

Dulwich Wood Nursery School and Children's Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100769
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	307474
Inspection dates	4–5 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Sue Vale

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	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Katy Jaffey
Headteacher	Ms Elizabeth Fleetwood
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2002
School address	Lyall Avenue Kingswood Estate London SE21 8QS
Telephone number	020 7525 1192
Fax number	020 8670 1115

Age group	3–5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The Nursery and Children's Centre is situated in an area which serves a number of diverse communities, some of which are in areas of social disadvantage. More than one third of the children are eligible for free school meals. There are increasing numbers of children who are learning English as an additional language and at around 42 per cent this is well above the national average. The Centre offers a range of services for children aged between 6 months and 4 years. For the purpose of this inspection the education and well being of children aged 3 to 4 were looked at. The Nursery gained children's centre status in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Dulwich Wood Nursery is a good school and children receive a good start to their education. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the strengths of the Nursery and is well aware of what it needs to do to develop further through its recent designation as a children's centre.

Most of the children begin Nursery with skills below those expected for children of their age, particularly in communication language and literacy and in their personal and social development. Good teaching and a real interest in individuals enables the children to quickly gain in confidence and helps them to swiftly settle in and make good progress. By the time they leave Nursery, they have made good progress in developing spoken English and in their personal, social and emotional development. Well planned practical activities allow children to develop their own interests and abilities independently. This provides them with a strong foundation for the next stage of their education. As a result, children achieve and progress well towards the goals expected of them.

The curriculum is broad and well planned with practical and engaging activities that allow children to learn through play. The free flow of movement between the two classrooms and the excellent outside area means that children widen their learning experiences and grow in confidence. This provides them with a strong foundation for the next stage of their education. As a result, children achieve and progress well towards the early learning goals of the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. One area of the curriculum, which has been identified for further development, is that of information and communication technology (ICT). Whilst children do have regular access to lap top computers and are happy to use them, one shared between up to 40 children is inadequate. The Nursery has rightly identified that more can be achieved in this area of learning.

Children's personal development and well-being are excellent. They are very happy and keen to be at Nursery, although attendance amongst some families does not always reflect this. Children quickly become independent and confident learners and they work and play together very well. Many children show mature attitudes for their age and have sustained levels of concentration.

The care of the children is good. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Whilst a number of good observations are taken showing what the children know and can do these are not robust enough to plan the next step of children's learning or to show if there are underachieving groups of children. Leadership and management are good. The Nursery's view of itself is accurate and good progress has been made since the last inspection. The school's successful record of improvement shows that its capacity to improve further is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

As a nursery school, the Foundation Stage is completely covered by the Overall Effectiveness section.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of assessment to enable staff to plan precisely the next step of children's learning and identify any underachieving groups of children accurately.
- Develop and improve the way children use information communication and technology.

- Encourage better attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children, including the growing numbers who are learning English as an additional language, achieve well. An increasing number of children start Nursery with skills and knowledge that are below those expected for their age, especially in personal, social and emotional development and in their communication language and literacy skills. Adults are very aware of this and plan a good range of activities, which encourage children to settle quickly and make a good start to school life. Consequently, children make good progress, particularly in developing speaking and listening skills and they achieve standards appropriate for their age by the time they leave. This is because of good quality teaching, and the good way that adults relate and talk to children, which encourages children to make their own choices, along with an interesting practical curriculum.

Those children at an early stage of learning English make equally good progress as their peers. Well-planned activities and a curriculum, which actively encourages the development of spoken English, help children to make good progress in this area. Adults are adept at engaging children in constructive talk. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities also make good progress and achieve well through the encouragement and good interaction with staff.

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 centre's outstanding focus on developing children's positive self-esteem, confidence and independence is highly influential in helping children to become independent learners. 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. Despite the fact that the Nursery carefully explains to parents the importance of children attending regularly, attendance is low. 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.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Children genuinely enjoy learning because teachers encourage them to make their own independent choices. They want to participate and are eager to try out new activities. Good intervention by adults when extra help, comfort, or support are needed contributes effectively to children's good progress. A good example was when teachers shared photos with individual children from their trip the day before to the Globe theatre and the Tate Modern. Gentle reminders of the new vocabulary they had learnt, with the visual input from the photos, meant that children were able to retell and recall all the exciting things that had happened in their own words. This really helps them to develop their independence and confidence and is why their personal development and well-being is so good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is enhanced by visits to places of interest. Staff plan and prepare activities, which encourage children to want to learn and to try out new things. Teachers and adults working with the children teach spoken language very well through encouragement and very good role modelling of language. This is particularly helpful to those children who are learning English as an additional language. As one parent wrote to the inspector, 'the Nursery is well prepared and organized to have (help) children whose first language are not English.'

The Nursery is arranged for a free-flow of movement so that children can make their own choices about whether they want to play inside or out. This supports children's own freedom of choice and helps their personal and social development. The curriculum does not develop children's understanding of ICT as effectively as it does other areas. There are plans to develop this area of the curriculum, but opportunities are missed for children to use ICT, as they are limited in their access to computers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and support provided for pupils is good. Children receive a positive start to their school life because the staff have a good commitment to meeting the personal and welfare needs of children. Child protection procedures are in place and are understood and followed by staff. Risk assessments for school visits and procedures for monitoring the health and safety of the children are in place. Parents are particularly pleased with the support, which they receive. One mother commented, 'Dulwich Wood Nursery has been so supportive to both my children.'

The staff provide satisfactory academic guidance for the children. Their individual strengths and areas for development are observed and assessed. However, adults do not always make sufficient use of the information gathered to move children's learning forward. A deeper analysis of the information gathered is not being undertaken rigorously enough to ensure that the staff have a clear overview of which particular individuals or groups would benefit from extra support or in order to plan for the next step in children's learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The effective leadership team has clearly recognised the Nursery's strengths and areas for development. There is a strong sense of commitment to the children and very good team work throughout the Nursery. Good procedures for the day-to-day management ensure that things run smoothly. The calm and effective headteacher, along with the governing body, has a clear vision for the development of the Nursery as a children's centre, through a greater involvement of the community. The governing body are good and act as a critical friend. Parents are fully included in their children's education and annual questionnaires are sent out to seek their opinions of how the Nursery could be improved.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

13 December 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Dulwich Wood Nursery School and Children's Centre, London, SE21 8QS

It was lovely to meet you when I came to visit your Nursery. I enjoyed sharing lunch with you and talking to the boys who were making transformers. I wish that I had had more time to enjoy the hairdressing salon that you had set up in blue classroom.

Dulwich Wood Nursery is a good school.

There are lots of things which you do well.

- You are very happy and like coming to your Nursery.
- Some of you are very grown up and show real independence for children your age.
- You concentrate very well on activities that you are interested in.
- There are lots of nice things for you to try and have a go at. You are fortunate to have such lovely grounds to play in.
- You have good teachers who look after you and care for you very well. They arrange lots of different activities for you to try out.

In order to make the Nursery even better, I have asked your headteacher to look at the way you use computers to help you do even better. I have also asked the teachers to make better checks of what you can do and what you are learning to help you move on even more in your learning.

Best wishes

Sue Vale

Lead inspector