

Spencer Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102955
Local Authority	Sutton
Inspection number	308171
Inspection date	18 June 2008
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	0-5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Carole Cook
Headteacher	Mrs Fiona Downing
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2005
School address	Spencer Road Mitcham Junction Mitcham CR4 4JP
Telephone number	0208 648 4126
Fax number	0208 648 7941

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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:

- how effectively the school uses assessment information to plan what children need to do next
- how well the care, guidance and support for children helps their personal, social and emotional development
- the behaviour of children
- the impact of the curriculum on achievement and standards.

Evidence was gathered from the school's records of pupils' attainment, planning and policies, observing teaching and learning and discussions with staff, a governor and children. An analysis of 34 responses to the parents' questionnaire was carried out. 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 in this report.

Description of the school

The proportion of families joining the school that are new to learning English is increasing each year so that there are around twenty five per cent of children new to English. The number of pupils identified with learning difficulties and disabilities fluctuates year on year but this year is higher than average; the main area of support needed is for those who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The Nursery has a much higher than average number of pupils with statements of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

During their time at Spencer Nursery, children receive a good start to their education. As one mother commented, 'Everyday it is a pleasure to bring my son to Spencer Nursery. Since starting 2 years ago he has developed a wonderful character, and is always happy.'

Most of the children begin Nursery with skills and abilities which are similar to those expected for children of their age. Good teaching and a good insight into individuals' interests and abilities enable the children to gain in confidence and helps them to make good progress and to achieve very well.

By the time, they leave Nursery, children (including those who are new to learning English) have made very good progress in developing spoken English, and in their personal, social and emotional development. Around half of leavers reach standards above those expected. Teaching is good overall. There are a number of new teachers in the Nursery who, whilst having fitted well into the ethos and daily routines, need time to settle and fully have an effect on children's learning. Good teaching, well-planned practical activities, and an interesting and stimulating learning environment, allows children to develop their own interests and abilities independently. Collaboration and cooperation between learners is actively encouraged by adults at the Nursery in order to help raise children's self-esteem and confidence. This year there have been more children who are identified with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some parents expressed their concern to the inspector about the impact of this on the other children. The Nursery has supported all children well in coping with those who manifest challenging behaviour. A consistent approach to dealing with poorer behaviour by all staff has minimised any negative impact. A positive outcome of this is that children have developed a deeper understanding and realisation of how they can help and care for each other. This is a major reason why children's personal development and wellbeing is outstanding. The way adults deal with some difficult behaviour is consistently good and teaches children from an early age how to deal with their emotions and feelings. This provides them with a strong foundation for the next stage of their education. As a result, children progress well towards the goals expected of them.

The good curriculum is broad and well planned, with practical and engaging activities that allow children to learn through play. As new staff become more confident, this will enable all to fully maximise opportunities for learning presented in the curriculum. The free flow of movement between the inside and well organised outside areas means that children widen their learning experiences and grow in confidence. Children really appreciate and enjoy their time in the gardens. It was a delight to see the fun a group of children were having when they were playing in the 'caravan'.

Children are very happy and keen to be at Nursery, and attendance overall is good. Children learn how to work and play together well. This is a challenge for some children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties, but staff support and help them well. Children have an excellent understanding about healthy lifestyles and have many opportunities for physical development. Healthy snacks and milk are available for the children throughout the day.

The care of the children is very good, and their academic guidance is outstanding. Regular observations by staff of what children know, understand, and can do are used very well to feed into the planning of what the children need to do next. There is a good mix in the planning of what staff have identified as the next step to improve the children's learning and the children's own individual interests. Individual portfolios known as 'learning stories,' which celebrate

children's achievements, are an outstanding feature. These, along with parents' contributions showing what they have noticed about their children's learning, provide excellent support for children's achievement. Good use is made of external agencies, but the Nursery has rightly identified that as the Children's Centre develops still further there is a need to encourage even more support and community use by children and their families.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The effective and highly organised head teacher, along with the keen and supportive governing body, has a clear vision for the development of the Nursery within the Children's Centre. The school has planned strategically and a large carry forward in the budget is in place to ensure that as the Nursery develops further as a children's centre, they are able to sustain full care provision. The governing body are very supportive. Their knowledge and understanding of the centre's needs are excellent and they successfully act as a critical friend. Some very good self- evaluation, based on rigorous monitoring, ensures that the Nursery's view of itself is accurate and relevant to its future development. 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 in the Overall Effectiveness section.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the involvement of children's families, the community and other agencies to support the development of the Children's Centre.

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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	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 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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	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

27 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Spencer Nursery School, Mitcham, CR4 4JP

It was lovely to meet you when I came to visit your Nursery. I enjoyed sharing lunch with you and talking to you.

Your Nursery is a good school. There are many things, which you do well.

- You are very happy and like coming to your Nursery.
- There are many interesting things for you to try to have a go at.
- You really enjoy playing outside, and are fortunate to have such a lot of lovely things to play with in the gardens.
- Your teachers plan interesting activities to help you learn.
- You have good teachers who look after you well.
- The Nursery is well led and managed.

There are still some things that could be even better at your Nursery. The Nursery as you know is part of the Children's Centre. The headteacher and the governing body have rightly identified that they would like to have even more things and partners to help and support you and your families. I have agreed that this is a good step in the development of the Children's Centre.

Yours sincerely

Sue Vale

Lead Inspector