

Purley Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101704
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	307779
Inspection date	27 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Charalambos Loizou

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3-5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	91
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs Frances Wimpress
Date of previous school inspection	29 October 2001
School address	58 Pampisford Road Purley CR8 2NE
Telephone number	020 8660 5639
Fax number	020 8645 9673

Age group	3-5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following areas.

- The quality and range of assessments carried out by staff.
- Teachers' planning and how this meets the needs and abilities of the children.
- The quality and range of the school's indoor and outdoor curriculum.

He gathered evidence from parents' responses to questionnaires and discussions with governors, children, and staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

This report is an evaluation of the provision for children in the maintained nursery.

Description of the school

The school is located near Purley town centre and admits three-year-olds, mainly in September. In addition to providing nursery education, the school is a designated children's centre providing extended full-time sessional day care. This aspect of its provision was inspected recently and that report is appended to this one. The large majority of children receive part-time education and attend either mornings or afternoons. Approximately one third of the children are full-time. The school runs breakfast and after school care clubs. Nearly half of the children are of White British heritage and others come from a wide range of backgrounds that represent the ethnic and cultural diversity of the local and wider areas served by the school. A significant number of children are in the early stages of learning English. A small number who join the school have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is staffed by teachers, nursery nurses, teaching assistants and supervisors. Their roles include a range of additional responsibilities for managing both the school and children's centre. The school has received national and local accreditation as Investors in Children and that it is an effective early years setting.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school and it has many outstanding features. The teaching is consistently good, enabling the children to achieve well. They start school with levels of knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. By the time they leave, the large majority of children are working beyond the levels expected of three and four-year-olds. There has been good progress since the last inspection, building on the strong features identified at that time. Parents think highly of the school. 'All the staff are extremely kind and seem to genuinely care about the children' and 'I cannot speak highly enough of the nursery. It gives the children a fantastic start', are just two of many tributes expressed by parents and carers. They are right! The staff provide excellent care, guidance and support and an outstanding curriculum. These are having a positive effect on the children's excellent personal development. Consequently, the children are well behaved and courteous. They care for others and are polite and considerate. The children are very proud of their school and are generous, for example, one kindly offering to share the dough cakes she made, 'You can have one of my cakes, there's plenty, look, all sorts', and then uses her good mathematics skills to count how many are left.

There is very good racial harmony and community cohesion. Stories as well as role-play and resources are used extremely well to promote cultural diversity and to celebrate customs from around the world such as the recent Diwali festival. The children's own experiences are used to very good effect to help them appreciate the wide range backgrounds represented. One child skilfully uses tools to sculpt noodles from dough and then offers these to others in a bowl because, as she said, 'I love eating noodles at home'. Other children reciprocate by making and sharing their birthday cakes, carefully placing straws into them that represent special candles that, as one put it, 'You have to count and then blow'.

Leadership and management, including governance are good. The headteacher and deputy provide highly effective leadership that inspires everyone around them. They continually monitor and support staff and children and set high expectations. Their accurate evaluations of the school's effectiveness and a well planned programme of staff training have established clear priorities for improvement. The leadership team has skilfully nurtured and developed a talented team of staff in preparation for the establishment of a children's centre. One of many benefits of this led to the staff adapting their skills to meet the additional demands of providing all round care and education. For example, nursery nurses are highly trained and well qualified in their new role as early years educators. Consequently, the staff are vigilant and attentive so that children work and play in a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment. Good use is made of role-play to develop language and communication skills. The children dress up as space men and women in their spaceship, writing logs of their journey to mars, even recalling how they responded when, as one excitedly described, 'We saw aliens, but they were friendly so we could talk to them'. Outdoor areas are beautifully set out with high quality climbing equipment, garden areas and running water set out as a charming pebbly stream so, in addition to the pond, children can explore the natural world around them. The gazebo doubles up as a band stand when visiting musicians perform or as a comfortable place to sit in the shade to sing action songs together. Children are fully aware of healthy eating and the wonders of nature. Vegetables are grown and harvested in the garden to add to the children's snacks during after school club. Early mathematics and science skills are developed well when children pour sand into 'stretchy materials' like tights and rubber gloves, even inspiring one child to use his creative skills on the easel to draw pictures of the 'funny shapes' the gloves make.

The teaching is effective in ensuring that the pace of learning is good. A particular strength is the way the staff question and respond to the children and assess their learning. Assessment is excellent and consistent, helping the staff to check how well the children are doing in all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Accurate records of achievement are compiled in profile books that include examples of children's work and photographic evidence that highlight each stage of learning. The children enjoy thumbing through their records to recall what they have previously achieved. This is effective in helping those with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language to make excellent progress improving their spoken language. One child in the early stages of learning English, smiled when he saw a photograph of himself holding a fire hose during a recent visit from the fire service, 'I was a fireman and the water came out quick', he said. Computers, recorders and robotic devices are used very well to develop the children's information and communication technology skills. Groups often congregate around one of many computers to watch and listen to electronic storybooks, happily engaging in communal singing and story telling. Activities are well thought out to engage the children and stimulate curiosity, including good opportunities to share and handle books. Although assessments accurately identify children of higher ability, activities are not always tailored to meet their specific learning needs. This is an area for improvement recognised by the leadership team to raise standards further. There is a balanced programme, providing opportunities for children to choose activities and to work on tasks that are led by an adult. However, when choosing, some children find it difficult to settle in one area for sustained periods. Whilst the pace of learning is good for most children, for those who do not settle, or when activities are not challenging enough, the pace of learning slows. Monitoring by senior staff and governors is thorough, although could be sharper to ensure that all planned activities optimise learning opportunities for all children.

There are strong links with parents, other schools, agencies and community services. In addition, the school has specially trained staff to liaise with parents and the community or to arrange home visits. Information for parents is of high quality and induction arrangements provide excellent opportunities for parents and their children to visit and spend time in school before choosing to register a place when this becomes available.

Governors and staff are always looking forward and continually strive towards developing the school. The strong leadership of the headteacher and deputy, and the effective synthesis of education and extended provision that serves the community well, demonstrate that the school has good capacity to continue improving.

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

- Ensure that teachers' planning incorporates more tasks and activities aimed at meeting the needs of children of higher ability.
- Ensure that adults engage those children who find it difficult to settle for sustained periods on self-chosen activities to extend their learning further.

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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?	1
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	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	1

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 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	2
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	2

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

5 December 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Purley Nursery School, Purley, CR8 2NE

You were all so nice to me when I came to see you. I think you all go to a good school. There are lots for you to do and I can see why you love school so much. Your parents like the school very much as well and everyone there is great at looking after you.

I wish I could have stayed longer because you and your teachers made it a really fun place to be. You are so lucky to have such caring people all the time you are there. I really loved looking at your beautiful work and photographs, and thank you so much for those cakes and the bowl of noodles, they were lovely! The space men and women were great and really liked their writing about their trip to mars. Some of you told me that you even spoke to aliens!

I have asked your teachers to keep checking your work so you can all do even better. I have also asked them to make sure that some of you do some things for longer to make sure you are all doing as well as you can.

I wish you and your parents the very best and I am so pleased to have met you all, you were all great.

Thank you so much children.

Charalambos Loizou

Lead Inspector