

Tanglewood Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114698
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326055
Inspection date	23 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Judith Dawson

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ann Davidson
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Barker
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2006
School address	Melbourne Avenue Chelmsford Essex CM1 2DX
Telephone number	01245 352788
Fax number	01245 490248

Age group	3–4
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- Children's high achievement, both academically and in their personal development and the quality of the provision. Given children have only three terms in the Nursery on average, are standards as high as the self-evaluation suggests?
- Has governance developed further since the last inspection?
- Is the size of the building having any adverse impact on children's enjoyment and achievement?

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, the senior teacher, staff, children and governors, observations of teaching and learning, and displays, as well as an analysis of the centre's data on standards and progress, and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors 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

Tanglewood Nursery School, in Essex, is much larger than most other local authority nursery schools. Children of all abilities attend the school from Chelmsford but some children, especially those who attend the pre-school speech and language centre, come from much further afield. It is affiliated to Writtlewick Children's Centre. Over 10% of the children attend the specialist speech and language centre in the school and more children than average have speech and language difficulties or moderate or severe learning difficulties. At present, about 8% of the children are identified as gifted and able, but overall, children's knowledge and skills are below expectations for their age on entry. Children normally spend three terms in the school. The school holds many awards, including the Advanced Healthy Schools Award and is involved in several national research projects.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding nursery, where children receive exemplary support to help them learn and develop and where their welfare is of paramount importance. One parent wrote that Tanglewood Nursery school 'is centred around the children, who are managed and cared for to an extremely high level'. The inspectors agree wholeheartedly with this view. This is a tribute to the high quality of the staff and the leadership and management. The headteacher runs the school with, as another parent commented, 'incredible efficiency and passion'.

The headteacher has been leading the school for many years. She has very high expectations of the quality of the provision and care and, with the staff and the governors, has maintained and improved on the provision which was judged as outstanding at the time of the last inspection. The outside areas have been transformed into exciting and stimulating environments that are totally focused on extending children's learning and skills. Each learning area, both inside and out, is carefully planned to ensure that each child has equal access to the same high quality learning opportunities. Children who attend the speech and language centre are included in the mainstream classes whenever possible. The management of their provision is very effective and the unit has regular access to expert support. The headteacher and governors are seeking every avenue to extend the building to allow them to provide more support for parents and room to support small groups of children. Nevertheless, relationships with parents are very effective and, as the totally positive parental questionnaires demonstrate, the parents really value all that the school does for their children. Two thirds of the parents who returned them took the trouble to provide additional written comments in praise of the nursery.

The governing body, although effective, had not been formed for long when the nursery was last inspected. Since then, governors have extended their monitoring and evaluation roles and have become very active in the life of the nursery, evaluating its effectiveness and planning for development. Leaders and managers have a very accurate understanding of the nursery's strengths and areas for development. Links with other schools, the community and further afield are promoted extremely well. There is excellent capacity for future improvement.

Although many children join the nursery with lower-than-average knowledge and skills for their age, by the time they leave, three terms later, their skills are higher than normally expected of four-year-olds and well above average in their personal and social development. This is remarkable progress in a very short time and equates to high achievement. This is because the whole ethos of the nursery is based on ensuring children 'learning for themselves'. Learning is not left to chance. The curriculum and teaching are very carefully planned to ensure children develop the skills they need. The children themselves are involved in planning their learning. The teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants are skilled in building on children's comments to extend learning and using children's responses to plan learning that interests them. The theme of the day is posted up every morning to ensure parents can extend this at home. For example, one class was learning to make play dough. As a mother brought her child into school, she asked her to be sure to remember the recipe so that they could make it at home.

All children are expected to take personal responsibility for their actions and learning. They register themselves on arrival and some say 'good morning' in one of several languages. There are excellent relationships throughout the nursery. Adults and children alike are very polite to each other and respect each other's views. Children listen to adults and each other extremely

well and behaviour is excellent. Children have high self-esteem because everyone values them as individuals. For example, children have their own personal 'treasure boxes' that only they are allowed to open, a rule adhered to by both adults and other children. They have a very good understanding of their place in the world. One child remarked, when looking at a cocoon, 'I have one of these. It's called my home.'

Children are very sure of how to keep healthy and stay safe because they are encouraged to take safe risks. Their woodworking tools are real, for example, and they are taught how to use them correctly. They eat healthily and stop their teachers eating raw chocolate cookie mixture because the eggs are raw. The wonderful environment for learning, where activities fire their imaginations, extends their communication, language and literacy, mathematical and logical skills throughout the day. A cleverly constructed water track, for example, enabled children to work out, where two pipes overlapped, that the one from which the water was flowing had to be above the other to stop the water leaking. Children learn about other cultures through topics such as Diwali and Chinese New Year, and visitors from Japan who danced for them. Children support several international charities. Many local visitors help children understand about their community and people who help them. Above all, all children thoroughly enjoy the nursery and are rarely absent.

Children are cared for extremely well. The most impressive aspect of the care the nursery provides is the way children are helped to look after themselves and each other, developing an excellent understanding of citizenship and personal responsibility. The nursery meets all the requirements for safeguarding children and there is an adult who has responsibility for ensuring that the entrance to school is secure at all times. Staff set high standards in personal relationships with each other and everyone is valued. Adults know the children extremely well and make regular assessments of their achievements. These are entered into children's 'Learning Journeys' and shared with the parents. They are used to identify children's next steps in their learning or personal development and help to promote seamless learning between the nursery and home.

Children of all abilities are challenged throughout each day and they thrive. Children in the speech and language centre receive excellent care and support. Staff are skilled in giving each child the support he or she needs, concentrating specifically on improving the specific weakness to be addressed while ensuring individuals gain in confidence. A parent wrote, 'My daughter loves this school and has learnt to speak here. I am very grateful.' The school is working with the other Essex nursery to develop systems for tracking more easily progress over time and recording children's levels of skills. These are not yet fully embedded. Although the very good assessment meets children's needs extremely well, it is difficult for adults to precisely measure each child's progress across all areas of learning because children's assessments are not used successfully to provide an overall record of how each child is doing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Embed the very good assessment systems so that adults can more easily track each child's progress over time.

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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 is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
The standards[1] 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/or disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

24 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Tanglewood Nursery School, Chelmsford, CM1 2DX

We had a lovely time when we visited your nursery recently. Thank you all very much for talking to us and showing us all the wonderful things that you do. We could see how much you enjoy yourselves and how quickly you learn new things. I do not think either of us has seen more polite and well-behaved children of your age. Well done all of you.

Your mums and dads told us how well you are helped to learn and how well you are cared for in the nursery. We agree with them. You are part of an excellent nursery. This means that, although you are not there for long, by the time you leave, you learn lots of new things very quickly. Your teachers make sure you have many fun things to do that make you think hard and learn for yourselves. This means that, when you go to your new schools, you should be able to carry on learning well. Your teachers make sure that grown-ups at home know what you are learning about and what you need to learn next. I know some of your mums and dads help you at home. I wonder if any of you taught them how to make play dough?

The grown-ups in the nursery take very good care of you and make sure that you know how to take care of yourselves. They teach you how to use your woodworking tools and other things safely so that you can do exciting things. You know how to stay healthy. I was pleased to see everyone wash his or her hands before cooking. You take good care of our world and water the plants carefully. I saw some of you using your magnifying glasses to look at the fish your teacher brought into the nursery. Did any of you find any teeth or tongues in your fish, I wonder?

Those in charge are very clever at making sure you all have the best possible care and lots of exciting things to do. They are going to watch your progress even more carefully in future. Those of you who have difficulty with your speech and language have all the help you need so that you learn very quickly. I know how much you enjoy leaning with your special teachers and with the rest of the children in the nursery. Your photographs show that you all had a lovely day at the seaside to help you with your topic this term. We both hope that you carry on enjoying your learning when you join your big schools.

Best wishes

Mrs Judith Dawson

Lead inspector