



# Spencer Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY280332
<b>Inspection date</b>	08 September 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Gillian Cubitt
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<b>Registered person</b>	Spencer Nursery School Governing Body & Committee
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Spencer Children's Centre and Nursery School is a maintained school which originally opened in 1946. The registered provider is Spencer Nursery School Governing body and Committee and was registered in 2003 and designated as a Children's Centre in July 2005. The school is an Early Excellence Centre and works in partnership with Sure Start. It is purpose built and operates from five nursery rooms. It is situated in a residential area of Mitcham Junction and serves the whole

borough of Sutton. A maximum of 54 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 66 children aged from 5 months to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 45 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 21 staff of whom 17 staff are early years practitioners. All staff working with children hold a varied range of qualifications in childcare and education including qualified teacher status and degree level.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

There are excellent opportunities for children to engage in physical activity. Children are enticed to the fresh air outside by the attractive gardens and play equipment which awakens their desire to explore. Babies are happily occupied with their toys whilst shielded from the sun under canopies and toddlers practise their walking skills pushing a variety of wheeled toys. Older children have their own play area where they run over bridges, climb apparatus and balance on beams. Children also enjoy the sunshine as they sit and chat with their friends or play with construction activities. Children know they must protect their bodies from the sun's rays and they put on sun block cream and hats when playing outside. Children's health is always protected by staff's attention to detail, especially when children have minor accidents. All staff are trained in first aid and are able to administer the correct care when the occasion arises.

Meal times for children are very special. At lunch time, children eagerly wash their hands in preparation for their meal. Their mouths water when they smell the freshly cooked food as it permeates the air, giving the atmosphere a wholesome warmth, which makes children feel comfortable and eager for their meal. Children and staff sit and eat together which completes the social experience. Babies and very young children have meal times with their carers in their own room which gives them individual care in a quieter environment. Children have an excellent variety of nutritious foods. They clear their plates, leaving sufficient space for their second course of strawberries and grapes.

All areas used by the children are very clean and of an exceptionally high standard. Daily cleaning programmes protect children from cross infection and staff are particularly vigilant in their routines for changing nappies. Staff fully encourage older children to take control of their personal hygiene, which sets the foundations for their growing independence in their personal care.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy the security and safety within their own dedicated rooms which are very well equipped with furniture and resources that is suited to their stage of development. Children relate to their environment because they see their work attractively displayed together with photographs of their family which they can share with other children.

Children are completely safe whilst in the nursery. All visitors, including parents, report to reception area, only being admitted via the intercom system. Visitors are accompanied and there are good systems in place, such as regular risk assessments which ensures that children are kept safe especially whilst the current building works, to improve the nursery, are being carried out.

The nursery rooms are well resourced, enabling children to have access to high quality toys, furniture and equipment. Considerable thought has been given to the layout of the baby room to keep sedentary and sleeping babies separate and safe from more mobile children. Floor surfaces are well designed so children do not slip and outside play areas are predominantly soft surfaces so the impact of accidents is minimised if children fall.

Children are fully protected because staff attend regular child protection training. They are fully aware of the procedures and know what to do if they have any concerns about a child. Staff are able to ensure appropriate action is expedited efficiently and effectively.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Nursery time for children is a very positive and exciting period. From the moment of their arrival they feel completely at home. They know where to put their coats and have their own special trays for their work. Children also see their work beautifully displayed which reinforces their self-esteem as they take pride in what they do. The nursery is exceptionally well organised to give children the maximum freedom within their rooms and the outside play areas. This significantly helps children make good progress in their learning and development. Furthermore, staff's thorough understanding of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and the framework of Birth to three matters ensures children obtain the best use of the activities provided.

Babies and toddlers thrive in 'Mini Macs' because staff make good use of planning. They are resourceful and versatile in providing a range of worthwhile activities which promote children's physical and creative development. Children thrive with their key workers but the good system of tracking children's progress through their 'learning stories' means that all members of staff are able to link in quickly to each child's stage of learning and development. Toddlers are able to explore outside, using various wheeled toys and babies enjoy the sunshine under the cool shade of the

canopies. Babies are stimulated with the various shapes of natural items in their treasure baskets. They use their whole bodies in grasping, mouthing and waving rubber utensils and natural wooden shapes. Their glee is shared with their key worker who constantly interacts, helping babies with their early communication skills. Children play and experiment with a wide range of natural and malleable materials such as sand, water and play dough as well as experiencing dancing lights and sounds of the sensory room. All of which help to develop their natural curiosity and wonder through their senses.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are completely supported by a highly committed and motivated team of teachers and early years' practitioners. Staff have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage and make extensive use of all planned and naturally occurring situations to extend children's learning and development, ensuring they make significant progress through the early learning goals. The structure and systems in place gives children maximum freedom to explore and investigate resources in their own time, working at their own pace. Planning is shared with all staff using long, medium and short term plans which ensures themes and activities are varied and cover all areas of learning. Regular assessment of children's achievements, via observation and focused activities, enable staff to plan effectively and engage children's attention so they are appropriately challenged. This ensures that children make significant steps forward in their learning.

Children are highly motivated and experience consistent opportunities to extend their learning. Children's personal and social skills are excellent, they quickly settle and make close friendships with their peers. Children's behaviour is exceptional because they have complete freedom to make their own choices yet feel secure because they know what is expected of them. At the end of the morning children stop what they are doing when staff ask them to show their hands. Children know that it is time to help tidy up and they enthusiastically engage in picking up toys and putting everything in order. Staff give plenty of praise of work well done which further promotes children's self-esteem.

Children learn to count in their everyday activities which develops their spontaneity and confidence with numbers. They count when singing and reciting rhymes. They learn about numbers and sequencing in their practical play using a variety of materials and technological equipment such as the computer and programmable toys such as the 'Roma'. Children look at quantities when counting and measuring pasta and pouring liquids, using words such as more or less. Children's understanding of early mathematical concepts, form as they begin to understand sets and groups when they compare different colours of eyes of children in their nursery.

Children love to look at books. They make their own stories and see how their personal learning story unfolds in their own private book which has pictures and print showing what they have enjoyed doing. Children also have their own family album that they share with their friends and talk about people and pets that are special to them. Children starting in their early days with the nursery particularly find this a comfort. Children's affection for books is fully nurtured in the nursery because they

have a wide variety of quality literature and staff take every opportunity to sit in small groups with children to look at pictures and tell stories.

Children's creativity is extremely well promoted through art and craft work as well as movement through music. Children have many music sessions, they sing and dance with gusto to taped music and staff continuously increase children's repertoire which builds their confidence and enjoyment. Children's physical development is carefully tailored to each child's capability. In the garden small climbing apparatus encourage less able children to try their skills whilst the energies of more active children are channelled using balancing beams and building bridges. The outside play areas also bring the world of nature to the children. They care for plants and through activities, learn about wildlife, such as birds who visit the garden to feed.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Children have a strong sense of belonging and are made to feel very special in their nursery. Children are proud of their very own family album which they share with staff and friends. This increases their confidence about who they are and their overall feeling of wellbeing. Children behave well and are kind and helpful as they play with their friends. Older children set a good example by showing kindness and warmth to new children and also are mindful of children younger than themselves when playing outside. Children learn about different cultures through an excellent range of resources and staff's commitment to understanding children's individual backgrounds who attend. Children's moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children with disabilities or educational needs are extremely well supported because the individual plans for each child carefully monitor their progress. The support from the expertise of the visiting specialist practitioners also benefit the children because they work very effectively with staff and parents to ensure children reach their full potential. Children's care needs are also extremely well met as staff work well in partnership with parents to ensure all aspects of children's care are known, such as children's nappy and toilet training routines, rest and sleep preferences and dietary needs.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. A very efficient system of home visits and thorough induction for children starting the nursery demonstrates to parents the high regard staff have for them and the importance of full parent participation. Parents are made very welcome and the importance of their involvement in their children's education is not underestimated; their views are valued as they become fully involved in their children's progress at every stage; they have access to extensive information on children's learning and this is reinforced through parent information meetings where they learn more about the Curriculum for the Foundation Stage. They also have twice yearly individual discussions on children's progress. Parents speak very highly of the nursery and the opportunities that their children are given.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Effective procedures are in place for the recruitment and vetting of staff so that adults providing care and looking after children are suitable to do so. The induction and training programme enables staff to become familiar with the policies and procedures so that good practice is implemented and promotes children's welfare. Staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of child development and learning. They use the appropriate guidelines to enable them to plan effectively for the children in their designated area, although there is not an overall plan that links the framework of Birth to three matters to the Curriculum for the Foundation Stage. The schedule of activities is well organised and provides children with variety and choice. Children are able to move freely around their play areas and select resources and play equipment. Although building work is being carried out, to improve the nursery, staff ensure that children are not affected by careful planning and very good organisation of play space.

Effective policies that are frequently reviewed, plus the good record keeping in all areas, contributes to the efficient organisation of the nursery. The specialist administrative support team ensure that records are well maintained and parents are always kept informed.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is outstanding. The Head manages a highly professional and committed team who hold a wide range of qualifications, experience and expertise. The management of the nursery is excellent. The Head and staff are fully supported by the Governing Body who have an overall vision for the future of the provision. All staff, including temporary placements are fully involved in planning, development and delivery of the curriculum for their group. A qualified teacher is the curriculum leader and works closely with the Head to continuously monitor children's education and improve the quality of teaching. New staff have a thorough induction programme and all staff have annual performance management reviews. The continuous supervision system fully supports staff in their training and development. Teaching staff have a comprehensive knowledge of the early years curriculum and are able to answer questions about policies and procedures, planning and key-worker responsibilities. They are supported by regular team meetings where planning and activities are fully discussed. The nursery provides on-going training sessions and opportunities which support staff in their professional development in their aim to continuously improve and develop the quality of care and education for children.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

Since registration there has been one complaint which relates to National Standard 1, Suitable Person and Standard 13 Child protection. The provider acted professionally and appropriately, making a full investigation and resolved the issue. Ofsted and all other relevant agencies were informed.

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## **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop a system that links Birth to three matters with the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage to aid children in their transition from 'Mini Macs' to the preschool

### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)