing plants, making models and sculptures.
- The children demonstrate very strong skills in communications, for example when engaged in their extended role play scenarios, when performing their songs and plays on stage and when writing about their everyday

experiences;

- Teachers encourage children's self-confidence and originality by giving them rich opportunities to express their ideas imaginatively and creatively; they value each child's efforts by carefully mounting and displaying individual examples of work.
- Parental involvement in the life of the school takes many forms and offers parents and carers opportunities to generally enrich the school's programmes as well as to be more involved with their own children's education.

What needs to be improved?

- There are no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to improving the following:-
- review and rationalise the use of commercially prepared worksheets.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made in addressing the 5 key issues arising from the previous Ofsted nursery education inspection. Creative activities and extended role play offer the children many opportunities for self expression. Large pieces of climbing and balancing apparatus have been fitted into the school hall so children have access to challenging physical development activities. Planning and assessment systems now link directly to the six areas of learning of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. Parents are given information about the nursery education grant scheme and the early learning goals.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

The children's personal and social development is very good. They are confident and enthusiastic in their learning activities and demonstrate good self-esteem. Throughout each day they engage in appropriate conversations with the teachers and other children and ask many questions. All the children behave well, share and take turns. They show independence in choosing resources, expressing their own ideas and taking themselves to the toilet.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are making very good progress in communications, language and literacy. They demonstrate their rich vocabularies in discussions of topics such as 'Me and My Body', and during role play. They write well and regularly use writing, for example, in role play and the recording of events in their lives. Older children use their own word books to support their writing. They are skilled at associating sounds and letters and recognising a range of familiar words.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

The children's mathematical development is very good. They have practical opportunities to learn about and apply mathematical ideas, language and number. They can confidently weigh, measure, count up to ten (and beyond), compare objects and numbers, play board games and sing songs which incorporate number operations. They can recognise numerals in the environment and elsewhere.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

The programme for knowledge and understanding of the world is very good. Children make good use of the wide range of first hand opportunities to learn about the natural world and the local community. They go on regular outings to local places such as a restaurant, fire station and shops, and further a field to museums and specialist parks. They have regular experiences of cooking, growing plants, using computers and marking a range of cultural events and religious celebrations.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

The children's physical development is very good. They enjoy many opportunities both indoors and outdoors to develop climbing, balancing, movement and co-ordination skills. They understand the importance of hand washing and hygiene. The children make good use of a variety of opportunities to experience and develop skills and control in using a good range of tools and resources such as scissors, pencils, cookery tools and large and small construction sets.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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The children are making very good progress in the creative development programme. They enjoy singing, moving to music and performing plays on the school stage. They are stimulated by exploring a diverse range of painting, collage and model making materials and ideas which they use well for self expression. Spontaneous responses to activities such as water play, role play, listening to stories, and cookery indicate their pleasure and their creative ideas.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

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- reviewing and rationalising the use of commercially prepared worksheets and the annotation of their use in the children's 'records of achievement'.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.