

INSPECTION REPORT

CHURCH HILL NURSERY SCHOOL

Walthamstow, London E17

LEA area: Waltham Forest

Unique reference number: 103028

Headteacher: Mrs S Campbell

Reporting inspector: Mr M S Burghart
20865

Dates of inspection: 30th – 31st October 2000

Inspection number: 224613

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 - 4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Woodbury Road Walthamstow London
Postcode:	E17 9SB
Telephone number:	0208 5204919
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Appropriate authority:	Local Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Peacham
Date of previous inspection:	19 th March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Church Hill Nursery School is situated in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The school has existed since the 1970s and is on the same campus as a girls' high school. The school has places for 70 children aged three to four, half of whom attend part time in the morning and half in the afternoon. Ten children attend full time. Five extra places are held as emergency provision. The school is almost full with 69 currently on roll and numbers have remained about the same since the last inspection. Children are drawn mostly from the local surrounding area from a mixture of private and local authority housing. Children's attainment on entry to the school, aged three, and in some cases four, represents the full range, but is heavily influenced by the high proportion for whom English is an additional language. Overall attainment on entry is below average.

The school has a stable staff. The headteacher has been in the school for nine years. She became head three years ago. She is supported by one full time teacher and five education support staff, one of whom is specifically employed to support children from ethnic minority groups and children with special educational needs.

There are 11 children on the special educational needs register. This accounts for 16 per cent of the school roll, and is broadly in line with the national average. No children have formal statements under the terms of the DfEE Code of Practice¹. Thirty children receive support under DfEE funding for ethnic minority groups and 39 children have English as an additional language. At 56.5 per cent of the total school roll, this is very high. Fifteen children are in the first stages of English language acquisition. The most commonly spoken languages amongst families with children at the school are Punjabi, Urdu and Arabic.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Church Hill Nursery is a very good school with excellent features, particularly in children's personal development, behaviour and the quality of staff team work in planning. This very effective nursery is a happy place and relationships at all levels are at least very good and often excellent. Children, a very high proportion of whom have English as an additional language, make very good progress. They achieve high standards against the required Early Learning Goals² as a result of high quality provision, record keeping and teaching. Very good leadership and management by the headteacher and governors help provide a very good learning environment. The nursery school continues to give very good value for money and fully justifies its selection for a short inspection.

What the school does well

- Standards are high. Children make very good progress. Their attitudes, behaviour, relationships and response to the school are very good and often excellent.
- The quality of curriculum planning is excellent. The school is very well led and managed.
- Excellent record keeping and very good assessment means staff know children well. Support for children with English as an additional language and for special educational needs is very good.
- Teaching is good, often very good and occasionally excellent.

¹ The DfEE Code of Practice gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities to ensure that all pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

² QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Early Learning Goals', comprised of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the end of the reception year. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literature; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; and physical development.

What could be improved

There are no key issues for the school to address. However, inspectors agree with the school's own intention to upgrade equipment for information and communication technology.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last report highlighted four issues for continued improvement and two issues for further consideration. The school has very successfully addressed all of these, whilst consolidating its good practice. Children's language and literacy skills have been further improved. Developments in planning make better provision for older and more able children, especially in writing activities, and children's involvement is sustained in 'purposeful experiences'. Teachers are successful in sharing good practice with all staff, which gives effective support to nursery officers and learning assistants. The overall quality of teaching has been improved. The school has continued its strong partnership with parents and developed communications to make the community more aware of its successes. In addition substantial improvements to the building have had positive effects on administration, the learning environment and community involvement. The school has successfully adapted its already well planned curriculum to take good account of the recommended Early Learning Goals and has increased resources, both in and out of doors, to enhance provision. The reported strong leadership of the last inspection has been maintained and the school is very well placed for future development.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about the achievements of children in relation to the national Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the school.

Performance in:	
Language and literacy	A
Mathematics	B
Personal and social development	A*
Other areas of the curriculum	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards for the majority of children are above average in each of the areas appropriate for early years education. Children, a large proportion of whom start school with below average experiences of English, make very good progress. By the time they leave the nursery most children are doing well and have already achieved most of the targets they are now expected to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage³. Children are very well prepared for the next phase of education. Particular strengths are in children's personal, social and emotional development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world, where standards are excellent. The nursery gives children a rich range of experiences and children develop self confidence and a good awareness of the world around them.

³ From September 2000, the term Foundation Stage refers to children's education from the age of three until the end of the reception year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good and often excellent. Children like coming to school and are frequently totally absorbed by activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good and frequently excellent. Children respond particularly well to the routines of the school and show respect for staff and volunteer helpers.
Personal development and relationships	Very good with excellent progress in personal development in response to the school's provision and high expectations. Relationships at all levels are excellent.
Attendance	Good habits are established for attending and being on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Lessons seen overall	Consistently good, with very good and some excellent features.

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.

All teaching observed was at least satisfactory and for 77 per cent of observations it was good or better with 37 per cent very good or better and 5 per cent excellent. This is an even better profile than in the last inspection. Excellent planning and record keeping are complemented by high expectations and good questioning. These have a significant impact on the quality of children's learning which is very good. Relationships are excellent. Teachers and support staff are well organised and prepared. All staff are very aware of the needs of individual children. No significant weaknesses were identified in teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good: excellent, detailed planning is translated into a broad range of relevant and interesting activities, indoors and outdoors. Very good consideration of Early Learning Goals. Play is valued.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good: needs are identified early. Very good monitoring and planning, particularly in individual education plans which support children very well, enabling them to make very good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good: staff expertise and good planning provide high quality support and children make rapid, very good progress. Many children reach high standards for their age before they leave.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall: with excellent features in social and cultural provision. Many opportunities are created to encourage children of different backgrounds to work and play together.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good: staff know children very well. Very positive impacts from excellent record keeping and very good assessment. Good attention paid to health and safety. The nursery provides a safe, secure, stimulating learning environment.

The school maintains excellent links with parents. Parents are very supportive and are justifiably pleased with the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher gives very clear educational direction. Staff all take responsibility for some planning and work very well together. The school is well managed. The school development plan clearly identifies priorities and action needed to take the school forward.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors support the school very well and are well organised with good committees. Governors have very good understanding of issues concerning the management of the school and their involvement in development planning has very positive effects.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good analysis of the success of school policies and planning. A good team effort to evaluate what is effective has a very positive impact.
The strategic use of resources	Staffing, accommodation and resources (particularly out of doors) very well used. Priorities supported by sensible financial planning. The school is efficiently run and strategic planning is very good. Overall the school continues to give very good value for money.

A strength of the school is the quality of space and resources outdoors. These have significant effects on children's physical and social development, and on their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, some very tall trees in the grounds are in need of attention.

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 coming. • Good standards of behaviour. • Good quality teaching. • The school is approachable. • It is well led and managed and works closely with parents. 	There was no consensus of opinion, but a small minority of parents would like even more information about progress.

Thirty parents (nearly 44 per cent) returned the Ofsted questionnaire. Sixteen parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector. The overwhelming response of parents is very positive. With regard to information about progress inspectors find that the school makes good provision to tell parents how their children are progressing. Inspectors are pleased to support parents' positive views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

‘Standards are high. Children make very good progress. Their attitudes, behaviour, relationships and response to the school are very good and often excellent.’

1. The school is very successful in achieving very good standards in each of the six required areas of the Foundation Stage.
2. Children, a majority of whom start school with less than expected language skills (some as a consequence of having English as an additional language), make very good progress. By the time they leave the school children are emerging as readers and writers. They are becoming confident in expressing themselves orally. Children are enthusiastic about stories and love joining in with favourites such as ‘Where’s Spot?’; and are keen on role play: for example in passport control before boarding their model airliner. Children listen well and take turns without fuss. In a large number of activities and situations their attention spans were noted as being well above average. Children concentrate effectively, responding very well to the interaction of their teachers. Most children speak clearly and often say ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ unprompted: for example to the child lunch helpers at dinnertime.
3. Many children appreciate the link between sounds and letters and have a good awareness of how to read initial letters phonetically. Children are beginning to write simple words, especially their names before they leave the school. There are some very good examples of children’s early writing in their ‘green record books’ and in class-made books such as the story of Bailey the rabbit’s holiday when he escaped. All children appreciate text has a meaning and that in English it follows from left to right. Higher attaining children have compared other forms of writing: for example Arabic with English, and can identify differences in script.
4. Although this area is least obviously promoted, standards in mathematical development are good, being above expectation for this phase of the Foundation Stage. Children can count reliably to 10 and some beyond. They are aware when items are added and taken away. They understand the relationship between combining two groups of objects and addition. Children can recognise shapes and patterns and the more able can identify and reproduce sequences.
5. Children make good use of their language skills to explain comparisons such as more or less and bigger or smaller. They are introduced to simple measurements: for example when baking banana cakes children weighed out ingredients and appreciated that cooking takes time.
6. Teachers stimulate children’s appreciation of ‘position’ by getting them to describe where objects are. Progress is good and higher attaining children are beginning to use mathematical ideas to solve practical problems. For example, children work out how many aprons will be needed for the painting group; or predict what size paper is needed to wrap different boxes for their charity appeal.
7. Children’s creative and physical development are very good. There are particularly good examples of children’s colour mixing and use of different textures in their paintings; and of good use of line and proportion for their age in illustrations for their diaries. The range of different models children have made representing houses they see on the way to school are well made and demonstrate very good cutting and sticking techniques. Very good physical skills are evident. In imaginative role play and in information and communication technology (ICT) children handle telephones and computers well. In outdoor play children run, climb and balance very well. This is a direct result of good provision and the school’s commitment to structured and free play.

8. Children's developing knowledge and understanding of the world is a strength of the school. A wealth of activities all have very positive effects. These are as diverse as:-

- Searching for minibeasts;
- Planning a route to and from the pond;
- Using computers to reinforce mathematics and as a tool for art work;
- Experimenting with materials such as card and glue to join things together;
- Starting to use simple reference books to find out more about animals, places and how people of different faiths worship.

9. Children's progress is very good and often excellent. Even children who start school with little experience of the world achieve high standards. With regard to children's personal, social and emotional development children exceed the Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage. Considering the wide diversity of children's backgrounds and experience, this is an excellent situation.

10. At all times children are interested and keen to learn. The well planned curriculum and well presented activities excite children and challenge them to do their best. There is a buzz of excitement and anticipation when the session starts and children come into the nursery. Many children are so instantly absorbed that they forget to say goodbye to parents. Children show consideration for each other and adults, and relationships are excellent for this age group. All children were observed working as part of different groups, sharing and taking turns. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and show that they understand fairness. In over 50 per cent of lessons observed children's attitudes and behaviour were judged excellent. In a further 45 per cent these were good or very good. There were no incidences of less than satisfactory response and behaviour, and, in all cases, children showed respect for adults, responding to instructions and support very positively.

11. The school successfully encourages children's independence and although children are often skilfully guided to the next activity, they can, and do, make choices. Older children were seen expressing preferences: for example, "I want to play on the computer," but they were obviously considerate to others and appreciated the consequences of their actions. Children wait for their turn without a fuss.

12. Children are confident even when trying new activities such as clay modelling, sawing wood and hammering nails. They take responsibility: for example as lunch monitors and in tidying resources away, and demonstrate that they can manage dressing themselves. Children visit the toilet and wash their hands without fuss, and those who stay to dinner need little prompting in cleaning their teeth after eating. Lunchtime is a very good social learning experience. Children make very good progress in using knives and forks, and waiting their turn.

13. From the time they arrive until the end of the session children are totally occupied. For those who stay all day and for younger children, this can prove tiring, but children respond very well. However, some consideration needs to be made during the afternoon session to allow for some less taxing activities, but overall time is very well used and children's standards are high as a result.

14. Overall most children are on line to fulfil the requirements of the Early Learning Goals before they leave the nursery. With a year still to go in the Foundation Stage in Year R in the infant school, this puts children well ahead of expectations.

'The quality of curriculum planning is excellent. The school is very well led and managed.'

15. Staff work very well as a team in planning the curriculum. The school has done very well in developing planning which fully addresses the Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage.

16. Together teachers and nursery officers ensure that children receive a rich variety of experiences to promote their personal, academic, creative and physical development. This long term planning is very effectively translated, through very good weekly and excellent daily plans, into activities which challenge and stimulate children of all abilities.

17. Particular care is taken to create opportunities to develop children's language skills and ensure that everyone is encouraged to express themselves. In the first instance this is designed to get children to speak, but this is followed up by providing activities that let children express themselves on paper: for example in experimenting with paint; and in 'writing' at the diary table.

18. Curriculum planning is generally strong, but there are particular highlights:-

- Children's knowledge and understanding of the world: for example children searching for minibeasts and using simple reference books to help identify them; and in information and communication technology using computer programs to follow matching games;
- Physical skills; where excellent use is made of both the outdoor and garden areas (in all weathers) to promote climbing and balancing, as well as encouraging children in constructive play.

19. Although standards are above average, the school is aware that currently, for a variety of good reasons, mathematics is less obvious than some other aspects. In order to develop children's understanding even further, the school is planning to raise the profile of mathematics.

20. Excellent provision is made for children's personal and social development. The school very successfully plans experiences that will bring boys and girls of different ethnic groups together in a wide range of activities. Staff very carefully identify objectives designed to develop children's communication skills and provide an exciting and stimulating environment. This results in very good learning, and in children being well challenged. Children respond very well and obviously enjoy school.

21. The high quality of teaching at this school is very clearly supported by excellent planning and organisation. Resources are accessible and well stored. Children make very good progress as a result.

22. The school has very clear educational direction, well presented in the school development plan. This features timescales, responsibilities and criteria for success. A more concise overview showing priorities would make this plan even better.

23. The vision of the headteacher and governors builds very effectively upon the successes reported in the last inspection to present an excellent curriculum for young children. Governors make a valuable contribution. They support the school well and have a very clear understanding of management issues. There is good communication between the governing body and staff. The school is very well led and managed and efficient use is made of finances, staff, resources, time and accommodation (with particularly good use of outdoor space). As a consequence, the school is very effective and continues to give very good value for money.

'Excellent record keeping and very good assessment means staff know children well. Support for children with English as an additional language and for special educational needs is very good.'

24. Staff keep excellent records of children. These start with information gained from first contact either in home visits or the children attending 'visiting day' before they are admitted. Throughout their time in the nursery children's participation and performance are carefully monitored. Staff make daily notes about children and each member of staff has non teaching time one day per week to track the children they are directly responsible for. This process is very well managed and the records produced are very detailed, especially concerning play, role play and physical activities where examples cannot be stored.

25. Staff make very good use of information from records and observations to plan for individual children and ensure that they are involved in an appropriate range of activities.

26. Communications are good. Staff work well together and between them know children very well. Parents at the pre-Ofsted meeting and through the questionnaire, showed that they are very pleased with their links with staff and that, 'All staff can tell you about your child.'

27. Records quite clearly show children's strengths as well as weaknesses and are well used to identify, not only children with special educational needs, but as recommended by the last inspection, to support more able children. Good extension activities are planned: for example to get children to copy simple sentences that they have spoken to an adult; and to put story cards in the right sequence.

28. Support for special needs is very good. Children who lack experiences expected of this age, which include language activities for those for whom English is an additional language, are very well taught. Staff have good expertise – some of them speak a variety of languages – and they target children's needs very effectively. As a result children make very good progress and many will have already achieved most of the Early Learning Goals before they leave the nursery. Staffing, resources and accommodation are used well to support all children.

29. Excellent collections of children's best work are mounted in their own record of achievement 'green books'. Staff annotate such work to show how old children were when they completed it and how much support they were given. Photographs are used effectively to record work and activities that cannot be stored in a book. Record books and teachers' notes on children are used as the basis for very good end of year reports to parents. Reports are highly detailed and show not only what children have done, but what they know and understand, as well as giving a very thorough picture of children's personal and social development.

30. Children's records are shared with the infant schools children move on to and should ensure that they do not repeat work unnecessarily.

31. Children take a real pride in their work and the more able are keen to talk about what is in their 'green books'. A measure of their growing independence is the way in which higher attainers are beginning to choose which pieces of work they would like to keep. This shows a high degree of maturity, especially where the more articulate can explain why they left out items.

32. The quality of record keeping makes a very positive impact on children's learning.

'Teaching is good, often very good and occasionally excellent.'

33. The quality of teaching is consistently good with very good and excellent features. Staff work well as a team and their planning is excellent. This supports their teaching very effectively. Staff are well prepared and very clear about learning objectives. Their excellent

record keeping gives rise to very good assessment and awareness of children's potential. This makes target setting possible and is used very effectively to challenge, not only those children with special educational needs and English as an additional language – where it works very well, but all children including the more able.

34. Staff's excellent relationships, particularly with the children for whom they are directly responsible, enhance children's learning. Staff encourage, praise and, where necessary, direct, and children make better progress because of it: for example children were allowed to experiment with playdough before the nursery officer showed them a good way to roll it out into the shape of noses and ears.

35. Teachers encourage children to enjoy their time in the nursery. Activities are made fun: for example, "Stick insects are tickly!" was the cry when the teacher handed the creatures to two girls. Everyone laughed and went on to look carefully with hand lenses at the very thin legs before looking in books to find out more.

36. Very good use of questioning by staff is aimed at getting children firstly to speak (initially in any language) and eventually to respond with more than one word, sometimes expressing emotions and opinions. "Why do you like your picture?" elicited the response, "I like yellow. It's a nice colour." In circle time at the end of the morning session when children came together to talk about what they had done, they took turns to speak when holding a large shell that was passed around. Even the minority of children who found this hard managed to say something and everyone listened!

37. All lessons observed were at least satisfactory with 77 per cent good or better, 37 per cent were very good or better, and 5 per cent excellent. All staff were seen to teach some good or better sessions, with particularly strong teaching in the areas of language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and the use of the outdoor area. The quality of teaching has been improved since the last inspection where 15 per cent was judged unsatisfactory.

38. Children's high standards, very good progress and good learning are very much the result of the good and very good teaching at this school. Children of all abilities, backgrounds and experiences benefit considerably from the quality of teaching. Those for whom English is an additional language are particularly well taught and their learning is rapid.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

39. There are no areas of significant weakness in this very good nursery school and no key issues to address. However, the school has already identified the need to improve and increase equipment for information and communication technology. Inspectors note that children do very well with what is available. Most children are proficient with the mouse and can appreciate the relationship between the keyboard, screen and printer. They can follow

simple instructions from the computer: for example to drag the right sized shoes to characters on screen; and some more able children can load and close programs down themselves.

40. Better quality, and more, computer hardware is needed to take advantage of children's good basic skills. The school is aware of this and has begun planning for improvements in its development plan.

41. The learning environment is of high quality. It is well resourced and stimulating and plays a significant part in the school's very good ethos. In order to make it even better the school is encouraged to:

- Take steps to ensure that very tall trees in the grounds are safe (one fell demolishing a section of the perimeter fence in a violent storm the night before the inspection);
- Develop, still further an area where children can be involved in quiet activities when they choose to.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

42. In order to further improve this very effective school, headteacher, governors and staff should:-

- **Improve**, as planned, resources for information and communication technology.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	32	41	23	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons. Due to rounding percentages do not total 100.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of children on the school's roll	69
Number of full-time children eligible for free school meals	N/A

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	11

English as an additional language	No of children
Number of children with English as an additional language	39

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of children
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of children per qualified teacher	22

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	128

Number of children per FTE adult	8.8
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999 – 2000
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	£
Total income	201470
Total expenditure	194188
Expenditure per child	2490
Balance brought forward from previous year	Not available
Balance carried forward to next year	Not available

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	69
Number of questionnaires returned	30

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	83	17	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	36	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	40	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	41	14	0	14
The teaching is good.	70	23	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	22	15	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	17	7	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	31	8	0	12
The school works closely with parents.	69	24	3	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	80	17	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	23	3	0	13
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	14	11	0	18

Due to rounding percentages may not total 100.