

# Northfleet Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118229
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	312854
<b>Inspection date</b>	15 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Patricia Davies

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	90
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jeremy Strike
<b>Headteacher</b>	Panna Nagar
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 November 2004
<b>School address</b>	140 London Road Northfleet Gravesend DA11 9JS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01474 533950
<b>Fax number</b>	01474 533950

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues. • The success of arrangements for teaching those children for whom English is an additional language. • Achievement in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. • How well work is matched to children's needs and encourages their independence and enjoyment of learning. • The extent and impact of monitoring by governors and members of staff responsible for areas of learning. Evidence was gathered from school documentation and assessment information, questionnaires sent to parents, visits to lessons and discussion with children, staff, governors, a representative from the local authority and a small group of parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection 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.

## Description of the school

Northfleet offers part-time places for all its children, with sessions in either the morning or the afternoon. Children join the Nursery at different times throughout the school year. It contains children from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Historically, the largest minority ethnic group has been Asian, but there are now also increased numbers from Eastern European countries. There has been a considerable rise in the proportion of children at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language, and this is currently over one third. Some of these children have little or no English on starting the Nursery. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is less than 1 in ten. The school offers play scheme facilities for children aged 3 to 12 years. The current headteacher joined the school since its last inspection and took up her position in February 2005.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Northfleet is an outstanding school. It is held in high regard by its parents, many of whom express strong satisfaction with all aspects of its work. Praise is wide-ranging but frequently highlights the school's high level of dedicated care and support for its pupils, whatever their needs and including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. One parent wrote to say of staff, 'I really believe they put the children first in everything they do and every decision they make.' The school places parents as equal and crucial partners in the educational process. Where language or confidence, for example, has inhibited some from participating the school is quick to draw them in. Those parents attending a small workshop in school spoke with considerable enthusiasm about how the school's support for them had directly benefitted their children.

The significance of the school's work to further academic progress and personal development is that it gives children invaluable assets for their future education. Rapid and consistent progress across all areas of learning ensures that children achieve exceptionally well. Their attainment on entry to the school is variable, but compared with expectations is low overall. By the time children leave to go on to primary school attainment is above expectations. Swift progress is most marked in children's personal and social skills and standards here are high. Relationships across the school are warm, friendly and harmonious. Behaviour is excellent. Children are extremely happy and confident whether working alone, alongside others or jointly on a task. They are entirely engaged in their activities, showing high levels of enjoyment and independence, even those who have only been at the school for a few weeks. Timely reminders and demonstrations from staff ensure that children use equipment correctly and safely. Snack time provides an invaluable opportunity for staff to promote good manners, personal hygiene and consideration for others. Children quickly adopt simple courtesies, such as passing on the milk jug or leaving enough for someone else. Indeed, members of staff constantly and unstintingly reinforce the routines and expectations that underpin the smooth everyday pattern of life at school. The success of this focus on children's personal development forms the bedrock for swift gains in other areas of learning because children gain confidence and security. This is especially significant for those with little or no English. As a result, these children settle in rapidly so that they make the most of the school's educational opportunities in the quickest possible time.

Teaching as a whole is of a high quality. It is never less than good and outstanding in those fundamental aspects that develop maturity and independence as learners. Children's progress in each area of learning is tracked very closely, in both the observations of key small steps forward and on a broader scale across several weeks. Information gained from these checks is used to set learning targets for each child, which are in turn assessed regularly to ensure they are met. Importantly, assessments and targets directly influence the content of planning. As a result, activities are matched successfully to children's differing needs. Each morning and afternoon session maintains a careful balance between small group tasks, with very clear and focused academic intentions and tasks, and freer activities designed to encourage children to plan and take responsibility for their learning. These occasions of free choice are extremely well organised, as are the children themselves in their response. During these times, children gain much from a wide range of sensory, practical and physical experience and from discussion with staff about how to develop their activities further. However, children are not always clear about the educational purpose of their selected activities. Consequently, they do not gain the

full benefit from their task that they should and especially if they mark time for a while before speaking with an adult.

The headteacher demonstrates exceptional leadership and the small team of staff work together very closely. The greatest strength of the school's overall good leadership and management is the high level of shared responsibility and commitment to raising achievement. The high expectations the school has of itself have led to some of its judgements about itself being over modest, but its systems for analysing where it might improve are excellent. Taken together with its already conspicuous success in furthering children's academic and personal development, these strengths mean it has outstanding capacity to improve further. Monitoring activities are well established across those with responsibilities at senior level and for areas of learning. Analysis of information, in particular has enabled staff to prioritise relative weaknesses in speaking, listening, mathematical calculation, and within children's knowledge and understanding of the world, and take steps to tackle them systematically and successfully. Staff are already finding ways to hone and focus their monitoring even more closely. They now scrutinise, for example, any links between gaps in attendance and the pace of progress of children learning to speak English as an additional language. Governance is satisfactory and, while not as strongly developed as other aspects of leadership has already taken steps to sharpen its role. Governors are very committed to the school and have been instrumental, for instance, in organising the holiday play scheme. A recent reorganisation of the governing body's committee structure enables it to have a much closer involvement in planning the school's future and close links are developing with the senior leadership team. Governors are keen to extend their monitoring role, but have yet to gain detailed information about the school's performance to enable them to provide the school with a good level of challenge.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

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

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Make sure children have a clear understanding of the educational purpose of those activities they select for themselves, so that they gain the full benefit from these tasks.
- Ensure governors gain detailed information about the school's performance so that they can provide the school with a good level of challenge about its work and outcomes.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

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	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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

<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>	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	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

15 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Northfleet Nursery School, Northfleet, Kent DA11 9JS

I really enjoyed my visit to your nursery and thank you for making me so welcome. It was a great pleasure seeing you all so busy and enthusiastic. Even the rain did not stop some of you choosing to go outside to use the things in your lovely outside play area! Your school is excellent and your mums and dads are extremely pleased with everything it does for you. Most importantly, you are learning lots and lots of new and exciting things very quickly and this means that your education has got off to a really good start.

Here are some other important things about your school.

- All the staff take special care of each one of you to make sure that you settle in quickly and do your very best.
- You really enjoy your activities, whether you are working on your own or with others.
- You are all extremely sensible and well behaved, and really kind and well mannered with others.
- The adults in school keep a careful check on your progress so that they can make sure you get better at those things you find more difficult.

This is what your school has been asked to do to make things even better.

- Make sure that you know more about what you should be learning to do when you choose your own activities.
- Make sure that your school governors have all the information they need to ask the school lots of questions about what it does.

I hope you all continue to work really hard and enjoy every minute of your time at school.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Patricia Davies Lead inspector

**Annex B**



15 May 2008

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Yours sincerely

Patricia Davies  
Lead inspector