

Inspection of an outstanding school: Columbia Market Nursery School

Columbia Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 7PG

Inspection date: 24 September 2019

Outcome

Columbia Market Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children are happy here and they love learning. They settle quickly into the school routines. Parents say that the school staff know their children really well. They say the nursery is 'amazing' and that 'staff always make themselves available to talk to us.'

The outside area is exciting and safe. Children are keen to explore, whatever the weather. When required, they quickly dress in wet weather gear provided by the school. The new mud kitchen is an exciting place to find minibeasts. Children know how to use magnifying glasses and explore under logs with confidence. One child said, 'this is the best place to find bugs.'

Children are constantly learning or given time to reflect and think about what they are doing. Adults know when to ask questions or introduce new vocabulary. They plan activities that interest and engage the children.

Behaviour is exceptional. Children are busy learners who play well together, learning alongside each other, taking turns and sharing. Growing, harvesting, slicing and then serving tomatoes to their friends was a lovely example of this.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Columbia Market is an exceptional place which inspires children to learn. The nursery team meets regularly to discuss what the children need to learn next. Leaders are particularly proud of their deeper learning approach. They plan learning over longer periods of time and revisit themes that interest the children. This helps the children to remember what they have learned. For example, children were quick to explain how ponies had visited the nursery last term. They remembered that, 'ponies like to eat carrots and that you measure them by using your hands.'

Teachers are early years specialists. They support children's physical development well. Children move from push cars, to scooters to balance bikes. Children love borrowing the

bikes and scooters, so they can practise riding to school.

Developing children's early reading skills is a high priority. From the day they start school, children develop a love of books. Two-year-olds select books from the class libraries, turn the pages carefully and point to the pictures. Three-year-olds are keen to talk about their favourite authors with adults and visitors. The teaching of these key skills is matched to the learning needs of each child. Children enjoy nursery rhymes, songs and simple stories. Some children are matching sounds to letters and beginning to read simple words. All children are encouraged to borrow books from the school library. Children enjoyed a recent visit from a local author.

The learning environment is set up to encourage excellent behaviour. Activities are carefully created with children's interests and needs in mind. The staff know the right time to intervene, question or offer support and guidance. This means that children remain engaged and focused at all times.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. Adults model vocabulary and repeat new language which children then use. The classrooms and outdoor area are designed to support children's development. Outside, the variety of mounds, tunnels and weaving pathways enable children to climb, run, duck and explore with enthusiasm. There is a big focus on developing children's confidence, communication skills, ability to take turns and self-care. This includes being able to use the toilet on their own and eat lunch at the table with their friends. Adults support children carefully with all of these skills.

Leaders and governors know their school and community exceptionally well. Staff plan activities for the children to celebrate the diversity in the local community. No child is turned away because the school tries to meet every need. Some children stay for an extra term if this helps them to settle into their next school successfully.

Leaders manage staff workload well. Staff recognise this and say that they feel valued and are listened to.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Keeping children safe is important at this school. A safeguarding culture extends to all staff and the governing body. Effective record keeping and processes are in place. Staff have regular training and are aware of risks such as extremism. Staff know how to report concerns. When recruiting new staff to the school, questions about safeguarding form part of the interview process. Children are safe, and confidently explore different classrooms and the outside area.

Background

When we have judged a maintained nursery school to be outstanding we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding on 6–7 October 2015.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	100884
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10110431
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Tonje Pettersen
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Lynn Cottle
Website	www.columbiamarket.towerhamlets.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 October 2015

Information about this school

- Columbia Market Nursery is an average-sized nursery.
- Children are taught in three classes. They attend on either a full- or part-time flexible basis. The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- Children are from a diverse range of backgrounds. A small minority of these children are in the early stages of learning English.
- Most children with SEND have speech and language difficulties.
- A small number of children are supported through the early years pupil premium funding (EYPP). The EYPP is additional government funding given to schools for disadvantaged children who are eligible for free school meals or are children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school provides extended care each day. This includes a breakfast club and after-school club, as well as a holiday club.
- Since the previous inspection, the acting executive headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have become permanent in their roles.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection we held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders. We met with the chair and vice chair of governors. We also met with three representatives from the local authority.
- The inspection focused deeply on reading, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical development. We visited lessons with leaders. We spoke with children and looked at their work. We also met with staff to discuss the curriculum.
- We met with school leaders, staff and governors to discuss safeguarding. We reviewed records and the single central record.

Inspection team

Paula Craigie, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Helen Morrison

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019