

SUMMARY OF THE INSPECTION REPORT

NORTHFLEET NURSERY SCHOOL

a nursery school situated in Northfleet on the outskirts of Gravesend
inspected between 29th November and 1st December 2004 by a team of
inspectors led by Mrs M Gough

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school that provides a **good quality** of education for all children. Overall, the children's achievement is good, and their attainment when they leave school is at the level expected for their age across most areas of learning. In personal, social and emotional development, their attainment is above the expected level. Teaching and learning are good, and the needs of children with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well met. The school is well led and managed and gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Children achieve well overall, and very well in terms of their personal, social and emotional development.
- The children's attainment is above the level expected for their age in personal, social and emotional development.
- Teaching is good throughout the school, and the High Scope Approach is effectively implemented.
- Not enough emphasis is placed on the children amending their planning in the light of the ongoing changes they make during free-choice sessions.
- Although assessment systems provide very good information about individual children, not enough use is made of assessment information when planning 'Small Group' activities.
- The school provides very good levels of care, support and guidance for all children.
- The provision for children with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good, and enables them to make similar progress to their classmates.
- Links with parents are very good, and there are exceptionally high levels of parental satisfaction.
- The school is well led and managed, and the governing body is very effective.
- The outside play areas do not provide sufficiently stimulating and challenging learning environments for the children.

There has been good improvement overall since the time of the last inspection. Teaching and learning have improved and the school has developed the curriculum well. All of the issues identified in the last report have been fully addressed.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Children of all ages and abilities achieve **well**, and by the time they leave school at the age of four, their attainment is at the expected level in almost all areas of learning.

When the children join the nursery, their attainment is varied, and taken overall, is lower than expected, especially in communication, language and literacy, where a high percentage of children have English as an additional language. The children achieve well in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. In physical development, their achievement is satisfactory, and in personal, social and emotional development, their achievement is very good. By the time children leave school at the age of four, their attainment is at the expected level for their age across all areas of learning, with the exception of personal, social and emotional development where their attainment is above the expected level. Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported and progress at a similar rate to their classmates.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall. Their cultural awareness is very good. The children have positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is good. Attendance is satisfactory. The school has very good systems for ensuring that children attend on a regular basis, and absences are almost always because of illness.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides children with a **good** quality of education. Teaching and learning are **good**. Assessment is good overall. The assessment of the progress and attainment of individual children is very good, but not enough use is made of assessment information when planning 'Small Group' activities. As a result, although activities are generally suitable, they do not always closely match the needs of different groups of children. The curriculum is good overall, and the 'High Scope' Approach is effective in promoting the children's independent learning skills. There is a good balance of activities the children choose themselves and those that are led by an adult. However, not enough emphasis is placed on the children amending their planning in the light of the choices they make during 'free-choice' activities. The provision for children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is good. The school provides a satisfactory range of enrichment activities. The accommodation is satisfactory, although even more could be done to make the outside play areas more stimulating and challenging. The school has a satisfactory range of resources, although there are too few computers and listening centres, limiting the children's use and awareness of information and communication technology. The school provides very good levels of care, support and guidance, and the well-being and happiness of children are the shared concern of staff, parents and the governing body. The school's partnership with parents is very good, and there are exceptionally high levels of parental satisfaction. Links with other schools and the community are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are good overall. The caretaking headteacher has provided good interim leadership for the school in the period between the promotion of the last headteacher and the appointment of the new headteacher, and has been well supported by a knowledgeable, and well informed governing body, and an enthusiastic and loyal staff. The governing body very effectively fulfils its leadership role, and governors are regular visitors to the school. The shared leadership and management of the curriculum by the teaching staff are good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are exceptionally pleased with the school, and very much appreciate the efforts the staff go to to ensure that the children are happy and secure in their learning. Although the children have difficulty in expressing their views about school because of their age, they are happy and confident learners, and the vast majority separate very willingly from their carers at the start of sessions.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Develop the outside play areas so that they provide more stimulating and challenging learning environments. ·
 - Make better use of assessment information when planning 'Small Group' activities.
 - Ensure that children amend their initial plans if they change the activities they have planned to do during free-choice sessions.
- The school has already identified this as an area for development within its current School Improvement Plan.

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