

Thomas Wall Nursery School

Robin Hood Lane, Sutton, SM1 2SF

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The nursery provides an excellent start to children's education and equips them superbly to benefit from the next stage of their education.
- Every child is highly valued and known very well by staff and there are very high-quality relationships at all levels. Children say that they really enjoy coming to the nursery and those with complex communication needs demonstrate this through their enthusiasm for all that they do.
- Children's achievement is outstanding. They make rapid and sustained progress especially in developing early reading skills. They can identify the first sound in words and the most able are beginning to read.
- Provision within the specialist resource unit is also excellent. Children with complex communication and social difficulties make rapid progress because their learning needs are assessed accurately.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers and all adults are very knowledgeable about the Early Years Foundation Stage and use this expertise to ensure that activities are planned that will excite children so that they make excellent progress.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. They play exceptionally well together, talking to each other about what they are doing and using equipment safely.
- The senior leaders and governors have well-shared ambition and drive to maintain the high standards and continually improve the school. Plans for development are based on accurate knowledge of the strengths of the school and clear targets for further growth. They are clear, for example, that they can further extend the children's development through even better use of imaginative resources.
- Leaders and managers check the quality of teaching very thoroughly. Targets set for teachers have enabled the high standards to be maintained and developed even further.
- Governors ask probing questions of the school's leaders to ensure they understand how well the children are progressing. They make the right strategic decisions which continue to ensure that high standards, which contribute strongly to the federation, are maintained.
- Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and all it does. They say that their children 'can't wait to come' and that the 'staff are fantastic'.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 sessions or part sessions of teaching and learning activities. These were taught by three teachers and other support staff. A morning was spent in joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. There were informal discussions with children and parents and carers.
- The inspector took into account the 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views expressed in a recent parents' questionnaire carried out by the school.
- The inspector looked at the nursery's documents, including records of assessment and children's progress, planning for improvement, monitoring of teaching and learning and records about attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Janet Dinsmore, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Thomas Wall Nursery School federated with Thomas Wall Children's Centre and Robin Hood Infants School in 2007. All three settings share a governing body and a headteacher. The federation will be part of a training school consortium for teachers from September 2013.
- The Nursery has morning and afternoon sessions of two and half hours; children attend either in the morning or afternoon. Parents and carers opt for flexible arrangements for breakfast club and additional morning and afternoon sessions in the extended day provision, Honeybees, to make 15 hours per week. Parents and carers can pay for additional sessions.
- Outdoor and indoor play space is shared with the Reception classes of the school and Honeybees, to provide an integrated Early Years Foundation Stage unit.
- The school is larger than average for schools of its type.
- There is a much larger than average proportion of children from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language. The majority of children are from a range of different ethnic groups, the largest of these being White, other than British, and Indian. Twenty two different languages are represented.
- There is a specially resourced base for assessment and intervention, known as Dragonflies, which offers 16 part-time places for children with complex communication and social difficulties. All these children have or are being assessed for a statement of special educational needs. Therefore, there is a much higher than average proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs that are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. There is an average proportion of children supported at school action.
- There is an average proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals. There are no children in receipt of pupil premium (additional funding for children in local authority care, children from service families and children eligible for free school meals), because this funding is not allocated for Early Years Foundation Stage children.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase even further the opportunities and high-quality real-life resources to promote creative, imaginative and investigative activities for longer periods of time.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- The majority of children arrive in the Nursery with skills in all areas of learning and development that are lower than would be expected for their age. They make rapid and sustained progress so that when they leave to enter Reception classes they have skills at least at or above the expected levels.
- The children learn to communicate very well; they talk with confidence to adults and can explain what they are doing. For example, they can explain the rules of a game and maintain their attention and enjoyment of it for a considerable period of time. They relate well to each other, as when asking each other for pieces of equipment and playing together amicably.
- The children have excellent early reading skills. Most can identify the first sound of a word that they hear, for example, 's' for sock, sponge and spider. The most able are starting to read simple books. Children enjoy books. For example, they eagerly take the parts of characters in *The Bad Tempered Ladybird* story to act it out and find out more information about animals.
- Children who speak English as an additional language make very rapid progress. They learn basic vocabulary well and have opportunities to borrow dual language books so that parents and carers can also read books to them in their home language, so promoting their dual language abilities. Disabled children and those with special educational needs also make rapid progress.
- Physical development is excellent and children have many opportunities to climb, run and to ride two- and three-wheeled bikes. They can also glue small objects accurately on paper to create patterns and designs.
- Early writing skills are particularly well developed. Boys especially make rapid progress in this area. By the time they leave the Nursery, boys and girls have the same level of skills in writing. For example, they design road maps for the cars indoors and develop records of the insects they have found outside. All the children use early writing activities, including mark making and recording, as part of their play.
- Children develop early mathematical skills very well. They have numerous opportunities to count, for example, when constructing a tower. Their knowledge of shape is excellent and some can name more complex three-dimensional shapes such as cones and cylinders.
- Children with complex communication and social difficulties, in Dragonflies, make rapid rates of progress similar to their peers. They take their opportunities to request play activities confidently, using pictures, and they complete activities independently.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Records of children's work, observations of what the children can do and the tracking of their progress in all the areas of learning and development demonstrate the rapid progress that they make, and this is the result of the outstanding teaching.
- Activities are planned with Reception class teachers and the Honeybees leader and all three settings in the federation share indoor and outdoor play spaces. This means that teachers can plan for progress across the whole Early Years Foundation Stage and enable excellent continuity. For example, nursery children built a castle with large bricks, they were then joined by reception children from the federated school, who used this in their role play, driving up to it in 'cars' they had made from boxes. The school is aware that, occasionally, children do not have enough time or the highest quality resources to fully take part in creative, imaginative play or investigate real things.
- Teachers and other adults have an excellent knowledge of each child, so that they design activities which make sure that each child continues to make excellent progress. Discussions at the end of sessions are of a high quality to assess children and plan for next steps in learning. Any slight slowing of this progress results in specific work with individuals and small groups to accelerate it. These activities are particularly well designed for children who need more help in

developing communication skills and who are learning English vocabulary. For example, dressing soft toys helped children learn the names of articles of clothing.

- Dragonflies sessions are very well planned for children with complex communication needs, maximising their attention, providing structure and routines, and explaining activities and learning to the children in simple language supported by pictures. Each individual's different communication difficulties are very well understood by excellently trained staff. This means planned activities to promote specific small steps in learning and individual tasks are very well designed. Children complete them from a basket at a workstation. Their attention and communication skills are continually extended. They have well supported opportunities to join in outdoor and indoor play with the children from the mainstream nursery.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The high quality of relationships across the whole Early Years Foundation Stage means that there is a harmonious atmosphere and high expectations of how to relate to each other, which children learn very quickly when they start in the Nursery. Parents and carers comment that the staff are excellent and that their children have settled well in this nursery. Children in the Dragonflies also learn quickly how to relate to those around them.
- The children behave exceptionally well. Any minor disagreements are sorted out very quickly by the children themselves or by adults sensitively supporting the resolution of the problem. As a result there is no bullying nor are there any serious behaviour incidents.
- The children use equipment safely, for example, they explain to each other how to use the climbing equipment by all travelling across it in the same direction to prevent collisions. They put on helmets to use three-wheeled and two-wheeled bikes, doing this independently and competently.
- The children know the importance of washing hands to prevent germs spreading. For instance, they commented that they needed to do this after handling a worm, before they eat their fruit.
- The children feel safe in the setting and readily turn to adults for support when needed. Because behaviour is exemplary, they soon develop confidence and respond well to the school's promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through stories and school events. They have an excellent understanding of right and wrong, explaining to each other how to share equipment.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leaders and managers have ensured that all aspects of the school have consolidated and further improved their outstanding quality since the previous inspection.
- The senior leadership team and governing body accurately evaluate the school, are ambitious and plan for continual improvement. The clear policies for developing early literacy skills have had a particularly good effect because they are jointly planned with the other school in the federation.
- The federation of schools continues to bring many benefits to the children in this school and provides significant opportunities for staff development, for example, middle leadership roles for checking children's progress in acquiring English language skills and the sharing of exemplary practice for children with communication difficulties.
- The links with the children's centre, particularly with staff who are working with families whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, have ensured that children are well protected and transition into the Nursery is made as smooth as possible. The school works very well with a range of other health professionals especially to support the children in Dragonflies. Statutory requirements for safeguarding are met.
- Equality of opportunity is maximised. Courses for parents and carers from overseas give them a good introduction to education in Britain. The school embraces all the cultures represented and involves parents and carers well, for example, in volunteering to run a toy library. Language

interpretation and support are available to those parents and carers with little English.

- Leaders and managers have ensured that assessment systems, training for staff and time have been allocated to support children new to learning English, as rapidly increasing numbers have entered the Nursery. This demonstrates that they know the school well, recognising the importance of early intervention and maintenance of continual improvement.
- Parents and carers value highly the work of the Nursery. The school holds regular workshops and parents' evenings for parents and carers to work with their children and find out how to support learning. The series for parents and carers of children with complex communication needs are particularly valuable in providing information and support.
- Performance of teachers is checked accurately and frequently. Newly qualified and experienced teachers are well trained and act as co-tutors for an initial teacher training college. Being part of a training school partnership enables other students to benefit, learning from the outstanding practice.
- The local authority provides a minimum level of support for this outstanding school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are experienced and have a good range of skills that enable them to give strategic direction for the whole federation and manage finances very effectively. They manage the performance of the headteacher well and check what is happening in the Nursery through regular visits and reports from parent governors as well as the headteacher. They ensure that only the best performance is rewarded and teachers and support staff continually develop their own skills and further their education and training. Governors are also aware of the rates of progress of the children in the light of national expectations. Regular visits ensure their good understanding of the strengths of teaching and of where teaching can develop further.

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	120956
Local authority	Sutton
Inspection number	400358

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	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline Penneck
Headteacher	Pauline Cook
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 December 2009
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