

INSPECTION REPORT

ST ANNE'S NURSERY SCHOOL

Kensington London

LEA area: Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Unique reference number: 100473

Headteacher: Ann Abd El Kader

Reporting inspector: Dr T Simpson
10428

Dates of inspection: 5th to 6th March 2001

Inspection number: 190191

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 5
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Latimer Centre 194 Freston Road London
Postcode:	W10 6TT
Telephone number:	020 8969 1024
Fax number:	020 8964 4627
Appropriate authority:	Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Name of chair of governors:	Patrick Short
Date of previous inspection:	4 th to 6 th November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Anne's Nursery School has 75 children on roll aged between three and five years. All attend full time. At the time of the inspection, a high proportion of the children were three years old and had only been in school for a few weeks. The overall population of the school is younger than at the time of the last inspection as the admission policies of neighbouring primary schools have changed, and these now take in children at an earlier stage. The children come from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds, but in socio-economic terms, the intake overall is below average. Children's achievements on entry to the school are also wide ranging. Thirty-two percent of the children have English as an additional language, while forty-five percent are entitled to free school meals. Around a quarter of the children are identified as having special educational needs and four have statements of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. Teaching is very good and all staff are highly skilled and committed, with the result that the children achieve well. By the time they leave, many children attain standards that are above expected levels for their age in all the areas of learning. In 1999 the school was designated a 'Beacon of Excellence' by the Secretary of State for Education. The children have very good attitudes towards their work and play and are excited by the rich range of activities that are provided for them. Relationships between children and staff are also very good. The inclusive way in which children with disabilities and those with different backgrounds and cultures are integrated into school life is exceptionally good, with children and staff alike having a high regard for the needs and feelings of others. Very high quality leadership is provided by the headteacher. She leads by example, but has also empowered the whole staff to take significant responsibility for the children's learning. She has a very high level of commitment to the school, the children and the parents. The school is justifiably very popular and provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is very effective. All members of staff are very committed and have a very good understanding of how young children learn.
- As a result of the rich learning environment and stimulating activities provided for them, the children – including those for whom English is an additional language – make particularly good progress in developing their communication, language and literacy skills.
- Provision for children with special educational needs is very good and these children achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment.
- Overall management at the school is very good and as a result all members of staff work very well together as a team.
- Very effective links have been developed with parents, who value the school greatly and make a good contribution to their children's learning.

What could be improved

- The inspection team found no areas where significant improvement is required. The school is very effective. It has good procedures in place for self-evaluation and review and is constantly striving to improve yet further.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When it was last inspected in November 1996, the school was found to be very good with many strengths. The very few issues raised then have since been resolved. The school is now in a new building and is well resourced. The governors have an appropriate role in the construction of the development plan and provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved significantly. Computers are used consistently to enrich and support learning across all the relevant areas and the children are being taught appropriate ICT skills. Child protection arrangements are now

better. The quality of teaching has improved even further. Parents are even more positive about the school and more activities are provided for them. The many strengths identified by the previous report – including the excellent provision for children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development – have been maintained.

STANDARDS

At the time of the inspection, many of the children had only been in the school for a short time and staff were successfully concentrating on their social and language skills. There was also a school focus on the creative arts. Most children are attaining at least the level expected for their age in all the areas of learning and some are exceeding these. Some younger ones, however, have poor speaking and listening skills. As a result of the very good teaching and the stimulating activities provided for them, the children make good progress and a significant number exceed the expected levels by the time they leave the nursery and are well on the way to achieving the early learning goals in all areas. Staff take every opportunity to develop the children’s language skills regardless of the focus of the activity. Young children, for example, successfully discuss the attributes of a stick insect and consider whether, should it become injured, it could find its own way to the vet. The taste, texture and colour of several different fruits are experienced and discussed. Early reading and writing skills are emerging well and good use is made of role-play and puppetry to develop speaking. Model making activities encourage the children to experience and discuss different mathematical shapes, while number games played on computers enhance their ability to compute within 10. A wide range of art and craft is produced. Children use a range of tools and materials to produce pictures, prints and models. Some – such as still life paintings of flowers – are of above average quality. Computers are in constant use supporting learning across the areas and the children’s ICT skills are frequently well developed for their age.

CHILDREN’S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good - the children love the school. They are very interested and excited by the activities provided for them.
Behaviour	Very good - most children behave very well in class and around the school. They are friendly and polite and treat equipment with care.
Personal development and relationships	Very good – the children have a high level of respect for the feelings of others – including children with disabilities and those from different cultural backgrounds. They take on responsibility successfully, use their initiative well and work independently when this is appropriate.
Attendance	Children are not of statutory school age and reporting requirements do not apply. Their punctuality is satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Sessions seen overall	Very good.

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. ‘Satisfactory’ means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. It was very good in eighty-seven per cent of the sessions seen during the inspection and good in the remainder. All staff are enthusiastic and highly committed to raising the achievement of the children. They provide an exciting range of relevant activities and have very good organisational skills. They understand the needs of groups and individuals very well

and have high expectations of them. As a result, the children acquire skills quickly. They work hard and at a good pace. From an early age they are successful independent learners. Children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good - and sometimes very good - progress as a result of the very good teaching they receive and because of the very good systems that are in place to support them. Literacy is taught particularly well and the whole school is a language rich environment. Wide-ranging activities are also provided to develop the children's mathematical skills and these are having a very positive effect on the standards being achieved. Creative development is also delivered particularly well. Staff have a high regard for the children's personal development. Every opportunity is taken to discuss feelings and attitudes, and children are treated consistently throughout the school. This has a very positive effect on their attitudes and behaviour.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good – The curriculum is broad, well balanced, covers all aspects of the areas of learning and shows clear progression. Planning is thorough and involves all staff.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Very good – this is a very inclusive school and children with special educational needs access all aspects of the curriculum very well indeed.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Very good – the children receive expert support and every opportunity is taken to extend their English speaking skills.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent – especially for moral and social development – and reflected in all aspects of school life. Religious and cultural diversity are successfully celebrated and all adults provide excellent role models.
How well the school cares for its children	Procedures for child protection and ensuring children's welfare are excellent. Very thorough assessment procedures are used well to inform planning.

Overall planning strategies have been suitably modified to reflect the new foundation curriculum and the school is currently updating specific policies to bring these into line as well. All areas of learning are fully in place and are reflected in the activities provided for the children. There are particular strengths in the provision for language and for creative development. Staff and parents work very well in partnership and this has a very positive impact on the children's learning. This is a very caring school in which the views of children and parents are greatly valued.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall – the headteacher provides very high quality leadership. She is highly committed to the school, its children, parents and staff. She leads by example, but also has empowered the whole staff to take significant responsibility for children's learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very supportive and is becoming increasingly involved in school life.
The school's evaluation of	Very good – all members of staff take part in regular reviews of the

its performance	school's performance.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes efficient use of all available space and resources.

The school has a strong ethos of caring for its children and constantly striving to raise their achievements. Those finances which are delegated from the local authority are used efficiently and the principles of best value are used well to ensure cost effectiveness.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem • The school is well led and managed. • The teaching is good. • They are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. • Behaviour in the school is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant concerns.

Nearly all written comments on the questionnaires were extremely positive about the high quality learning environment provided by the school and about the commitment and skills of its staff. The parents' meeting was also very positive indeed. The team agreed with the positive comments. The only concern related to the organisation of lunchtimes with some parents worried about the loss of older role models. During the inspection, lunch sessions were well-organised occasions where children were happy and well looked after.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Teaching is very effective. All members of staff are very committed and have a very good understanding of how young children learn.

1. Teaching was very good in eighty-seven per cent of the lessons seen during the inspection and good in the remainder. All members of staff work closely together, sharing their ideas and experiences and providing a rich range of activities for the children. As a result the children are very interested, learn well and make good progress. Activities are carefully planned in line with the recommended foundation curriculum. While generally having a specific focus and intended outcome, they are often intended to stimulate the children's interest and learning in a number of different ways. In one activity seen during the inspection, for example, a group of children – including one who was blind – examined the qualities of a number of different and interesting fruits such as pineapples, strawberries and kiwi. With the skilled guidance of a nursery officer, they explored texture, taste, colour and shape. They discussed their observations and related their experience to the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. On another occasion, children discussed the Muslim festival of Eid and created henna prints and pictures while they listened to relevant Asian music. After examining a hamster, they were given a chance to look at a world map and see where these animals come from. During the inspection, there was a school focus on creative development and related activities were particularly stimulating for the children, involving, for example, painting, printing, sewing, model making and drama.
2. Expectations are very high. Questions are used continuously and very effectively to extend the children's knowledge and skills. Activities are suitably challenging and the children's pace of learning is good. A very caring and friendly approach to child management was a major contributory factor to the very good behaviour seen during the inspection. All staff smile and provide very good role models. They are warm and affectionate, while still prepared to be suitably firm when appropriate. As a result, the children relate very well to one another, sharing equipment successfully and concentrating well on their activities. Even the youngest are generally able to work and play well independently without direct adult supervision, when this is appropriate. Staff treat the children with dignity.
3. There are good strategies for assessment in place, and assessment is used well to inform planning and teaching. Early years profiles are effective records of progress which are frequently completed in considerable detail. A number of children from each class are 'tracked' in rotation and the information gained is used to inform their profiles. The needs and progress of children with special educational needs is assessed and recorded in detail. Staff meet after school each day to evaluate successes and any concerns, and to use the information gained to plan for the following day. Staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn. This is reflected in the methods they use, which are very relevant to the needs of the children in the school.

As a result of the rich learning environment and stimulating activities provided for them, the children – including those for whom English is an additional language – make particularly good progress in developing their communication, language and literacy skills.

4. The school places a strong emphasis on developing the children's language and the environment is highly supportive of this. Regardless of the focus of activities, every opportunity is taken to extend the children's spoken language through discussion and questions. For example, while modelling the children are asked to consider which bits of clay are bigger and which are smaller. While they are discussing the attributes and life style of a hamster called 'Kinks', they are asked to suggest other words that sound the same or start with the same letter sound. While they are successfully exploring a woodland model they discuss the range of animals that they might find there. Role-play areas provide further opportunities to develop the children's spoken language, often with appropriate adult intervention. Good use is also made of puppets and story 'sacks'. A number of the children enter school with poor speaking and listening skills. As a result of carefully planned conversations and the fact that they are given

the confidence not to be afraid of making mistakes, they make particularly good progress in this area.

5. A good range of books is available to stimulate the children's interest in reading. They are read to regularly in groups, in pairs or as individuals, and frequently share stories well with one another in story corners. The children are encouraged to re-tell stories read to them by an adult and act them out using pre-prepared props. They also take books home regularly to share with their parents and families. Written language is given prominence throughout the school. Displays are extensively labelled – sometimes in more than one language. Children are also given a wide range of opportunities to develop their emerging writing skills. At the earlier stages, they are given the opportunity to make simple marks in sand and paint and soon they come to recognise that print carries meaning. They produce their own simple picture books with inscriptions provided by an adult. They learn to copy adult writing and some record their own ideas on paper by themselves. There is a graphics area in each classroom. Computer programs are used successfully to develop children's knowledge of initial letter sounds.
6. Provision for children for whom English is an additional language is very good and is thoroughly planned for. Their own languages and cultures are treated with great dignity and are valued by all staff. During the inspection, for example, a parent read a story to a group of children in Arabic, while a teacher read a parallel text to them in English. Other parents record stories or inscribe posters in various languages. The children have regular access to stories with an appropriately repetitive refrain and with a strong visual context to aid comprehension. A part time specialist teacher provides expert support for those children at the earliest stages of English language acquisition. Although she mainly supports these targeted children within their own classroom, she sometimes removes groups for specialist teaching in an attractive alternative area when this is appropriate. After formal assessments, all these children are set achievable – but appropriately challenging – targets at the beginning of each term. At the end of term these targets are evaluated and re-set. Language competency profiles maintained by the school indicate that most targeted children make good progress in acquiring English competency.

Provision for children with special educational needs is very good and these children achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment.

7. At the time of the inspection, three children with statements of special educational need were in school. Two have physical disabilities and one has severe visual impairment. These children are particularly well supported and make progress which is at least good, and is sometimes very good. There is also a number of other children with a range of complex learning needs who, because of the highly developed professional skills of the staff and the stimulating activities provided for them, also make significant progress. St Anne's is a very inclusive school and, with expert individual adult help, the children concerned are enabled to successfully access all activities and areas of learning. An example of this seen during the inspection was when the visually impaired child was enabled to access learning and appreciate the activities arranged for the day by using touch as well as his other senses. The staff relate to the children in a way which is loving and good humoured, but at the same time stimulating and – where necessary – suitably firm. Every opportunity is taken to develop the self-esteem of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Relationships between the children with special educational needs and other children are very good and all value one another. The children with special educational needs make a very positive contribution to the overall ethos of the school.
8. Equipment available to support children with special educational needs is relevant and appropriately effective. For example, a specially constructed recording machine is used well to repeat words and explore spoken language. Suitable wheelchairs support mobility and computers are used well when appropriate. Good systems are in place to identify and assess children for special educational needs. The provision is very well managed by the headteacher who is the special needs co-ordinator. Close relationships are maintained with parents and with outside agencies such as the educational psychologist.

Overall management at the school is very good and as a result all members of staff work very well together as a team. This ensures a strong impact on the rate of children's learning.

9. The headteacher provides very effective leadership. She is very committed to the school, its staff, children and parents. She has many ideas for taking the school even further forward and is highly regarded by all the parties concerned. She leads by personal example. The deputy head has an appropriately complementary role. One of the main strengths of the school, however, is the way in which all members of staff, regardless of their individual role, are enabled to have a full say in the school's forward development. For example, a meeting held during the inspection to discuss the needs and progress of some children with special educational needs was chaired very positively by the headteacher. However, all present were able to contribute in a significant way. All views and contributions were of value and were valued.
10. There are regular school evaluation staff meetings and daily meetings of staff to assess and plan. The headteacher attends each of the latter in rotation, regularly discusses their areas of responsibility with co-ordinators and maintains close contact with support staff. Co-ordinators, themselves, monitor one another informally from time to time. The assessment co-ordinator examines all planning weekly, looks at samples of children's individual profiles and discusses these with the headteacher. Overall, however, the whole staff works closely together and is an effective and forward looking team. Overall provision and planning strategies have been suitably modified in line with the new foundation stage, but some individual policies have still to be updated.
11. The chair of governors is very knowledgeable about issues involving the early years of schooling and visits the school regularly to discuss strategies and emerging issues. He supports the school well in its relationships with the local authority. The governing body as a whole is also highly supportive of the school and is committed to its success. Some individual governors work in classrooms with the children or with groups of parents. Appropriate procedures are now in place to involve the staff and governors in the production of the school development plan, although the document itself lacks financial details in some areas. This is a relatively new governing body and there are opportunities now for it to develop strategies for a more focused examination of different areas of the foundation curriculum in the school.
12. The school does not have a fully delegated budget, but every opportunity is taken to look at principles of best value when making purchases such as equipment and books, or when arranging for building improvements. It is constantly evaluating its performance. Overall, the school is well resourced. Good quality displays celebrate the children's achievements and act as a stimulus to their learning. However, some outdoor play apparatus is in need of updating. The school had a nominal under spend of its budget at the end of the last financial year. This related to an aspect that was not delegated to it.

Very effective links have been developed with parents, who value the school greatly and make a good contribution to their children's learning.

13. This is a justifiably very popular school. Parents value the school and its staff, and are equally valued in return. In the questionnaire, one hundred percent of the parents who responded stated that they were kept well informed and that they felt comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. The overall response to the questionnaire was very high. Parents are encouraged to come into classrooms at the beginning of the day to help their children settle down and to share their work with them. This is appreciated. Several help in classrooms with activities such as information and communication technology, cooking and sewing, and this is equally appreciated by the school. Parents are also very supportive of fund raising activities.
14. There is an appropriate induction meeting for parents prior to their children starting at the school, while relevant curriculum workshops are held during the course of the year. Parents are also provided with written information about curriculum matters each term. Their children's

personal profiles are shared with them. The headteacher and other staff encourage parents to visit the school to discuss any concerns and the parents feel that these are resolved quickly.

15. The school is successfully developing as a centre for the community it serves. During the inspection, a family literacy session was observed. This involved a range of activities, including sharing books, working on a computer and developing letter and sound recognition. This was an occasion for children and their parents to work together. Separate children's and parents' sessions are also held at other times. Other community activities include a 'drop in' session for parents of children with special educational needs, parent skills classes and a cross stitch club. The very good links that the school enjoys with its parents have a very positive effect on the ability of the parents to support their children's learning and on the achievements of the children themselves.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

16. The inspection team found no areas where significant improvement is required. The school is very effective. It has good procedures in place for self evaluation and review and is constantly striving to improve yet further.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed	10
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	87.5	12.5				

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	75
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	34

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	18

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	24

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	N/A

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	N/A

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	247

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	409930
Total expenditure	367840
Expenditure per pupil	4904
Balance brought forward from previous year	N/A
Balance carried forward to next year	N/A

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	75
Number of questionnaires returned	41

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	88	12	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	76	17	0	0	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	29	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	22	7	0	27
The teaching is good.	83	12	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	76	22	0	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	17	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	22	5	0	14
The school works closely with parents.	73	22	3	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	88	12	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	76	20	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	17	5	0	22

Other issues raised by parents

Nearly all written comments on the questionnaires were extremely positive about the high quality learning environment provided by the nursery and about the commitment and skills of the staff. The parents' meeting was also very positive indeed. The team agreed with the positive comments. The only concern related to the organisation of lunchtimes as a result of the loss of older role models. During the inspection, lunch sessions were well-organised occasions where children were happy and well looked after.