

Laleham Lea School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Lisa-Marie Jones
Setting Address	29 Peaks Hill, Purley, Surrey, CR8 3JJ
Telephone number	0208660 3351
E-mail	
Registered person	M E McGaughrin
Type of inspection	Nursery Education

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Laleham Lea School is an independent school. It has been operating for over a hundred years and the nursery opened in 1995. It is located in a residential road in Purley, which is within the London borough of Croydon. It caters for children from the ages of three to 11 years. The school follows the Catholic faith, beliefs and teachings, but also welcomes children from other religions.

The Foundation Stage comprises of a nursery class and a reception class. The children have access to a dedicated outdoor learning area, two playgrounds, a garden, playing fields and a well equipped adventure play area. They also use the whole school facilities which include a library, hall, dining room, information technology suite and music rooms. The school is open Monday to Friday, term time only for 36 weeks a year. The school day starts at 08:30 and finishes at 15:10. The nursery sessions are from 08:45 to either 12:15 or 15:00. There are currently 33 children on roll, 25 of whom receive funding for education. An after school facility is currently open until 16:30 and the plan is to extend this facility in September 2008 to run term time until 18.00.

In total four, full time staff work directly with the children. In addition they have access to specialists teachers for physical education, information technology and music. All staff hold appropriate qualifications in early years education and care. The Head of the Foundation Stage

has Early Years Professional Status and is responsible for the early years programme and has developed close links with the early years development and childcare partnership for support and training.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Funded education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children's attitudes to learning, their behaviour and general level of engagement is excellent, aiding them to make superb progress towards the early learning goals. Solid planning from knowledgeable staff ensures that activities are planned to each child's abilities. Children are either organised in ability groups or staff are deployed to support children's differing needs. Children's next steps of learning are clearly identified and taken into consideration when planning activities. Therefore, the planning takes into account children's individual needs and interests.

Overall the early years department is a very nurturing environment. Children are not pushed or forced to take part in activities, but are lead through free flow play to enjoy and experiment with learning at their own pace. Along with the strong ethos of play and the good organisation of the resources it provides an environment where children can be fully independent in their learning. The children further benefit from having additional subjects, for example, physical education and music, taught by specialist teachers.

All children are bright, lively children, who relish play and learning and show great enthusiasm when taking part in activities. They thoroughly enjoy playing with their peers and are able to initiate imaginary play and conversation and squeal with delight in group games such as hide and seek. They happily choose activities independently, concentrate well on tasks and are absorbed in what they are doing. Behaviour is excellent. Staff are skilled in enabling children to problem solve for themselves, which boosts their confidence and self-esteem. The children develop a sense of community, as they have good opportunities to explore the local environment, meet people such as animal handlers and go on trips to places such as the local library.

The children are very keen communicators and happily chat while they play. Some are very skilled in expressing themselves and eagerly describe actions or activities they are taking part in. Staff are skilled at asking lots of open ended questions and extending children vocabulary by not only using new words but explaining their meanings. The phonic scheme running in the classes is very effective and the children enjoy learning in a very practical and meaningful way; they are able to transfer those skills and attempt writing for pleasure during play activities. Children enjoy books and handle them carefully. They spend time reading and sharing books with their friends and adults; they can retell well known stories by looking at the pictures and by following the text. They have access to a well stocked library as well as a good range of books within each classroom. The headmaster is a well known face during story time and children enjoy this so much they request him to come in to share stories with them. A system is in place for the nursery children to bring in a book from home to share with the class and sharing books at home is encouraged as homework for all the children.

Children are very confident with numerical activities. Children are beginning to understand the concept of simple addition and subtraction; they can say what is more or less and attempt to

add groups of objects and enjoy simple practical games using dice. Children's understanding of space, shape and measure is developing well. They learn how to use numbers in everyday situations and show that they understand size and shape through lots of practical activities, such as, comparing and estimating.

The children are very skilled in manipulating construction toys and make very elaborate construction. There are very good opportunities for the children to explore computers. They have good opportunities to use programmable toys and equipment to aid their learning and to question why and how things work. They also have formal sessions in the information and communication technology suite with a qualified teacher to develop their skills further. Children are beginning to understand past and present, and they discuss people, places and events in their own lives, as well as exploring meaningful historical topics. Children learn about different cultures and beliefs through well planned topic work. This is also enhanced by visitors and trips to the local environment and input from parents. Children take part in daily prayers and also have the opportunity to really think about what they are praying for and why, therefore ensuring children develop a real understanding of faith.

The newly refurbished outside classroom is proving a real asset to the early years department. This is where the staff have really grasped the concept of free flow play. All children choose to spend the majority of their day in the outside area and both the nursery and reception class integrate well. This aids their health and their physical development. They also have the opportunity to take part in structured physical education sessions. Children demonstrate a good sense of space and move confidently around the whole setting. They enjoy taking risks and challenge themselves when climbing over the concrete tunnel, as well as attempting to scoot down the slight incline on wheeled vehicles. They thoroughly enjoy using the adventure playground, where some children show great skill and courage to climb to new heights and attempt challenging tasks. They are keen to help each other and are eager to demonstrate to their peers how to complete tasks safely. Their fine motor skills are developed well as they practise fine motor coordination using a wide range of tools and equipment. They are able to use scissors with precision and control, and have ample opportunities to use a variety of equipment such as pens and pencils, paintbrushes and construction. They are encouraged to understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and how the body works, through a purposeful range of ongoing activities both indoor and outdoor.

Children play musical instruments and experiment with sound independently, as well as having structured music lessons with a qualified music teacher. Children are skilled in using their imagination in role play situations. Each classroom environment has a role play area set up that is changed to suit the topic that is being explored. They enjoy and independently explore craft and messy activities such as painting, sand, water and mud, which they have regular access to.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Partnerships with parents is outstanding. Children benefit greatly from concrete relationships between their parents and staff, helping them receive consistent support both individually and as a group. Parents receive detailed information about the Foundation Stage; the information outlines what and how children will learn. This ensures parents have a good understanding that play has an important role in developing children's skills for the next stage of learning. Staff ensure that they involve parents in their child's learning through regular newsletters, parents evenings, as well as written information. An open door policy is also in place should any parent wish to talk to staff. Parents make valuable contributions to their child's assessment during

regular parents' meetings and through meaningful activities within the classroom, this contributes significantly to continuity in the children's education. Parents report that the strengths of the setting are that it is very small and has a family environment that nurtures their children's needs. They feel that the school supports their children's education well and they have ample opportunities to be involved in their children's education and planning of their next steps of development.

The school follows the catholic faith, beliefs and teachings, but also welcomes children from other religions. The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The leadership and management of the funded education is outstanding. There are highly effective systems in place to monitor and evaluate the curriculum that is on offer, in order to identify strengths and promptly address areas for improvement. There is a strong commitment to develop and improve the provision and effective use is made of outside support from the local authority. The management team are extremely effective in promoting an inclusive environment in which every child matters. Staff have already begun to take on board the new Early Years Foundation Stage and have attended training as well as starting to implement a new planning system.

Overall the setting meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection there were two points of consideration put forward. They were to: extend existing opportunities for children to learn about cultural diversity through the use of more multi-cultural books and resources; and to provide more opportunities for the children to have access to information technology during the weekly programme.

Both areas are now well resourced and children have good planned opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in both areas.

Complaints since the last inspection

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THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk