

Curzon Crescent Nursery School

Curzon Crescent, Willesden, London NW10 9SD

Inspection dates 7–8 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children achieve well in all areas of learning, including in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2014, after one year in Nursery, they reached higher levels than those expected of five year olds nationally.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs achieve well. The most able children make faster progress than is expected for their age. Children known to be entitled to free school meals perform better than other children in school.
- Teaching is good. Since the previous inspection leaders and governors have improved their systems for checking the quality of teaching.
- The behaviour of the children is good. They move around the school sensibly and with a sense of responsibility towards one another.
- Safety is outstanding. For leaders and all adults in the school, keeping children safe is a top priority. All safeguarding systems are excellent.
- Leadership is good with many strengths. Leaders worked successfully since the previous inspection to improve all aspects of the children's education. As a result, the quality of the school's work is now good.
- Governors make sure that the school provides children with a good education. They are passionate in their drive to make sure that children make at least the typical progress for their age so that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Staff do not always make sure that children learn to express themselves in conversation about their learning.
- At times, staff do not make sure that all children develop the necessary skills to choose activities for themselves when they are allowed to do so.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector carried out observations of all three classes jointly with the deputy headteacher. Children were observed in their learning both inside the classrooms and in the outdoor learning areas.
- The inspector read all the school policies and all documents pertaining to all aspects of the management of the school, including documents regarding keeping children safe, the programmes of study and assessment procedures, monitoring of teaching, the school's self-evaluation and the school's development plan.
- She looked at the children's work in their home learning books, their drawing books and their journals, to judge how much children learn and the progress they make in their Nursery year at this school.
- The inspector talked to a few children, with an adult present who was supporting one of the children. She also shared a story book with them.
- She also had many conversations with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and one middle leader, who is the 'lead learner' in the school. She had a telephone conversation with the link adviser from Brent Local Authority and she met with the Chair of the Governing Body.
- She talked to a number of parents to ask them what they think of their children's school and why they chose this school for their children. She also looked at the responses of 46 parents to a school survey in March 2014. There were no responses to the online Parent View questionnaire.
- The inspector considered also the questionnaire responses of 10 members of staff.

Inspection team

Mina Drever, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Curzon Crescent Nursery School is an average sized Nursery and is one of three provisions in The Partnership of Curzon Crescent Nursery School, Fawood Children’s Centre and Challenge House Children’s Centre: collectively known as ‘The Partnership’.
- In January 2012 Curzon Crescent Nursery School and Fawood Children’s Centre formed a hard federation. They share one executive headteacher and one governing body and work together on most policies and documentation. Each school has its own development and self-evaluation plans. Each school has its own deputy headteacher.
- At Fawood there is a specialist centre – The Rainbow Centre – which provides specialist support for children diagnosed with autism from both nursery schools as well as from across Brent Local Authority. This year no child at Curzon Crescent Nursery School attends the Rainbow Centre.
- The school has three classes with an almost equal number of girls and boys.
- There are 18 ethnic groups. The largest groups are Black African and Black Caribbean. Children attend school full time, though in the first two weeks children are allowed to come for a few hours each day until they are settled.
- A total of 17 languages are spoken by different children in the school. Well over half of the children on roll speak English as an additional language, which is an above average proportion.
- More than half of the children on roll are known to be eligible for free school meals and this figure is well above average.
- Just over one sixth of the children are disabled or have special educational needs.
- The executive headteacher is currently on secondment to the local authority as the Early Years Quality Improvement Manager. He leads on quality and standards across the private, voluntary and independent sector.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the overall quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - providing opportunities for children to develop their speaking skills so that they are able to carry out meaningful conversations about their play and their learning activities
 - ensuring that all children learn to make decisions about what they want to do and why when they are allowed to choose activities, so that the children’s learning continues in a purposeful way even during play
 - developing the skills of staff so that they help children to improve their speaking skills.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders and managers relentlessly pursue their goal of providing the best education for the children who come here. Since the previous inspection there have been major improvements in all areas of teaching and learning. Parents and staff are very appreciative of the changes that have taken place and children are a testament to what has been achieved so far.
- Very well thought out policies and procedures in all areas of the school's work have resulted in improved achievement and better quality teaching. Assessment of children's skills when they join the Nursery is rigorous yet friendly. It delves deeply into each child's stage of development by asking the families to talk to the school about their children. Initial home visits play a significant role in helping children settle very comfortably and so they quickly begin to make progress.
- The school has an accurate and rigorous view of the quality of its work. This leads to effective development planning which focuses on continuing to raise the children's achievement.
- Since the previous inspection leaders have developed, under the visionary leadership of the executive headteacher, a very rigorous cycle for checking the quality of teaching. For example, teachers use video-recorded lessons as a base for developmental dialogue with their leaders. This enables them to reflect on what works well with the children, in class or outside in the garden, and adapt the learning activities to the children's needs. Leaders are aware of the need to ensure that all staff have the skills necessary to encourage children to develop their use of spoken language.
- Because the executive headteacher was so successful in improving the school since the previous inspection, the local authority invited him to be seconded to help the authority as the Early Years Quality Improvement Manager. In this capacity he has been successful in raising the achievement of other Early Years providers in the borough.
- The quality of middle leadership has been strengthened and is now good, thus giving the leadership greater capacity for improvement and for planning for effective succession in management.
- The school implements the Early Years curriculum very effectively, with emphasis on the holistic development of the unique child. Children's well-being and equality of opportunity underpin the whole curriculum. Understanding the cultural and religious differences of the world that the children are growing up in is introduced well, with a variety of activities suitable to their age. For example, children visit churches and temples, markets and shops.
- Children are prepared well to begin to understand how to participate in democratic decisions of groups. For example, they contributed their ideas to the design of the pond and of the climbing areas outside. They decide what the group should bake on baking days and they decide who should be the day's helper.
- Middle leaders have contributed substantially to the improved assessment procedures and to the teaching approaches that have contributed to the improved rate of progress the children have made since the last inspection. A new online record keeping of children's development has been developed and will be accessible to parents within weeks. They will be able to see at any time at what stage of development their children are.
- The local authority works well with the school, particularly in developing data analysis and in providing targeted professional training as identified by the school through its systems for checking teaching and learning.
- The school meets statutory safeguarding requirements. Keeping children safe is of paramount importance to all adults in the school.

The governance of the school:

- Since the previous inspection, governors say that they feel much more empowered to challenge leaders, and in particular the headteacher, on the achievement of the children. They have reconstituted and have sought and obtained appropriate training in order to contribute more effectively to the working of the school. For example, they feel better equipped in observing learning and in asking teachers for explanations of the learning activities they see and how children contribute to their own learning. They are rightly proud of the outdoor learning environment which gives children immense enjoyment and many opportunities for physical development.
- The governors challenged the expensive use of top quality materials, but were convinced that the money was well spent. Thus they keep a very tight hold on the budget. They supported the secondment of the executive headteacher once they reassured themselves that this would bring immense benefit to the education of the children. Much of the new outdoor equipment was purchased with income from this secondment.

- Governors keep a close eye on the management of teachers' performance. They agree on promotion and pay awards only if children's achievement is at least good. The headteacher's performance is managed with the same rigour.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Children learn very quickly which behaviour is acceptable and what is not acceptable, because all adults set very good examples: they are kind and respectful towards one another and towards the children.
- There are high expectations of children's behaviour and conduct. Walking into the school is like going into a very peaceful home. Children are very settled and very contented. This is the result of the way adults treat children.
- Children move around the school in a very calm manner. There is an atmosphere of mutual consideration. Lunchtime is a delightful experience. It is like being in a family home, where children sit nicely and enjoy eating their meals. This is because adults treat the children with the utmost respect.
- The school's policy on behaviour is based on prevention and on education. Discussions are held with the children about what behaviour can hurt other people's feelings. They are encouraged to think about what they can do to make sure that other children do not experience feeling hurt. This is often done with a 'visiting doll' who tells the children how she or he might be feeling and why. The children help the doll to feel better.
- Attendance is good. The school ensures that parents understand the importance of their children coming to school every day unless there are medical reasons or special family circumstances for children to be away from school.
- Children's attitudes to learning are good, especially during the learning activities which are directed by teachers and nursery nurses. They listen attentively and pay very close attention to what the adults are saying.
- Children respect their learning environment. They use resources carefully and with the purpose for which they are meant. A creative workshop corner has been created especially for children to practise using tools purposefully and safely.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The safeguarding arrangements are meticulous and very rigorous.
- Parents are very confident about their children's safety and the children themselves feel safe. They told the inspector that they have never been upset and they have never seen any children upset others. The school has never had to record any incidents of bullying.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers create a very calm and purposeful learning environment in which children can thrive. Children settle down quickly and are ready to learn. This enables them to make good progress during all learning activities.
- Teachers plan appropriate activities during which children learn with fun. Teachers have a very well developed sense of children's attention span and move on as soon as they notice any child begin to lose concentration.
- A few children, however, are not capable of choosing activities for themselves. Teachers and other adults do not always notice this and as a result these children make little progress in their learning during these sessions.
- Some of the children imitate the good examples in adults' use of language and practise new words with great enjoyment. For example one girl was heard saying 'I'm sprinkling it' as she spread glitter onto her art work, after another child had commented that it was a good idea to sprinkle the glitter slowly as she was doing it.
- However, not all children display this natural curiosity for language. Teachers and other adults do not consistently encourage them to play with words. As a result they make less progress in speaking than they do in other areas of learning, including mathematics, reading and writing.

- Children have many opportunities to develop writing skills, from early marks to recognisable letters and words. This is evident in their home learning books and in their writing books.
- As a result of the senior leaders' efforts to improve learning and progress, there is now a good balance of adult-directed learning and sessions when children are allowed to choose their own learning activities.
- The outdoor environment is very well equipped and there are several areas that appeal to the children's natural sense of wonder, like the pond – which is very safe and secure – and the mud kitchen. This provides children with particular delight and a great source for language development, learning about worms and other little creatures as they emerge out of the soil. Pretending to be aspiring cooks, a small group of children entertained their teacher with their wet, muddy concoctions.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join this Nursery school with development that is generally below that typical for their age. They make good progress in the one year they stay here.
- The more able children achieve well, making faster progress than is typical for their age.
- Although the school is not required to do so, it formally assesses children for progress towards attainment in the Early Learning Goals. The 2014 results show that, after one year, their attainment was above that of similar children nationally.
- There has been sustained improvement over the last three years, with attainment rising each year in all areas of learning. More children made progress typical for their age in all areas of learning including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Individual children's progress is very well tracked from the point of transition to the end of the Nursery year. Parents say that assessment at transition in their homes is particularly effective because it establishes an easy rapport with the child's key person and enables children to settle very quickly when they start school.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points. This is because the school identifies their needs very quickly and puts in support programmes to support them appropriately. For example, speech and language therapy is provided as soon as it is needed.
- Children known to be eligible for free school meals achieve better than the other children in the school.
- Although the rate of children's progress in speaking has also improved, this has been slower than in other areas. This is because teachers do not always know how they can challenge children towards a higher level of speaking.

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	101489
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	442115

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Turner
Headteacher	Mark Cole
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 October 2012
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