

# Somerset Nursery and Children's Centre

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100992
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wandsworth
<b>Inspection number</b>	323389
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sue Vale

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>	3-4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	73
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Martin Linton MP
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Louisa Halls
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 June 2006
<b>School address</b>	157 Battersea Church Road London SW11 3ND
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7223 5455
<b>Fax number</b>	020 7228 4989

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the Nursery and investigated the following issues:

- the accuracy of leaders' self-evaluation of the Nursery and the impact of its work on the children's learning and development
- how well observations and assessment are used to help children progress in their learning and the standards reached
- the care, guidance and support provided for children
- the quality of provision for different groups of children, including the more vulnerable, those who are learning English as an additional language, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- the school's involvement in community cohesion.

Evidence was gathered from records of children's progress, observations of activities in and around the Nursery, discussions with staff, governors and children, and an analysis of 57 responses to the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspection 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 in this report.

## Description of the school

Somerset Nursery is located in the London Borough of Wandsworth. Approximately a third of the children who attend the Nursery are learning English as an additional language. There are 40 full-time and 40 part-time places. Around a tenth of children are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mainly difficulties in language acquisition. The Nursery opened as a children's centre in spring 2009 and has seven children under three years old attending.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Somerset Nursery and children's centre is outstanding. It gives the children an excellent start to their education. Staff put the children's learning and development of new skills and understanding as central to all that they do. Their clear vision, along with the exceptionally stimulating learning environment and curriculum, ensure that children make rapid progress and achieve really well. As one parent aptly wrote, 'Somerset is an excellent environment. The staff are welcoming, nurturing and engaging. The activities that Somerset have in place are exceptional and have made learning a fun and treasured experience for my son.'

Children reach above the expected standards in many areas of their learning by the time they leave the Nursery. This represents excellent progress from their starting points. Teaching is excellent and really supports children's rapid progress in their development. The highly stimulating curriculum, along with the outstanding emphasis by teachers on developing children's personal, social and emotional development, and on helping them in their language acquisition, enable children of all abilities and backgrounds to make outstanding progress in their learning. This aspect was noted by one mother: 'I love the way children are given the opportunity to play creatively, and encouraged independent imaginative minds.' The children are indeed fortunate to have such wonderful 'hands-on' activities to learn from. Children were able to explain how the chicks had hatched from eggs and are eagerly awaiting the next lot of eggs to hatch. Planting runner beans, eating cress sandwiches they have made, building, making things, creating models and hideaways, playing imaginatively, whether in the home corner, or outside in a tent or building a plane, all the activities are geared to the outstanding personal learning of each and every child.

Observations and assessments of what children know and can do are greatly improved since the last inspection. Evidence is collected both in written and photographic form and the information is used very well to challenge the children and to move them on to the next stage in their learning. This all supports the outstanding progress which children make. The daily meetings held by staff to discuss children and their interests and advancement are thorough and helpful. The information shared and decisions made for the next day's planning are significant factors in supporting the rapid progress made by the children.

The recently opened children's centre is a welcome addition and extension to the Nursery. Provision for the younger children is excellent, and their individual needs are catered for extremely well. During the inspection, a group was running in which parents and their toddlers and babies could share in their learning together. All those playing in the flour had an exhilarating, and stimulating time.

The children's personal development and well-being is outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is equally outstanding. The awe and wonder experienced by one girl when stroking the chick showed real enjoyment of learning that will last a long time in her memory. This learning was enhanced by excellent questioning from the adult working with her, to develop her speaking and listening skills. All areas of learning are fully supported and as one parent governor commented, 'I am still amazed at how much my children have learnt about the wider world around them from their time at Somerset.' This understanding and knowledge about the world around them is encapsulated by the amazing concentration and enjoyment found by a group of children who were learning about how the blades of a windmill turn, when they connected batteries to make it work. There are regular opportunities for children to choose

freely to work either inside or outdoors and the stimulating exciting environments provide children with a rich range of learning experiences. There is an excellent balance of adult-led activities and opportunities for children to learn through independent choice and play.

There is outstanding teamwork among all who work in the Nursery, a paramount reason as to why the Nursery is so successful. The care, welfare and personal development of children so that they become independent, confident learners is central to how the Nursery is led and managed. The Governors are knowledgeable and very supportive of all that the Nursery does. They have been a positive influence in the development of the newly opened children's centre and are keen to ensure that it goes from strength to strength. As yet, they are not acting fully as a 'critical friend' and they themselves recognise the need to be more rigorous in their monitoring and questioning.

Self-evaluation by the Nursery of its own strengths and areas for development is good. An analysis showed that individual children's attention and listening skills were in need of improvement. Consequently, the Nursery instigated a programme of learning based on music, which develops children's abilities to listen. This has had a positive effect on all areas of learning and children's skills have improved considerably.

The school promotes community cohesion well. The local community is used to promote pupils' awareness of belonging and many opportunities are taken to celebrate pupils' ethnic backgrounds through the study of different religious festivals, visits to places of interest such as Chinatown and visitors coming in and talking to the children. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement. The Nursery recognises that there is still more they can do to develop children's understanding of how people in other countries live, and their understanding of the rich diversity of cultures found in other parts of Britain.

Given the excellent leadership and track record since the previous inspection, there is excellent capacity to continue to improve further.

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

- Develop the governing body more rigorously in their role as a critical friend.
- Carry out an audit of the way community cohesion is promoted in the Nursery and provide pupils with greater opportunities to learn about the diversity of cultures in Britain and the wider world.

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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

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	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

<b>How well do children in the EYFS achieve?</b>	1
The standards[1] reached by learners	1
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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?</b>	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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?</b>	1
<b>How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?</b>	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?</b>	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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	2
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**

09 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Somerset Nursery and Children's Centre, London, SW11 3ND

It was lovely to meet you when I came to visit your Nursery. I enjoyed sharing lunch with you and talking to the children. I am wondering if the eggs have hatched yet.

Your Nursery is an excellent school. There are many things which you do well.

- You are very happy at Nursery and obviously really enjoy learning.
- There are many interesting things for you to try.
- You are very lucky to have such wonderful resources and such a lovely outside area to play in.
- You have outstanding teachers who look after you and arrange many different activities for you to try out.
- You receive excellent care during your time at Nursery and you are very well looked after.

Your headteacher manages the Nursery very well, but she cannot do this by herself. I have, therefore, asked that staff and the governors do a bit more so they can all manage the Nursery and children's centre better. I have also asked them to look at ways of helping you to learn more about people who live in other parts of Britain and in other countries.

Is the playhouse finished yet? I hope you continue to enjoy learning at your wonderful Nursery.

Yours faithfully

Sue Vale

Lead Inspector