

# Balham Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100990
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wandsworth
<b>Inspection number</b>	285933
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sue Vale

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	69
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Warren Hatter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Helen McAuley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 February 2002
<b>School address</b>	72 Endlesham Road Balham London SW12 8JL
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8673 4055
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8675 3627

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Balham Nursery has fifty full time equivalent places. Around a quarter of the children are learning English as an additional language. Approximately ten per cent have statements of special educational need which is higher than average. Attainment on entry is average, but there a number of children who are articulate expressive speakers for their age.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Balham Nursery School provides an excellent start to children's education. Equality of opportunity is central to all that the nursery does and it strives to include every child. Parents are delighted with the Nursery and their feelings are encapsulated in the words of one parent, 'We believe Balham Nursery is very well led and creates a happy caring, fun environment.'

The Nursery is very well led by the headteacher and her vision is supported by all who work at the Nursery. Most of the children start Nursery with the expected skills for their age. Around a third are very articulate and communicate well. There are increasing numbers of children identified with learning difficulties and disabilities. They are fully included in all aspects of Nursery life, and their varied and complex needs are dealt with very well indeed. This means that all children make very good progress. When they leave Nursery, they reach standards above those expected and achieve very highly in their personal, social and emotional development. Staff know the children, their families and their needs very well indeed. Consistently very good teaching and an excellent curriculum, which is adapted to cater for the individual needs of children, ensure that children progress and achieve very well. This provides them with a strong foundation on which to build their next steps for learning.

Children's personal development and well-being and the care, guidance and support which they receive are outstanding. This means that children make exceptional gains in their personal, social and emotional development. They quickly become confident, happy learners. Parents feel very included in their children's learning; many comment that staff always have time for them. The Nursery plans to develop this work with parents further as they work towards becoming a children's centre.

The Nursery has maintained high standards since the last inspection. Although the expenditure per child is high, because the nursery employs extra staff to support those children identified with learning difficulties and disabilities, it provides good value for money. The Nursery has excellent capacity to continue to improve and maintain its high standards.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the firm start already made towards becoming a children's centre, particularly by increasing the involvement of children's families and the community.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Children reach above average standards and achieve well. The majority of children start Nursery with broadly expected levels in all areas of learning although there are around a third who are articulate speakers and communicate well. Children make very good progress in their learning whatever their starting point. By the time they leave Nursery many reach above expected levels for their age in all areas of learning. They reach exceptionally high standards in personal social and emotional development. This is because the school has high expectations of all children and teachers work very closely as a team to support children's individual needs. Those with English as an additional language make very good progress as a result of an emphasis placed on speaking and listening in the planned activities. Children with learning difficulties and disability make very good gains in their emotional and social development as a result of individualised support provided by teachers.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Children's personal development and well-being are excellent. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The outstanding focus on developing children's positive self esteem, confidence and independence is highly influential in helping children to make rapid progress and to reach high standards. Consequently children are keen to come to nursery. This is because they are interested and encouraged to want to learn and to find out more. The excellent facilities available in the outdoor garden area motivate and stimulate their curiosity. Children make a positive contribution to the Nursery community. They work safely, and are encouraged to adopt a healthy life style.

Individual and small group work, planned to meet the individual interests of children, enhances their personal, social and emotional development and this helps all children to progress well. Parents of children with learning difficulties and disabilities are particularly pleased with this aspect of the Nursery. 'We particularly like the fact that the children appear to be encouraged to develop at their own pace and are given a lot of freedom to choose what they do.'

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

Teaching is outstanding. Excellent use of questioning by adults encourages children to develop their 'thinking' skills. This really helps them to make very good progress and to learn. There is with some outstanding adult interaction with the children. All adults who work with the children have a very good understanding of their individual needs and abilities. This is very important in planning and adapting the curriculum to the individual needs of children including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Adults have the balance right between when to leave children to explore and find out things for themselves and when adults need to be involved in order to challenge and move children's learning on. This was seen during story time; one child needed more time to think before answering, the teacher clearly understood the individual needs of this particular child and gave him the time needed to process his thoughts before answering. This is an example of why children make such rapid progress in their learning.

Effective systems are in place to track children's progress. Staff use assessment information well to match work to children's abilities, providing very good support for those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

Excellent knowledge of how young children learn ensures that staff plan and prepare activities which really influence and support children in their learning. Basic skills are taught well through encouragement, interesting practical 'hands-on' activities and a wide range of stimulating activities on offer. There is good use of information and communication technology (ICT) through the use of digital photography. Children take pictures of things they have made or created and these are then used to help develop speaking and listening skills. This in turn develops children's confidence in their own abilities. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are fully integrated and, as one parent commented, 'the school is totally inclusive and they have provided a safe, friendly and fun introduction to school life for our son.'

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

Teachers are very sensitive to the needs of children. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities, and who are new to learning English receive very good support from teachers to help them achieve as well as others. The procedures to deal with child protection issues, accidents and incidents are in place, and staff receive regular training. As one parent commented, 'Balham nursery is an excellent school. My son has been treated as an individual and has been nurtured through some tricky issues...'

The school has effective systems for assessing and recording learners' attainment and progress. Teachers make regular observations of what children know and can do and of the activities which they like to visit. This information is then used well to guide planning the next step of children's learning.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

Leadership and management are excellent. Outstanding leadership by the head teacher has allowed the Nursery to progress well so that its overall effectiveness is excellent. The head teacher leads her team very well. She, along with the governing body, has a clear focused vision for the development of the school and there are very good procedures in place for the day-to-day management. The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate, albeit modest in some areas. It is very thorough. Areas for development are clearly identified and the Nursery is always looking at ways in which it can improve the education it gives the children. A clear vision for the future of the school by the leadership team ensures that the school is rightly focused on the way forward for the best interests of the children and the community in developing as a children's centre.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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	1
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**

6 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Balham Nursery School, London, SW12 8JL

I really enjoyed visiting your Nursery. It is a lovely friendly place to learn and gives you a wonderful start to your education. You are very lucky to have the lovely garden to play in. I hope that Chocolate and Snowy are well.

You and your teachers do lots of things really well;

- You are very good at playing and working together.
- You reach very good standards and achieve really well.
- You are all treated equally at your nursery and you are lucky to be able to choose some of the activities which you want to do yourselves.
- You are very happy at your nursery and obviously want to go there every day.
- You work very hard and learn lots of interesting things
- Your teachers also work very hard and make what you learn interesting.
- Your teachers care for you very well and are very good at looking after those of you who need extra help and support.

Your headteacher and other staff are very good at what they do. They are working very hard to get ready for turning the Nursery into an even more special Children's Centre.

With best wishes

Sue Vale Lead inspector