

INSPECTION REPORT

WENTWORTH NURSERY SCHOOL

Hackney

LEA area: Hackney

Unique reference number: 100212

Headteacher: Ms C Maples

Reporting inspector: Mr John Tyler

20506

Dates of inspection: 25th and 26th February 2002

Inspection number: 230300

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 to 4
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Cassland Road
Hackney
London
Postcode: E9 5BY
Telephone/Fax number: 020 8985 3491
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Appropriate authority: Hackney Education Authority
Name of chair of governors: Ms F Beregevoi
Date of previous inspection: May 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Wentworth is a large nursery school for boys and girls who are three and four years old. Sixty children attend part time and 30 full time. Most children attend for four or five terms, at least one of which is full time. The school draws children from a broad range of social circumstances. A few children have special educational needs and five of these receive some level of extra support from outside the school. The range of special needs includes communicative disorders, behavioural and emotional difficulties and visual impairment. About three-quarters of the children are from ethnic minority backgrounds. Forty-seven children are learning English as an additional language, and 35 of these are at an early stage of language acquisition. The most commonly spoken language in children's homes is English, but a significant number of families speak Turkish and, in all, 20 home languages were noted at the time of the inspection. Taken together, pupils' attainment when they start nursery school is well below average overall, including their personal, social and emotional development, in the skills of communication, language and literacy, and in their mathematical development.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school in which children make rapid progress and achieve well. Standards are above national expectations in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Although standards in communication, language and literacy are below national expectations, in the context of their attainment on entry, children achieve well. The quality of teaching, the range of learning opportunities, and the provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are all very good. Equally strong are the level of care for children and the school's partnership with parents. The school is very well led and managed and has made good improvements since the last inspection. The cost per pupil is high, in common with most nursery schools, but, with so many strengths and no significant weaknesses, the school offers good value for money.

What the school does well

- Children make very good progress over time and achieve well in relation to their starting points and abilities. They reach standards that are above national expectations for their ages in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world.
- The school provides very well for children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Very good leadership contributes significantly to the strong teamwork of staff, the consistent quality of teaching, and effective planning.
- The ethos of the school is welcoming, caring and inclusive of children of all abilities and backgrounds.

What could be improved

- The inspection found no significant weaknesses. Governors may wish to include the few minor aspects for improvement in their school improvement plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since its last inspection in May 1998, the school has maintained all the strengths identified at the time and has improved some aspects. Improvement overall, therefore, has been good. The governing body has developed its role and is now strongly involved in the life of the school and well informed about its work. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which was reported as being good, is now very good. The planning of the curriculum has improved and is now very detailed. With strong, self-evaluative leadership, the school is well placed to continue improving.

STANDARDS

Children make rapid progress in the short time that they attend the nursery school and achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry. The result is that, when children move on to primary school, the balance of attainment overall is in line with the national expectations for their ages. Children achieve especially well in their personal, social and emotional development, their knowledge and understanding of the world, and their mathematical development. Children do especially well in these areas because of the emphasis on personal development and the richness and variety of the curriculum. The oldest children reach standards that are above national expectations in these three

areas. Standards in physical and creative development are in line with national expectations. In communication, language and literacy, standards overall are below national expectations. However, in the context of children's attainment on entry this represents good achievement.

The wide range of ethnic groups in the school make equally good progress and the significant proportion of children who speak English as an additional language achieve especially well. Children with special educational needs, although often not attaining the levels expected for their ages, achieve very well in relation to their starting points. More able children are sufficiently challenged and reach standards well above national expectations in some areas.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children have very positive attitudes to the school. They are keen to learn through their play, inquisitive, and follow routines well. Many concentrate for extended periods of time and persevere well when tasks are difficult.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Even when minor disagreements occur, children generally respond positively to the adults' high expectations of behaviour and courtesy. Many children are beginning to make their own decisions about how to behave towards others.
Personal development and relationships	By the time they leave the nursery school, children have a strong degree of independence and confidence. Their understanding of right and wrong is well developed. Children from a wide range of ethnic groups and backgrounds value each other and get on very well with each other and adults.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Typically for children of their age there are many minor illnesses that keep them away from school, usually against their will!

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery	<i>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.</i>
Quality of teaching	Very good	

The quality of teaching was very good or excellent in nearly half the sessions observed, good or better in most, and at least satisfactory in every one. The effect of this consistently strong teaching is that children make rapid progress and are very well prepared for their entry to primary school. The school is successfully meeting the needs of all its children.

Learning is well planned to ensure that activities have a learning intention as well as being fun. Activities often fit into a theme so that children begin to make their own links between the areas of learning. Staff work together very well in planning sessions and in leading activities. As children move from one activity to another, they are well supervised and helped through guidance and questioning. This helps them to concentrate for extended periods and gives them encouragement to persevere with difficult tasks. Relationships between staff and children are very positive and this helps to create the happy, stimulating atmosphere that pervades the nursery school. It is a feature of the school that children with a wide range of abilities and backgrounds get on well together and learn to value the diversity within their environment.

Planning for the pupils who attend full time is particularly detailed to ensure that there is sufficient challenge and support when they have lessons that focus on basic skills. Early literacy and numeracy skills are taught effectively in these lessons. Children with special educational needs are taught very successfully. Staff have considerable skills in dealing with the range of needs. The strong emphasis on spoken language, together with very good liaison with families, helps children who speak English as an additional language to learn very effectively. The school's positive use of home languages helps children to develop their overall use of language and their verbal reasoning, which enables them to learn English successfully.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
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The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Detailed planning ensures a broad, stimulating curriculum with excellent links between different areas of learning. A wide range of visitors and trips to places of educational interest greatly enriches the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Precise planning to meet individual needs and very effective support from adults ensures that these children are integrated well and make very good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The strong emphasis on personal, social and emotional development gives children confidence to experiment with new vocabulary and grammatical structures. Children's home languages and cultural backgrounds are valued and this contributes very significantly to their rapid progress. The school draws very effectively on external support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Children are strongly encouraged to make their own decisions about how to behave well, and to see the difference between right and wrong. They are encouraged to be independent and responsible. Many opportunities are created for children to work together and to help each other. Children's abilities, languages, cultural heritage and religions are valued and they are very effectively taught to respect other people. The school helps children successfully to be inquisitive and to reflect upon the wonder of the world around them.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Adults know the children very well and take great care to ensure their welfare, health and safety. Child-protection procedures are very good. Systems for formally assessing children are effective. The identification of special educational needs and the needs of children learning English as an additional language is very good.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school works very effectively with parents and carers, who are well informed about the curriculum and their children's progress. It actively encourages parents to be partners in teaching their children and to discuss achievements and concerns with their children's key worker.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very strong leadership from the headteacher, ably supported by other key staff, results in powerful teamwork and very good teaching. Adults work together especially well in planning the curriculum, caring for children and ensuring that the school's policies and values are implemented consistently.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very involved in the life of the school and well informed about its work. They are appropriately involved in planning for school improvement. The governing body's annual report to parents does not fully inform them of all the many strengths of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is good at evaluating its strengths and weaknesses, and ensuring that it is providing good educational value. Staff share ideas, for example about how to improve teaching further, and are committed to a culture of continuous improvement.

The strategic use of resources	Care is taken to ensure that the financial resources available to the school are used well. The number of adults is good and they are very well deployed. The accommodation, though extremely cramped, is used very efficiently and learning resources are used effectively. Continuing professional development of staff is valued and makes a significant contribution to the very good quality of teaching.
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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. ◆ Staff set high expectations, which leads children to make good progress. ◆ Children are helped to become mature and responsible and their behaviour is good. ◆ Parents feel very comfortable about asking questions or sharing concerns. ◆ The school works closely with them, and keeps them well informed about their children's progress. ◆ The school is well led and managed. 	No issues were raised by a significant proportion of parents.

The inspection agreed with parents very positive views of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Children make very good progress over time and achieve well in relation to their starting points and abilities. They reach standards that are above national expectations for their ages in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world.

1. Although children enter the nursery with a wide range of ability and experience, many are below average and the overall level on entry is well below average. Children make rapid progress in the short time that they attend the nursery and achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry. The result is that, when children move on to primary school, the balance of attainment overall is in line with the national expectations for their ages. Children achieve especially well in their personal, social and emotional development, their knowledge and understanding of the world, and their mathematical development. They do especially well in these areas because of the emphasis on personal development and the richness and variety of the curriculum. Detailed planning ensures a broad, stimulating curriculum with excellent links between different areas of learning. For example, one activity focused on physical development by encouraging children to throw accurately. However, it also required them to write their name on a record sheet, record their efforts mathematically and to develop social skills. A wide range of visitors and trips to places of educational interest greatly enriches the curriculum. Story tellers and artists regularly support learning and trips range from London museums to the local park or shops. For some children, these outings are something that they do not experience except through school.

2. Children are mature for their age, often making good decisions about what activities to take part in and how to behave. They are confident and get on well with each other and with adults. Children have good general knowledge and are inquisitive to find out more about the world around them. Some children playing with dinosaur toys, for instance, knew that some animals eat meat, while others eat only vegetation. Others knew the main parts of a green plant and discussed how things grow in the garden. One pupil, who's English is only just starting to develop, was keen to watch and use a computer-animated story. Children recognise mathematical shapes and count objects confidently. One small group played a game that required them to add the dots on dice and match the answer with a number of objects, which they did successfully.

3. Standards in physical and creative development are in line with national expectations. In communication, language and literacy, standards overall are below national expectations. Many children speak English as an additional language and some have special educational needs, and so, overall, attainment on entry is low in this area of learning. Both these groups of children achieve especially well. They are helped by the strong emphasis that is placed on spoken language and practical experience. The school's approach to teaching English as an additional language is very effective. Families are encouraged to speak in the parents' most fluent language so that children first develop understanding and reasoning. This helps them to learn English more effectively when they are ready and the result is that most do so very successfully. Children with special educational needs are supported very well by adults and through careful planning, so that work matches their particular needs. More able children are sufficiently challenged and reach standards well above national expectations in some areas. Some children, for example, are reading and writing.

The school provides very well for children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

4. The school is very successful in fostering children's personal development. Many children enter with underdeveloped social skills and are emotionally immature, but make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and leave with attainment that is above national expectations overall.

5. Children are encouraged to be independent and responsible. They have many opportunities to choose which activities they would like to take part in and are encouraged to persevere. Less confident

children, often those who are new to the school, are helped by adults to make decisions and gradually learn to do so for themselves. Many children concentrate for extended periods of time. Some children played with water for a long time, experimenting with different sizes of container, and then returned later in the session. Staff are very effective in harnessing children's natural inquisitiveness. They do this by preparing interesting activities and through good questioning.

6. Adults set clear expectations for behaviour and how children should get on together. The result is that children follow routines such as taking turns, behave very well, and have positive relationships with each other and adults. Children are taught an understanding of right and wrong rather than simply to follow the rules. This enables them to make choices for themselves. One child, for instance, was very keen to carry on playing a game but cleared away quickly "...because Anne needs this table." Many children are beginning to make their own decisions about how to behave towards other children. One child was about to push another away, but stopped herself just in time and asked him to move instead. Children from a wide range of ethnic groups and backgrounds value each other and get on very well with each other and adults. Their abilities, languages, cultural heritage and religions are valued and they are very effectively taught to respect other people.

Very good leadership contributes significantly to the strong teamwork of staff, the consistent quality of teaching, and effective planning.

7. Very strong leadership from the headteacher, ably supported by other key staff, results in powerful teamwork and very good teaching. The quality of teaching was very good or excellent in nearly half the sessions observed, good or better in most, and at least satisfactory in every one. Staff work together very well in planning sessions and in leading activities. The key workers (teachers and nursery education officers) work in pairs to plan and lead activities, and work with assistants very effectively. The assistants know what children are supposed to be learning and this enables them to focus on the most important aspects. As children move from one activity to another, they are well supervised and helped through guidance and questioning. This helps them to concentrate for extended periods and gives them encouragement to persevere with difficult tasks. Planning for the pupils who attend full time is particularly detailed to ensure that there is sufficient challenge and support when they have lessons that focus on basic skills.

8. Relationships between staff and children are very positive and this helps to create the happy, stimulating atmosphere that pervades the nursery. It is a feature of the school that children with a wide range of abilities and backgrounds get on well together and learn to value the diversity within their environment. A significant factor in this is the way that adults get on together, setting a good example that children follow.

9. The school is good at evaluating its strengths and weaknesses, and ensuring that it is providing good educational value. Staff share ideas, for example about how to improve teaching further, and are committed to a culture of continuous improvement. The leadership of the headteacher is a key factor in this. Her vision and enthusiasm are infectious, and the whole staff has a very strong commitment to the school's success. This is seen in the way, for example, that staff seek training to enable them to support some children with special educational needs. Governors are very involved in the life of the school and well informed about its work. They see the school as being at the heart of the local community and as a powerful force for social good. Together with the staff, they have built good relationships with parents that contribute strongly to the success of the school.

The ethos of the school is welcoming, caring and inclusive of children of all abilities and backgrounds.

10. This is a happy school. Children and adults get on well with each other and visitors are made to feel welcome. New children are helped to settle in quickly and to gain in confidence. Parents' views and support are valued and this contributes strongly to the success of the school. Adults know the children very well and take great care to ensure their welfare, health and safety. Supervision, for instance, is very good and so minor accidents are quickly spotted and dealt with. When one child was upset, an assistant was very quick to comfort him and find out the cause of the problem, which was then sorted out

immediately. The identification of special educational needs and the needs of children learning English as an additional language is very good. This enables the school to offer very good support and help children to make rapid progress.

11. All children are valued, and this is something that parents feel is a particular strength of the school. The school has a number of children with quite severe special educational needs. Some, for example, have visual or auditory impairment, physical disabilities or communicative disorders. A larger number of children are learning English as an additional language, and many are still at a very early stage of language acquisition. The needs of different groups and individuals are made a positive feature of learning for the whole school. For example, clothes pegs have pupils' names written in English, another language if appropriate and in Braille. This is not highlighted so as to make any individual child stand out, but is accepted as a normal part of everyday life. In one session, an adult used sign language to support an individual, but other children joined in quite naturally, trying to copy the signs as they sang a song. The range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the school is considerable, and all are equally valued. The school successfully encourages and supports harmony and mutual respect. At the pre-inspection meeting for parents, an interpreter helped some parents who found English difficult. The school's resources are carefully chosen to reflect the mix of children. One child put down a white doll, picked up a black one and said, "This is like my sister." The school organises an activity library that parents may use. One parent chose a particular puzzle because it reflected the racial mix in the school rather than her child's own family background. A Turkish story teller visits regularly and children carry their enthusiasm and experiences from these sessions into their other activities. Western European culture and the English language are valued alongside others, with the recognition that they represent the majority of children in the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

14

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	1	4	5	1	0	0	0
Percentage	9	36	46	9	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons graded 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 nine percentage points.

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)	60
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60

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

Nursery

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
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3

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	11
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11

English as an additional language

No.	of
pupils	

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	47
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47

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No.	of
pupils	

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
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10

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17
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17

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

School data	10.9
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10.9

National comparative data	5.6
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5.6

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	0
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0

National comparative data	0.5
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0.5

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

Exclusions There were no exclusions in the last school year.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff:

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	214

Number of pupils per FTE adult	4.4
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	282,897
Total expenditure	286,039
Expenditure per pupil	4,767
Balance brought forward from previous year	33,091
Balance carried forward to next year	29,949

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	81
Number of questionnaires returned	60

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	22	0	0	5
My child is making good progress in school.	52	32	0	0	17
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	35	0	0	15
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	28	8	0	17
The teaching is good.	60	27	0	0	13
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	27	2	0	13
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	17	0	0	7
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	30	2	0	10
The school works closely with parents.	58	33	0	0	8
The school is well led and managed.	62	25	2	0	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	28	2	0	13
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	55	17	2	0	27

Some rows may not add up to 100% because of rounding.