

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **DULWICH WOOD NURSERY SCHOOL**

Southwark, London

LEA area: Southwark

Unique reference number: 100769

Headteacher: Jenny Lovell

Reporting inspector: Robert Greatrex

19924

Dates of inspection: 26-27 February 2002

Inspection number: 230137

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 4 year olds
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lyall Avenue Kingswood Estate London
Postcode:	SE21 8QS
Telephone number:	020 8670 0372
Fax number:	020 8670 1115
Appropriate authority:	W.S.Atkins/Southwark Education
Name of chair of governors:	Heather Morley
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Dulwich Wood is a small nursery school with 38 full-time and 84 part-time boys and girls on roll. Standards when children join the school are very varied indeed. Children's experiences and backgrounds are similarly very varied. Some children have already enjoyed a wide range of experiences and know much. Others struggle to speak clearly and coherently. On entry, overall standards are a little below those expected by this age. Although only a small number of children are on the school's register of special educational needs, a relatively large proportion have higher levels of need. The main areas of need are speech or communication and several children have more general learning difficulties. A high proportion of full-time children are eligible for free school meals. A large proportion speak English as an additional language, and nearly all of these children are at an early stage of English acquisition. Seven main languages, other than English, are spoken by children from a number of ethnic backgrounds. A relatively high proportion of children join during the year.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Dulwich Wood is an effective school. It is fully inclusive of all children and provides a very happy environment in which children from a very wide range of backgrounds thrive. Children work and play together very harmoniously. This is seen by many parents as a strength of the school. Although children attend for a relatively short period of time, accurate assessment and very close tracking of how they are doing enables the school to ensure all children achieve well. Teaching is of high quality. Staff plan challenging and stimulating tasks that interest children, build on their natural curiosity and help to create positive attitudes to learning. Staff work closely with parents, an important factor in the good progress children make. The school is very well led and managed so that it runs very smoothly. The school gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Children make good progress at Dulwich Wood.
- Teaching is of a high standard.
- Staff know the children very well, like a parent. Relationships are excellent.
- Dulwich Wood fully meets its aim to provide a stimulating curriculum that engages children's curiosity and interest so they are keen to learn.
- Good routines and efficient organisation help ensure no time is wasted and each day is productive.
- The partnership with parents is close and this is beneficial to children's learning.

#### **What could be improved**

- There are no key issues for action. To improve further, the governors and staff should continue to implement their own current plans for the school's improvement, such as further development in the provision for information and communication technology.

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Dulwich Wood has made good progress since it was last inspected in 1998. Group sessions have been reorganised and now provide children with good opportunities to learn and share their successes. The size of the group is invariably right for the activity undertaken. Record-keeping is very thorough so that staff have a clear understanding of how each child is progressing. Staff have worked hard to improve attendance which is now comparable with most infant schools. Curriculum revisions are implemented effectively and carefully, so that the children's good rate of learning is maintained. Given the strengths in management and teaching, the school is well placed to improve further.

## STANDARDS

By the time they leave the school, most children are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. A good number should exceed these expected levels and be working within the National Curriculum. A few are unlikely to reach these expected levels, particularly in the more academic areas. This is a similarly positive picture to when the school was last inspected. As then, the vast majority of children make good progress. All parents who responded to the questionnaire feel that their children do well at school.

Children with special educational needs continue to be well supported and to make the progress of which they are capable. The most able children are given challenging tasks so that they begin to learn to think for themselves and, most particularly, to use what they know to solve problems. This prepares them well for the next stage in their learning. Children for whom English is an additional language also make good progress. Staff observe carefully and ensure all children, whether boys or girls, outgoing or shy, take an active part and enjoy a full range of tasks. This ensures each child receives a full and varied curriculum and is very beneficial to the standards children achieve.

Children make particularly good progress in their personal development, knowledge and understanding of the world and musical development. Staff encourage them to use what they already know when faced with the challenge of a new activity. Careful choice of activities means that all children enjoy a rich and varied curriculum that builds their general knowledge particularly well. Learning in one area helps build understanding of another, for example when children discussed the various sounds they could create with the musical instruments they had previously designed and made. Staff take every opportunity to encourage talk and develop children's linguistic skills. Many can articulate very clearly what they are doing and why.

## CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children are very positive about school and what it offers. They are curious and inquisitive, very keen to learn. They have a real thirst for knowledge and interest in all they see around them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Children quickly settle in and respond well to the expectations that they will behave well, show kindness and courtesy to one another, and look after property. Whether in the classroom or garden, they behave equally well.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Older children notice when others need a hand, for example to put an apron on, and readily help younger and newer children to settle. Children have very close relationships with staff, too. They will often share a joke as they work together.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is better than when the school was last inspected, and punctuality is generally good.

Children's very positive attitudes and very good behaviour make a real contribution to the flow of lessons and good rate of learning, continuing to build upon the good standards reported at the last inspection. Children make a full contribution to the happy and harmonious working atmosphere, both in the school and around the site. Most have one or two very close friends but show very positive attitudes to the other children too.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of children in:</b>	<b>Nursery</b>
Quality of teaching	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 very good quality of teaching reported at the last inspection has been maintained. Teachers and nursery nurses work together very effectively. All parents who replied to the questionnaire agree teaching is good.

Children's previous knowledge is used well, particularly to begin activities. Activities are organised to encourage children to think for themselves and gain independence, safe in the knowledge that there is always a member of staff on hand with a word of encouragement or guidance if they are not quite ready yet. Children learn to enjoy learning. Staff's enthusiasm and interest, for example at story-time, excites and stimulates children so that they want to learn and take part. Staff constantly model what they are expecting from their children. Whether playing an instrument or reading a book, children can see as well as hear what they are expected to do. Thorough planning and preparation ensure no time is wasted and sessions flow well.

A feature of lessons is the very good quality and quantity of talk. Children's linguistic skills are developed very well in all tasks. Specific vocabulary is carefully taught and children are expected to use the right word. Staff ask challenging and searching questions, encouraging children to think. In cooking, for example, they are asked to predict what will happen when the ingredients are heated. Staff expectations are high, children respond positively and do well. In a very good music session, children were asked to listen again to the music when they did not offer the answer the teacher was looking for. They listened more closely and succeeded. In a very good summing-up session, very good teaching meant that children were beginning to recognise that they would use an aeroplane for a very long journey, but would walk to the local shops. All children, including those with special educational needs, those who are most able and those for whom English is an additional language, are taught well. Staff engage children at their own level very effectively. Support is tailor-made for each child, largely because of accurate assessment, careful planning and the good level of support available.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Excellent. A very wide range of carefully planned activities stimulate children's interest. The garden is used as effectively as the classroom, to arouse curiosity and fuel children's thirst for knowledge. 'Inter-active' displays are used very effectively to grab children's interest. Visits and visitors enrich and enliven the curriculum further.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Very good. These children's needs are determined quickly, and good support and guidance put in place to meet them. Staff check progress well. Parents are fully and actively involved in their children's education.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. A new teacher is soon to begin. In the meantime, the school's good levels of high quality staffing ensure that each child is assessed, their needs identified, and support given. Progress is checked frequently.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Everything is done to make children feel at home and part of the school community. They are taught right from wrong, and how to live and work in a large group of people.

How well the school cares for its children	Very good. Although children attend for no more than five terms, staff know them very well indeed. Pastoral needs are very well catered for. Through thorough and detailed assessment, staff ensure each child receives the support and guidance they need, when they need it. This makes a very strong contribution to the good rate of children's progress.
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The school works closely with parents, particularly to involve them in the life and work of the school. There is a real sense of partnership, of working together to better support the children's needs. Parents' skills and expertise are valued and used to enrich the curriculum when possible.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. Educational direction is clear. Teachers and nursery nurses work very closely together, to the benefit of children's learning. Everyone knows, and is involved in formulating, the school's priorities for improvement. Routines and procedures are very well established and known to all staff. Everything is managed well so that the day flows smoothly and efficiently.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors want to do their best for the school. Although they are justifiably proud of what has been achieved, they are keen to build upon this and see the school improve further.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school knows its own strengths and the areas it needs to improve. Current plans are appropriate.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school is generously resourced, but nothing is wasted and everything is used for a purpose aimed at improving the quality of education offered to its children.

Dulwich Wood is a well-run school. Teamwork is very strong. Teachers and nursery nurses work very effectively together: to plan, teach and review progress. Administration, premises and meals staff all play a full part in ensuring that the school runs smoothly. The school does not yet run its own budget. However, it applies the principles of best value well to areas for which it is responsible.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like Dulwich Wood.</li> <li>• Parents are very comfortable raising questions or problems with staff.</li> <li>• They feel the school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Parents feel teaching is good.</li> <li>• They feel that Dulwich Wood helps their children become more mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school works closely with them.</li> <li>• Children behave well at the school.</li> <li>• Children make good progress at the school.</li> <li>• Staff have high expectations of how well children do at school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents are very pleased with the school and raised no particular areas they would like to see improved.</li> </ul>

Parents have very positive views of the school. In each category above, no parent disagreed with the statement. This level of support is very praiseworthy. Inspectors endorse parents' very positive views.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Children make good progress at Dulwich Wood**

1. All children's progress was judged good at the time of the last inspection. This has been maintained. All parents who expressed a view in their replies to the questionnaire agreed.
2. Progress in personal, social and emotional development is very good. Pupils quickly learn to think for themselves. Opportunities to act out stories they have written in front of the class develop their confidence. The school ethos is to teach children to enjoy their own learning and to develop the confidence to try things for themselves. Consequently, children learn to cope with any failure and many begin to realise mistakes are natural, and represent another learning opportunity.
3. Progress in communication, language and literacy is good. Children are given many interesting activities that develop their skills well. Most know some letter sounds, particularly everyday ones such as they find in their names. Whilst some are articulate, others struggle to pronounce common words accurately. The link between reading and writing is well taught. Children's abilities to make up stories develop very well at special times when staff scribe for them. This is followed by them acting out the story whilst it is retold. Children make very good advances in a number of important ways. For example, their self-confidence grows just as much as their ability to tell a story.
4. Progress in mathematical development is good. Again, children are given a wide range of practical tasks that relate to their everyday experiences and enable them to build their understanding of number, shape and size well. Most can count aloud to five, many to ten and a good number of children well beyond that. Most children recognise common regular shapes such as triangles, squares and circles. A smaller number know other shapes such as rectangles.
5. Progress in knowledge and understanding of the world is very good. Children are given lots of interesting experiences so that they begin to make sense of the world around them. A great diversity of religious festivals and customs is celebrated. This begins to give children an insight into their own backgrounds and those of others. Most use a mouse and toolbar confidently and can print their work out independently.
6. Progress in creative development is good and in music very good. Good teaching means children know how to play instruments properly, and identify the different sounds they can make. About half are beginning to follow a beat. They generally sing tunefully and few shout.
7. Progress in physical development is good. The wide range of challenging activities in the garden is used well. Children quickly learn to balance when travelling over a plank, to climb through a tunnel and over a form. They respond very well to the high levels of challenge. Most have a good and developing sense of their own space and that of others. Other skills, such as cutting, develop satisfactorily.
8. Children with special educational needs make good progress. These children, especially those on the higher levels of need, are given the support and guidance they require to enable them to participate purposefully in activities. The more able children are catered for through the level of challenge in the tasks they are given. These children

are given many opportunities to practise skills and learning recently acquired in new activities and tasks, so that they move from just knowing to fully understanding. Children who speak English as an additional language also make good progress. Again, the high level of support enables them to receive the help they need, when they need it.

### **Teaching is of a high standard.**

9. Teaching is very good overall. Although few lessons were seen, none was judged to be less than good, and this is very praiseworthy.
10. Teachers have very high expectations. Children respond positively to this and progress at a good rate. Once taught, for example, they are expected to use the right word, to walk to the library in an orderly fashion, or to use equipment in the right way and put it back. Children are expected to clear away after themselves. Much is done to teach hygiene in this way.
11. Teachers are enthusiastic educators. Children are excited and stimulated by both the task and the teacher's delivery. There is always a sense of lots going on; no two days seem identical. Staff recognise that many children have limited experience of books, and plan accordingly. They take children to the local library regularly, showing them how libraries work as well as enjoying books together and fostering good reading habits. Back at school, children use props such as soft toys to act out the stories staff read. They begin to develop a sense of how stories are told in words and pictures. A good design and technology session typified teaching at Dulwich Wood. Sticking techniques were clearly taught before the children practised them in their model-making. Every opportunity was taken to develop language and lots of pictures and examples of vehicles were readily to hand to give ideas. Children were given everything they needed to succeed and, consequently, produced good quality work including an imaginatively designed ambulance.
12. Discussion is of high quality. Teachers ask challenging questions that encourage children to think for themselves. During a story, for example, they may be asked to predict what they think will happen next, and during cookery, to say what will happen to the ingredients when they are mixed.
13. Staff recognise many children have limited knowledge of spoken English. Most instruction and teaching is accompanied by a visual demonstration. When unknown words are pronounced, staff insist children watch closely to see how the mouth is formed. Whether it is how to sit at story-time or how to play an instrument, staff constantly model what they want from their children. The children, in turn, repeat what they see as well as what they are told.
14. Staff use activities very effectively to develop children's skills. In a very good music lesson, different shakers were played and children asked to listen very closely to the differences. Their vocabulary and speaking skills were then extended by the discussion that followed, particularly when they were asked to describe the sounds they had heard and the differences between them. Very good use was made of open-ended questions. Children make particularly good progress in language and literacy when staff write down the stories they dictate before giving them and other children the opportunity to act the story out. Staff encourage participation. Children quickly learn to compose longer stories that tell a tale and to think about the characters and story-line when acting it through.

15. Children respond very positively to teachers and nursery nurses alike. They listen closely to staff. They are very keen to answer the searching questions they are given. Their answers suggest they have listened equally closely to earlier lessons. In a cookery activity, for example, some children remembered baking powder and its use. A group of recent arrivals found some mixing difficult for their level of dexterity, but they were determined and tried hard. They responded positively to the teacher's constructive and helpful guidance.

**Staff know the children very well, like a parent. Relationships are excellent.**

16. All staff know their children very well, and this makes a positive contribution to how well they can help them.
17. Teachers and nursery nurses take it in turns to meet and greet children and parents at the start of the day. Consequently, all staff know their children as members of families.
18. Very thorough assessments mean all staff know their children very well indeed. Accurate tracking sheets record individual children's progress during activities. These useful and informative comments are child-specific but referenced to the learning objectives, too. Later, these are shared with all who teach that child. Staff regularly review the progress of each child. Excellent assessment procedures ensure all children are very closely monitored during their five terms in the school. Every few weeks, each child's progress is discussed in detail and specific plans made to move the child on or to reinforce an area of difficulty. Subsequently, a tailor-made curriculum is provided.
19. Relationships between staff and children are excellent, and this makes a very positive contribution to the good progress children make. Staff and children will often share a joke as they work. Although part of a large group, each child is treated individually. For example, a child will arrive at the start of the day and seek out a member of staff. They share a private joke only the two of them know, or the child will proudly show something brought specially from home.

**Dulwich Wood fully meets its aim to provide a stimulating curriculum that engages children's curiosity and interest so they are keen to learn.**

20. Tasks and children are carefully matched to ensure all have a balanced curriculum at an appropriate level of challenge. Scope is provided for children to use their previous learning in new situations, to enable them to begin to move from just 'knowing' to 'understanding'.
21. The curriculum is designed very carefully. A very wide range of stimulating activities is well prepared and very carefully resourced to fully meet the learning intention of each task. Different areas of learning are incorporated in topics so that learning is linked and what is learnt in one activity reinforces learning in another. The curriculum is very relevant to all children and carefully starts from their own experiences. For example, music is chosen from a wide range of cultures so that it is recognisable to children.
22. Very good use of 'inter-active' displays arouses children's curiosity or enables them to practise what they have recently learnt. All displays are used cleverly to instruct, enthuse, motivate or celebrate children's successes. Each is provided with a brief explanation, to inform parents and explain the intention of the task and the reason for it.
23. The outside is as interesting and stimulating as the inside. Not only is each activity carefully planned, but the outside space has been carefully planned to offer a very rich

and interesting variety of challenges. Each is used very effectively. For example, a very well-planned story activity was acted out in the pagoda. Although surrounded by a large garden and many other playing children, the environment created was intimate enough for the children to feel really they were on a bear hunt. Good use of background music and instruments the children played also contributed to the atmosphere.

24. Much is done to enrich the curriculum. Visitors are skilfully used to extend the curriculum, for example to give children first-hand experience of unusual animals. Children are helped to make sense of the world around them through the visits they make. Whether to make a pizza or to select fruit from the market, activities are planned to stimulate children and arouse their curiosity.
25. Children are keen to learn. The vast majority go straight to work at the start of the day. Their independence is encouraged by staff. They also know how to learn. The vast majority persevere and concentrate on a task until it is completed. Very few, and generally only those new and still settling, move quickly between tasks without settling. Children quickly learn to wear a cap when using sand and an apron when painting. They know how to get the resources they need and generally remember to put them back.
26. Activities are reviewed at the end of each day, as the beginning of the planning cycle. This ensures the curriculum remains closely matched to children's capabilities and needs. Decisions are taken to make changes to the next day, perhaps so children have more experience of something they found difficult.

**Good routines and efficient organisation help ensure no time is wasted and each day is productive.**

27. Routines and procedures are very well established and thoroughly understood by staff, children and parents. All staff know what is happening and why. Consequently, no time is wasted and the whole day is productive and purposeful.
28. From the moment children arrive, they are greeted, share news and are quickly encouraged and enabled to settle to a worthwhile task. One member of staff meets the children, whilst others are already working with their carefully chosen group. No sooner are children through the door than they are faced with many interesting opportunities.
29. Activities, and the resources to undertake them, are very carefully planned so no time is wasted. All children are monitored so that they have a well-balanced curriculum. The use of the computer is timed and children are carefully chosen for each taught activity.
30. The structure of the teaching day enables children to move from session to session seamlessly. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. For example, summing-up at the end of the session begins with taped music. Without any word of command, children no sooner hear this than they quickly move to the group. They first listen quietly, modelling the behaviour of the teacher and knowing there will be questions about the music shortly.

**The partnership with parents is close and this is beneficial to children's learning.**

31. The school recognises that the partnership with parents is of the utmost importance. It is given a very high priority. The teacher responsible helps ensure home-school links are good. Parents are welcomed into school and much is done to ensure children's

start to school is positive. Prospective parents are encouraged to bring their children to a pre-nursery group that meets regularly.

32. Parents are kept very well informed about school events and their child's progress. Picture books are used very effectively to explain to parents what the school does. These show and explain the excellent range of activities and tasks undertaken by the children. Good use of photographs enables explanations to be clear without a large volume of text. This is particularly helpful to parents with a limited knowledge of English.
33. Much is done to help parents' understanding. Sessions are held about aspects of the curriculum such as language and literacy. These are full of practical advice to help parents, and are much appreciated.
34. Parents frequently help in school, and this is very beneficial. For example, parents will demonstrate the traditional foods and clothes of their cultures, or help with carpentry skills.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

35. Dulwich Wood Nursery School is judged to have no key issues. To improve further, the governors and staff should continue to implement their own current plans for the school's improvement.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	6

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	7	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	39	39	0	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than five percentage points. Furthermore, four lesson observations were quite short and these have not been graded.

### 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)	80
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	30

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7



### **Teachers and classes**

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.4
Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	134
Number of pupils per FTE adult	5.3

*FTE means full-time equivalent*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total expenditure	372 239
Expenditure per pupil	5 030
Balance brought forward from previous year	7 218
Balance carried forward to next year	9 675

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	122
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.	67	27	0	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	30	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	42	0	0	13
The teaching is good.	72	28	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	34	3	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	87	13	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	30	0	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	69	28	0	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	83	14	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	20	0	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	76	7	0	0	17