

Somerset Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100992
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	376496
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2011
Reporting inspector	David Shepherd

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Linton
Headteacher	Louisa Halls
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2009
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Age group	3–4
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Five sessions led by two different teachers and six early years practitioners were observed. Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. Opportunities were taken to talk to children about their views of the school. Questionnaires from 28 parents and carers and 17 staff were received and analysed. A sample of documents was scrutinised, including those related to data regarding children's progress, teachers' planning, attendance and safeguarding.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. The following key areas were looked at in detail.

- The progress being made by children, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are in the early stages of learning English.
- The extent to which children understand and adopt healthy lifestyles and safe practices, and make a positive contribution to the school.
- The consistency in the quality of teaching and the use of assessment.
- How successful the school is being in securing good attendance.

Information about the school

Somerset is an average-sized nursery school and serves an area with diverse communities. A higher than average proportion of children come from minority ethnic communities and speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. A below average proportion of children have special educational needs and/or disabilities. At the time of the inspection, 29 children attended on a full-time basis with a further 13 attending part time. The school has gained the Rights Respecting Schools Award sponsored by UNICEF. The Nursery is linked to a children's centre which shares the same site and is managed by the governing body. The children's centre is not included in this inspection.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Children are very happy to come to Somerset Nursery School because they are exceptionally well cared for and feel extremely safe, learning and playing in a stimulating environment where they have fun. They develop excellent relationships with adults, are very responsive to them and behave well. Children from a wide variety of backgrounds get on very well together and learn to respect each other's differences. This is appreciated by all those parents and carers who completed the questionnaire; a typical view was expressed by one parent who wrote, 'My son loves the school. He has very strong relationships with the teachers.'

Children who attend on a full-time basis enjoy appetising lunches in family-style groups where they learn about healthy eating and good manners. For their age, they help tidy up well at the end of activities. Adults provide a wide range of stimulating activities both indoors and outdoors in the exceptionally well resourced garden area and these engage and motivate children who are eager to try out new experiences. This helps most children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language, to make good progress in all aspects of their learning. However, while making good progress overall, a few boys do not always make the progress they could, especially in linking sounds to letters, writing and calculation.

Teaching and learning are consistently good. Some teaching, especially that which helps children to investigate the world around them, is inspirational and fully engages highly motivated children in their learning. A notable feature of activities is that they are practical and based on children's interests and experiences. Staff make regular assessments of children's progress and record them systematically in attractively presented portfolios. Parents and carers are kept well informed about the progress of their children and they receive detailed and easy-to-read written reports at the end of the year. Most children attend regularly, but a few miss sessions for reasons other than illness and this slows their progress.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher, senior leaders, staff and the governing body. They have a good awareness of the school's strengths and areas that need improvement and are working effectively to improve any issues identified. They share a strong commitment to embedding ambition and securing improvements. This, together with careful management of resources, including finance, indicates that the school has a good capacity to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2012, ensure all boys make as much progress as possible by regularly monitoring and reviewing their learning, especially in linking sounds to letters, early writing skills and calculation.
- Work closely with parents and carers to improve the attendance, and to raise the achievement, of the few children who are regularly absent for reasons other than illness.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

Children listen attentively and thoroughly enjoy the activities that have been provided for them. For example, groups of children enjoyed using magnifying glasses to observe the tentacles of snails. Children's excited reactions to this activity included 'I think they are sleeping' when they did not move and 'Look, mine is eating cucumber!' Children took great delight in rolling cars and wheels down slopes in the garden to see which travelled furthest.

Children start in the Nursery with skills and abilities that are generally at expected levels for their age. The very large majority achieve well in most areas of learning, especially in personal, social and emotional development where progress in disposition and attitudes is quickest. Progress is not as rapid in linking sounds to letters, early writing skills and calculation. By the time they leave the Nursery, most are reaching above the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, especially those with speech, language and communication difficulties, do not reach typical age-related levels but they make good progress nonetheless. Children who speak English as an additional language quickly pick up skills in the English language and make good progress. Children known to be eligible for free schools meals also make good progress. The attainment of the more able children is higher than typically expected in all areas of learning.

At the time of the inspection, in spite of being new to the school, children displayed confident attitudes that indicated how safe they felt. Behaviour was good and occasionally exemplary whether children were inside or outside, playing with their friends or working alone. Children support charities such as Red Nose Day. They are developing a good understanding of healthy lifestyles by eating fresh fruit and drinking milk during the day, washing their hands after going to the toilet and exercising regularly. They are developing a good understanding of how to get on with others by working and playing in groups. For example, in one activity during the inspection, one child brought a chair for her friend who wanted to join the group.

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Most children attend well, but figures are adversely affected by a few children who are not regular attenders.

These are the grades for children’s outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Children’s achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Children’s attainment ¹	2
The quality of children’s learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children’s behaviour	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Children’s attendance ¹	3
The extent of children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

A varied and very well resourced curriculum, which includes excellent opportunities to visit places of interest and benefits from a wide range of visitors to school, promotes effectively children’s development and well-being. The focus on valuing individuality is reflected in the school gaining the Rights Respecting Schools Award. Articles within this award include: ‘Children have a right to learn and use the language and customs of their families’ and ‘Children with different abilities should have care and support so that they can lead full and independent lives’. These guide the work and ethos of the school through following a plan that includes activities such as ‘Fair trade Fortnight’ and an International Evening where parents and carers dress in their national costumes and prepare national dishes for children to taste.

Regular visits are made to places of interest, including Wimbledon Common, the Tate Gallery, Battersea Riverside Walk and Chinatown. In addition, visits are made within the locality to the local library, local shops, fire station and heliport. Visitors to the school include a music specialist and parents and carers talking about the jobs they

¹ 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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do. This rich provision is reflected by one parent who wrote, ‘The children always have something to do and the day-to-day activities cover all areas of learning.’

Children are provided with good opportunities for listening and developing early reading skills. They are not always given enough opportunities to reply to questions in words or extended sentences to help them develop their speaking and thinking skills. Planning is good overall and includes provision for children at different levels of ability. However, the activities planned for a few of the boys do not always ensure they make the progress of which they are capable, especially in linking sounds to letters, early writing skills and calculation.

Skilled intervention by staff in the role-play areas helps children to develop their self-confidence, independence and social skills. Staff skilfully teach children how to control a mouse when they are using computer programs. They support children playing in groups very well and this ensures they are fully engaged in activities. A notable strength of the teaching is that adults join in the activities with the children, much to their delight and enjoyment.

Staff compile useful and detailed portfolios on children’s achievements and these provide a useful record of progress. However, not all staff include the next steps in learning when recording formal observations on children and this can lead to missed opportunities to promote increased learning.

All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are looked after extremely well. Their individual needs are identified soon after they start school and specialist provision allocated for them. Children leave the Nursery and join a wide range of primary schools. Good links with the main primary schools promote smooth transition to Reception classes. One parent expressed this by writing, ‘My three children have come to this school and it has been the best start they could ever have.’

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets children’s needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides strong leadership for a well-motivated and enthusiastic

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staff whose morale is very high. Together, staff demonstrate a sense of responsibility, ambition and a commitment to continue to improve provision. Staff meetings, held at the end of each day, are successful in reviewing what has gone well and what needs to be provided the next day. Teaching is monitored regularly and points for improvement are identified and adopted by staff. This enables the senior staff to identify effectively the strengths and areas for further development which are then incorporated into a plan for improvement. Monitoring and evaluation have brought about significant improvements in recent years, but have not always in the past focused sufficiently on children’s outcomes. The analysis of data for the last year is outstanding and includes the attainment and progress of different groups. The school is beginning to use this data to identify strengths and weaknesses in provision and children’s outcomes.

The governing body is supportive and encouraging to the school. A number of governors have been appointed recently and are being trained to support the school in the evaluation of its work. The governing body and senior staff have a good understanding about safeguarding procedures and the school adopts effective practices across all areas of its work. The school promotes links with its local community very well and helps children to develop a good understanding of international communities throughout the curriculum. Steps are being taken to extend national links.

Equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination are promoted well overall and have resulted in good progress being made by a very large majority of the children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The school has good relationships with parents and carers. The responses and comments on the questionnaires received from parents and carers were overwhelmingly positive. Initiatives, such as the extensive induction programme and opportunities to help in classrooms and talk about their jobs, as well as being kept well informed by the school about how well their children are progressing, all contribute to the good relationships parents and carers have with school. However, there is scope for closer work with a small minority of parents and carers in order to improve attendance. Partnerships with the children’s centre and visitors are excellent because they help improve provision for children. Partnerships with the health services and local authority are good.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

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The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The table below illustrates the extremely positive views of the school held by parents and carers. Eight questionnaires included written comments. These referred to the good relationships between staff and children, good links with parents and carers and positive comments about the headteacher and staff.

A number of these comments have been included throughout the report, but two more are: ‘The school took account of all my suggestions and concerns concerning my child’ and ‘The school is fantastically well organised’.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Somerset 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.

The inspector received 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 42 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	75	6	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	86	4	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	17	61	6	21	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	68	5	18	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	82	4	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	21	75	4	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	79	4	14	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)	22	79	3	11	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	20	71	5	18	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	68	5	18	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	71	6	21	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	86	3	11	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	24	86	4	14	0	0	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 all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



23 September 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Somerset Nursery School, London, SW11 3ND

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school. I found out all sorts of interesting things. Here are some of them:

- Your school is a good one where staff look after you extremely well and make you feel extremely safe and happy.
- You learn how to keep healthy by washing your hands after going to the toilet, and eating your healthy snacks and delicious school lunches. You love playing outside in the fresh air.
- You are well behaved and look after each other very well, paying attention to each other's safety and being kind to one another.
- Your teachers and other staff prepare exciting activities that interest you and that you understand. You like going on visits out of school to places of interest such as the local shops.
- You really enjoy finding out about snails and magnets, and you love finger painting and modelling with play dough.

We have asked your headteacher, teachers and governing body to do two things to make your school even better. These are to:

- make sure that all the boys in particular learn as much as they can when learning the sounds of letters, how to write and how to work out sums
- make sure that all of you attend school as often as possible.

Keep working hard and having fun.

Yours sincerely

David Shepherd
Lead inspector

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