



# Low Hall Nursery

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 103027  
**LEA** Waltham Forest LEA  
**Inspection number** 276808  
**Inspection dates** 11 May 2006 to 12 May 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mike Thompson AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery	<b>School address</b>	Low Hall Lane
<b>School category</b>	Maintained		London
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 5		E17 8BE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	02085201689
<b>Number on roll</b>	60	<b>Fax number</b>	02085201689
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Fiona Edwards
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Claire Toberman

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Low Hall is a small nursery, situated in a socially and culturally diverse area of London. Most of its children attend on a part-time basis, for either the morning or afternoon session. Most are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and a large majority of these are in the early stages of learning English. More than 25% have learning difficulties or disabilities. Many children are from disadvantaged home circumstances, and more than 40% are eligible for free school meals. In January 2006, the school was designated as a Children's Centre, as part of the government's initiative to improve childcare provision. There have been significant changes in staffing over the past year, including the appointment of the class teacher.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

The school was over-cautious in its evaluation of its effectiveness, which it judged to be good. This is, in fact, a highly effective school, which provides high quality education for its children, and gives good value for money. Parents have overwhelmingly positive views of the school, and these are fully justified. They are best summed up by one parent who wrote, 'Low Hall has exceeded my expectations of what a good nursery should be.'

Why is this school so effective? It is exceptionally well staffed. At times there may be as few as three or four children to each adult. These adults show great expertise in working with the children, and are particularly good at looking at what needs to be done to help each individual to improve. The school is very good at providing its children with really interesting and exciting things to do, and has a very good range of equipment to help do this. As a result, the children are never bored and are always keen to learn. The school provides an outstanding quality of care, including very detailed and regular monitoring of the progress made by each child. The result of this high quality provision is that the children get on exceptionally well, both academically and in developing their personal and social skills.

All of this has been brought about through the vision and determination of the headteacher, who has transformed the school since the time of the last inspection. She ensures that this is not a school which rests on its laurels, but is always looking for ways to make things even better for its children. She knows each individual well and closely monitors every child's progress. However, her monitoring of the school's plan for improvement is not based upon sufficiently specific and measurable targets.

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

\* Make sure that the targets set out in the school development plan are more precisely measurable.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Children join the nursery with a very wide range of skills and knowledge; however, their starting point is below average overall. By the time they leave, most children who have attended for the maximum five terms are well on course to achieve the goals normally expected of those a year older. The rest still achieve good standards for their age in all areas of learning.

There are many factors which, together, result in the children achieving so well. The most significant of these is that the school is exceptionally well staffed. These adults are highly skilled and have a good understanding of the ways in which very young children learn. They frequently work with individuals or very small groups, and assess each child's needs in great detail. The carefully planned curriculum is based on these detailed assessments, and as a result all children, including those with learning

difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is a second language make excellent progress in meeting challenging targets.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Children's personal development and well-being underpin everything that the school does. This has a very positive impact on children's progress. Part of the reason for children's excellent achievement is that they enjoy being in school because they are interested by the activities provided for them. They behave exceptionally well and get on very well with one another. Bullying is not an issue. Children feel safe and very happy, and know that there is always someone to comfort them if they feel sad. They develop confidence and independence in response to the staff's high expectations. At lunchtime, for example, they select their own cutlery and set it out in the correct positions marked out on their place mats.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The children develop a healthy respect for each other's cultural traditions and beliefs, and have a clear understanding of right and wrong. For instance, following an entertaining enactment of the story Not Now Bernard by members of staff, one very young child commented: 'You were a naughty monster because you ate Bernard up!' Children know how to work and play safely, for example, showing that they know the correct way of carrying scissors or handling saws and drills when making models. They enjoy healthy snacks and meals. Food grown in the school garden is used in cooking sessions to help the children appreciate the benefits of healthy eating.

Attendance is satisfactory. The main reasons for absence are illness and extended family visits to Pakistan, taken in term time. Children's achievements in acquiring basic skills prepare them very well for the next stage in their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

The quality of teaching is outstanding, and results in children making excellent gains in their learning. All of the teaching is at least good, and some is exemplary.

Teaching is highly effective because it often takes place in very small group sessions, and because the staff relate to the children exceptionally well. They have high expectations of what children can achieve and how they should behave. The underlying reason for the effectiveness of teaching is that activities are carefully planned and well resourced.

All children are regularly and carefully assessed as they work and play. The needs of children with learning difficulties and disabilities are precisely identified and teaching for these children is closely linked to the targets set out in the individual plans drawn up for them. Those for whom English is a second language enjoy specialist help, and

are similarly well assessed. There are excellent record-keeping systems that are used effectively to track the progress children make. This information is used well, not only to ensure that follow-up activities are relevant, but also to keep parents fully informed about how their children are getting on.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The school provides a very wide range of interesting and exciting activities for its children. This is achieved through excellent teamwork. Each week, the staff team takes a great deal of time in evaluating the success of the previous week's work and then adjusts its plans accordingly. The class teacher and the four nursery nurses each takes responsibility for planning different focuses, while the headteacher's careful monitoring ensures that all areas of learning are covered well. A particularly strong feature of the curriculum is the emphasis placed on developing children's personal and social skills, through working together and making choices about their learning. A good range of local visits and the range of skills brought into the school by visitors help to add an extra dimension to the school's planning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The parents rightly speak very highly of the care which their children receive. A number wrote to praise the school's 'open-door' policy which helps them to feel welcome, knowing that they can visit at any time to see at first hand how their children are getting on. Child protection and health and safety procedures are thorough and consistently supported by staff. The school works effectively with other agencies, such as social services, to ensure that any children and their families who are experiencing difficulties are supported to the fullest extent. Children are also given high quality help in developing their skills in all areas of learning. This happens because all adults carefully record their assessments of what children have achieved, and these are passed on to one of the five staff members who act as 'link workers'. Each of these link workers has an overview of the progress made by a small group of children. This system helps provide continuity for children as they move through the school and ensures that the targets set for them are suitably challenging.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The head teacher provides outstanding leadership which contributes significantly towards children's high levels of achievement and their outstanding personal development.

An extremely strong feature of the school is the commitment and teamwork of the staff. They share the vision of the headteacher to help all children to achieve the very best that they can. Teaching, curriculum and care are all of extremely high quality and

something to be proud of. The school's partnership with parents is strong. Their views are regularly sought, and they have every confidence in the school.

Systems for monitoring and evaluating the achievement of the children are exceptional and very effective. However, the way in which the school is able to judge the effectiveness of its planned development has one key weakness. Its plan contains very clear objectives, but the measures used to judge how well it meets these objectives are not always precise enough.

Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They support the school in many ways and actively monitor its work through their regular visits and contacts with parents. For example, the chair and vice chair of governors met new parents individually to find out what they felt about the 'settling-in' arrangements for their children. However, governors need to improve some aspects of their management of the school's new status as a Children's Centre.

Finances are carefully monitored. The comparatively large amount carried forward in the school's budget is sensibly earmarked for further improvements to the premises.

This very successful school certainly knows itself well and with such excellent leadership, has the capacity to keep up its impressive work.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	NA
Learners are educated about sexual health	NA
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Children

Thank you very much for being so helpful when I came to visit your school. I really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at all your lovely work.

I think that Low Hall Nursery is a brilliant school and this is why: \* you are really lucky that you have so many clever grown-ups to look after you \* all of the grown-ups are really good at teaching you and giving you lots of interesting things to do \* you learn a lot because you always try your best \* you play well with each other and are good at taking turns \* Claire is really good at making sure that you have everything that you need and that your school keeps you safe.

Even in a wonderful school like yours there is always something that could be even better. So, I think that what needs to be done next is for Claire to make really careful checks on the plans that have been made to improve your school. This will help her to find out how useful new ideas really are, such as the work which is being done to give you some outdoor places for play which are out of the sun.

With best wishes

Mike Thompson

Lead Inspector