

James Lee Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100317
Local Authority	Hammersmith and Fulham
Inspection number	285764
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Jane Wotherspoon HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Dickinson
Headteacher	Marlene Slack
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2001
School address	Gliddon Road London W14 9BH
Telephone number	020 8741 8877
Fax number	020 8563 2645

Age group	3–5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves a culturally diverse and socially mixed area. It takes children at the start of each term following their third birthday. However, many of its 42 full-time and 35 part-time children join and leave the school at different times as their families re-locate from temporary accommodation. Around half are from White British and other White backgrounds. The other half comes from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages. Over 60 percent are learning English as an additional language and 21 different languages are spoken. A small, but significant, number of children have speech and language difficulties.

Since December 2006 the school has been working with a local Sure Start centre to provide the core offer of a children's centre. Most of the extended services operate from a separate site. The school provides an after school club, toy library and book-lending service as well as an after-school club. It has gained a Healthy Schools Award. The school has been operating with an acting deputy headteacher for five terms and has had several other staff changes in the last year. Two staff are temporary and another joined the school at the start of this term.

During the inspection, 62 parental questionnaires were returned to the inspector. This is 86 percent of those issued and is an unusually high response.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

James Lee Nursery is a good school with outstanding features where children get off to a good start in their education. Senior staff and governors have an accurate view of the quality of education and care at the nursery through their well-established systems for monitoring the provision and for checking how well children achieve. Although there is scope to analyse children's achievement further, they recognise their strengths and know what needs to improve. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's strong lead and clear expectations have provided stability during a period of change. She is ably supported by the acting deputy and by the expertise of individual governors. Together, they work effectively to support new staff in developing their roles as leaders and managers. Team work is strong and staff are reflective about their practice. This is a firm foundation for future improvement.

Children achieve well. Those with learning needs, including those with speech and language difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. The school draws very effectively on a range of external services to support the care and well-being of children and their families. The partnership with parents is first-class and parents hold the school in extremely high regard. Teaching is good. Adults respond intuitively to children's needs. They take every opportunity to encompass different aspects of learning into routine activities, but some staff occasionally miss opportunities to extend children's learning. All staff observe children closely as they learn through play but miss opportunities to record what they have observed and to use this information when they set targets for the children.

The high quality environment with its outstanding range of stimulating and interesting activities contributes significantly to children's enjoyment of learning. A strong focus on allowing children to make choices helps them to gain confidence and independence. The high levels of concentration and perseverance of older children show how well prepared they are to leave the nursery to go to school in September. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the way staff look after the children each day. Their confidence is well founded. Staff help children to learn to take responsibility for themselves and for their actions. There are few rules at James Lee but children know them and respond to them well. As a result, behaviour is exemplary. Children settle quickly in the calm atmosphere. Outstanding provision for spiritual, moral social and cultural development can be seen in the way the children get on with each other, make friends and show kindness and consideration for one another. Relationships are excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the roles of curriculum leaders in monitoring what children achieve and in analysing this information further.
- Sharpen systems for recording the observations staff make on children's learning and the use they make of this information when setting targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The nursery's initial assessments show that children start with skills and knowledge that are broadly expected for their age, although there is some variation. Many children who experience difficulties with speaking because English is not their first language, quickly gain confidence to speak and to learn new words. Those with specific difficulties with speech and language make good progress as a result of the additional support they receive. Children make good

progress across the areas of learning. They achieve especially well in personal, social and emotional development and a good proportion exceeds expectations for their age by the time they leave nursery. Their language, literacy and mathematical skills are developing well. They love stories and are learning to recognise letters in their name as well as to practise writing. The children are naturally curious about their surroundings which they explore readily. They have good climbing skills and are quite adventurous on the challenging outdoor equipment. They are adept at using computers and small tools. Many show a high level of independence in exploring materials to make, for example, models of robots.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The children enjoy school enormously and are happy to come, as their good attendance shows. They are developing positive attitudes and learning habits that will stand them in good stead in the future. They engage readily in the wide variety of activities on offer and are gaining a high level of independence in choosing what to do. They demonstrate unusually high levels of concentration. Children happily follow routines and expectations of staff and regularly offer to help with tidying up. Relationships are excellent. Children cooperate well, share resources, take turns and are patient with others. Behaviour is outstanding. Lunchtime is an extremely sociable occasion that reinforces healthy eating habits. The fact that adults eat with the children provides an excellent model of good table manners that children emulate. Children are acutely aware of health and safety issues. They know, for example, that they must wear a hat when they go outside to protect them from the sun and they remind others, including visitors, who forget the rules. Taking care of personal hygiene is part of the regular routine and children use a wide range of tools safely. Healthy snacks of fruit and drinks are available at all times and children learn from well-chosen stories the importance of eating fruit and vegetables regularly.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is typically good with particular strengths in the way that staff act as models of good behaviour and relationships so that children learn how to behave. Excellent organisation of the space and of resources fosters children's independence. Activities are planned well. Staff are clear what they want children to learn from the different experiences and intuitively adapt the activities for different children. Some skilful intervention and targeted questioning challenges children who are capable of working at a higher level. However, there is some variability between staff in the quality of interventions made. Staff make detailed and perceptive observations of children which they write up later; this system is time-consuming. However, some observed learning is not written down. Staff compile their observations along with samples of work and photographs into a profile for each child that builds up a picture of their progress over time. This is given to parents as their children leave the school and is a wonderful record of their time at James Lee. However, the school's own monitoring of these profiles show some variation in the number of observations for some groups of children and some areas of learning. The targets that are set termly and discussed with parents are not always closely linked to the observations.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The staff team plans an excellent balance between activities that adults direct and those that children choose and create for themselves. Activities are well considered to capitalise on children's enthusiasm, curiosity and interests. They cover all areas of learning and incorporate the five outcomes of 'Every Child Matters'. Every opportunity is taken to reinforce health, safety and aspects of children's personal development. Daily routines, such as laying the tables for lunch, are used to as learning experiences. The strong focus on developing children's language through real life play experiences such a 'having a party' or 'shopping at the fruit and vegetable shop' is particularly successful. Staff make excellent use of the relatively small outdoor space to provide an extensive range of activities, incorporating all areas of learning, with challenging climbing equipment that enables children to develop skills and confidence as they exercise. Events and visitors, including parents who cook food from different countries, a sculptor and artists, add a strong cultural dimension to children's learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents are right to be highly satisfied with the level of care and support that staff give their children. The children's personal development and well being are supported by the excellent relationships they share with adults in the nursery. The school has very thorough systems for vetting staff and adults who work with the children and strong measures to ensure the children are kept safe and learn to be healthy. Home visits are offered to parents but not always taken up. Nonetheless, the children settle quickly into the routines, often by following the good examples of older children. Early assessments of children enable staff to identify specific needs and to ensure the appropriate specialist support is provided, such as that for children learning English as an additional language and speech and language therapy. Strong partnerships with local health and education welfare services help the school to support the most vulnerable children effectively.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Staff and governors are committed to providing high quality education and care for each child and seek constantly to improve. The school's systematic approach to monitoring aspects of the school's work and evaluating the impact of provision on outcomes for children has served it well for many years. However, changes in staff mean that several are new to this aspect of their role. The school values its strong partnership with parents and seeks their views too. The headteacher analyses children's achievement at the end of each academic year and looks for patterns to identify and investigates anomalies. Areas of relative weakness become a focus for the following year. There is scope to analyse outcomes during the year in order to take more immediate action, given that many children are in school for only three terms. Regular monitoring of teaching has identified that some staff need further guidance on the management of the large group sessions at the end of the morning and afternoon. Governors are clear about their strategic role and have improved monitoring systems since the last inspection. They visit regularly, develop links with staff, and are no longer reliant solely on the headteacher for information. They contribute effectively to the process of self evaluation.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

4 July 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of James Lee Nursery School, London, W14 9BH

I enjoyed meeting you when I came to visit the nursery. I had a lovely time. I think you are lucky to have such interesting things to do each day.

I think these things are really good:

- you love school and like to try new things
- the adults look after you very well
- your behaviour is super
- you share and take turns
- you know about eating healthy food
- you help the adults put things out and tidy up
- you are learning a lot

I have asked the adults to think about:

- the way they check how much you have learnt
- the way they write down what you are learning

With best wishes

Jane Wotherspoon HMI