

# Balham Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100990
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wandsworth
<b>Inspection number</b>	335634
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Natalia Power

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>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	70
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Joanne Saich
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Mcauley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	72 Endlesham Road London SW12 8JL
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed the two class teachers, and also the nursery nurses and specialist support staff, in both the indoor and outdoor learning areas. Inspectors talked to governors, staff and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's safeguarding procedures, its tracking of children's progress, the school development plan, minutes of the governing body, curricular planning and the 57 questionnaires submitted by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of the school's measures to increase children's attendance
- the quality of the management of teaching and learning
- the quality of the school's planning for future improvement.

Most children start in the September after their third birthday and stay for a year until they move to the Reception year in a range of primary schools. Almost a third of children attend all day and the rest either in the morning or in the afternoon. Over half of the children come from White British backgrounds, and the rest from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages. A few children are at an early stage of learning English. Around a quarter of children at the school have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including a very few with statements of special educational need. The school forms part of a Sure Start Children's Centre managed by the governing body. The school manages a breakfast club and after-school provision. The school is one of only a few early years providers to have achieved Level 1 of the Unicef Rights Respecting Schools award.

## Information about the school

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**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

- This is an outstanding school, where children receive, in the words of one parent, 'a wonderful nurturing caring start to the school system'. The hallmark of the school is the exemplary care it offers to all children, identifying and addressing their needs fully. The adults go out of their way to remove all barriers to children's learning. As a result, all the children thoroughly enjoy their learning and achieve exceptionally well.
- The school is situated in a family house with an established garden, and this family ethos promotes a strong sense of security in the children. In this safe environment they develop outstanding personal qualities. They are constantly encouraged to make decisions about what they are going to learn, and this enables them to grow in confidence.
- The wealth of tasks offered to the children, both indoors and outdoors, are designed to stimulate their curiosity and extend their learning fully. Activities provide excellent opportunities for children to develop new skills and understanding and a sense of wonder about the world. Children's speaking and listening skills are developed exceptionally well, and they leave the school with high attainment in literacy and numeracy.
- The school promotes community cohesion exceptionally well, ensuring that children from a variety of backgrounds get on extremely well together. Leaders and governors go out of their way to ensure that the children learn as much as they possibly can about the wider world.
- The children love going to school. One parent commented, 'My child can't wait to come to school every morning.' The school has made great efforts to increase attendance and, as a result, attendance has been rising and is now above average. However, a few children arrive late and this affects the concentration of children who are settled at their tasks
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher are highly ambitious for the school and continually seek ways of improving it. Leaders, managers and governors have an excellent understanding of their school and their plans for the future are admirably clear and focused on the correct priorities. They have fully met the recommendation of the last inspection to make the children's centre a hub of the community. These factors indicate that the school has an excellent capacity to continue to improve.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

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- Work closely with parents and carers to ensure that all children arrive promptly so that they can settle quickly to their tasks

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of children****1**

'My child has developed beyond all our expectations.' This comment from one parent reflects the outstanding progress made by the children in their learning. The children enter the nursery with skills and aptitudes which are varied but broadly in line with those expected nationally for three year olds. By the time they leave, children from all backgrounds have made excellent progress in their learning, and their attainment is high. Children with a range of additional physical and learning needs and those at an early stage of learning English receive focused support in their play-based activities and make progress in step with others.

The adults take every opportunity to extend the children's learning through the exciting range of tasks offered. Children programmed an electronic toy to travel towards areas drawn by them on a large sheet of paper. They were engrossed in the task and learned a variety of different skills: information and communication technology, mathematics as they counted the moves made by the toy, and speaking and listening skills as they were encouraged to talk to one another about the movement of the toy. Snack times and meal times for children who stay all day are also used to stimulate their learning as well as their social skills, and the adults gently encourage the children to discuss their food preferences and pass items politely to one another.

Children fully understand the importance of health and hygiene. For example, they can explain why they need to wash their hands before eating. They develop excellent physical skills by climbing and swinging and balancing in the exciting outdoor areas. Children feel completely safe and know that there is always a trusted adult to turn to if they have any worries or are feeling unwell. They play together confidently and report that they have many friends. They behave exceptionally well, and are ready to share and take turns. Children make an outstanding contribution to their own community, for example by growing vegetables for the school. They also make a valuable contribution to the wider community, for example by learning to respect the use of water, which is a key article of the Unicef Rights Respecting Schools Award. The children develop excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural qualities. The tenderness with which they handle the school's guinea pigs fosters in them a sense of wonder about the world around them. Children gain an excellent grounding in language and number skills, which prepares them exceptionally well for the next stage in their schooling and later life.

*These are the grades for children's outcomes*

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of children's learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which children feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Children's behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Adults use a variety of opportunities to extend the quality of children's learning and encourage them to think for themselves. A bowl of fruit gives the children opportunities to describe smells and shape, to count the pieces of fruit, and to think about which fruit can be eaten with the skin on and which need to be peeled. Children in the woodwork area choose which object they will make and practise fine motor skills in measuring, sawing, hammering and using a vice until the object is completed to their satisfaction. As a result, the children work quietly, sticking at tasks until they are completed. Storytime is used not only to stimulate children's imagination, but to ask them searching questions about the pictures. 'Is it a hot or cold day? How do you know?' The level of challenge is extremely high because the school rigorously collects information on children's progress, and then uses this information to provide focused activities which bring out the best in each child.

The school encourages children to make sensible choices, and this helps them to become independent learners. There is an enormous variety of activities, with opportunities for developing all six areas of learning both indoors and in the stimulating outdoor play areas. When they wish to be quiet and concentrate hard, the children can make models, paint or sort buttons, and all these activities develop different but important skills. When they are in a more exploratory mood, they can discover how water trickles along pipes into the sand pit and makes mud. Music is used exceptionally well to encourage children to develop their rhythm and singing. It also is of enormous benefit to children with a range of additional needs who develop excellent social and

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personal skills with guidance from the dedicated music therapist. The excellent and varied activities are also used to benefit children who attend the breakfast or after-school clubs, and these children are given care of the highest quality.

Potentially Vulnerable children are given excellent support. Parents and carers of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities pay tribute to the support provided by the school. One commented, 'I have been delighted on every level. My child has thrived and grown in confidence.' Children's progress is shared with their families in clear and user-friendly ways. Transition arrangements are exemplary. Children quickly become familiar with their key person, and settle happily into the school. When the time comes for the children to move to the next stage of their education, the school's excellent partnerships with local primary schools ensure that they are prepared extremely well for the transition.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>1</b>
	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

### **How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher, ably supported by her senior leadership team, promotes exceptionally high standards, ensuring that all staff strive for excellence. Her management of teaching and learning has an exemplary focus on how children learn and what can be done to make their learning even better. She has the trust of parents and carers, and one commented, 'The headteacher does a wonderful job and always has time to talk to you.' There is a shared sense of purpose among all the adults. As a result of the leaders' and managers' outstanding ambition and drive for improvement, the school is extending the range of services it provides in the children's centre, ensuring that the needs of the whole family are met. The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination exceptionally well, so that all the children succeed. Leaders, managers and governors ensure that safeguarding procedures are robust and of the highest quality.

Governors provide outstanding support. They are fully engaged in the life of the school and share the leaders' high standards and determination to maintain the school's exceptional qualities. They are proactive in ensuring that the school keeps community cohesion at the forefront, so that the children develop an excellent understanding of other people's faiths and cultures. Leaders and managers work in extremely effective partnership with parents, keeping them fully informed about their children's progress

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and encouraging them to bring their skills to the school community.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	1
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	1
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	1

## Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers who responded through questionnaires or who spoke to the inspection team expressed great enthusiasm for the school. All agreed that it keeps their children safe and healthy. Parents and carers were unanimous in agreeing that the school prepares children well for the future, that it deals well with their behaviour and that the school is well led and managed. Inspectors fully endorse these views. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are happy with their child's experiences at the school. One commented, 'Balham Nursery School has provided my child with an excellent education in a very caring environment.' Inspectors agree that this is an outstanding school.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 70 children registered at the school.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Balham Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	82	9	16	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	86	8	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	38	67	17	30	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	67	17	30	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	70	14	25	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	67	17	30	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	63	19	33	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	37	65	19	33	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	67	18	32	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	67	17	30	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	70	15	26	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	46	81	11	19	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	79	11	19	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



27 May 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Balham Nursery School, London, SW12 8JL

A little while ago two visitors came to your school to watch you play and learn. We had a lovely time at your school. Thank you for welcoming us. This is what we found.

- You are lucky to go to such a fantastic school, where you learn an amazing amount for children of your age. The grown-up word for your school is 'outstanding'. Your parents and carers love your school as much as you do.
- Your school gives you a huge number of exciting activities to help you learn. You love all the chances you are given for exploring and drumming and painting and hammering and climbing. You also love the stories and music the adults teach you.
- Your school keeps you extremely healthy and safe.
- You are all really happy at your school. This is because you get on so well with one another, and always share and take turns.
- Your school takes excellent care of you and all the adults are really kind. In turn, you are kind to others, including the guinea pigs! We were told that you are keen to look after them in the holidays.
- You learn a great deal about people in your own community and the different ways they live and worship. The adults make sure that you think about other people, and this is why your school has an award for respecting the rights of others. Make sure, then, that you nag your parents and carers to get you to school on time every morning, so you do not disturb the other children when they are working hard at their activities.
- Even though you are very young, you can still do your bit to help your school by being as kind and helpful as you can to one another.

We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Natalia Power Lead inspector

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