

# Thomas Wall Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102956
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sutton
<b>Inspection number</b>	335992
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Coussins

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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	115
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ann Haizelden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pauline Cook
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18–19 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Robin Hood Lane Sutton Surrey SM1 2SF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed a range of learning activities and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at data about children's progress and attainment, the school's planning documents, including its self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan and policies and procedures for safeguarding.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well the provision ensures sufficient challenge for more able children
- how well the school is teaching and developing children's early writing skills
- the effectiveness of the use of assessment to inform the next steps in children's learning
- the extent to which the federation is benefiting children in the school.

## Information about the school

The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in three nursery classes where children attend on a part-time basis. One class (Dragonflies) is an assessment base with places for up to 16 children with complex communication difficulties. During the inspection 11 children were attending this class. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds, with a minority from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds. Over one quarter of the children have English as an additional language and many of them are at the early stages of learning English. The school offers extended provision, known as Honeybees, and a breakfast club. There is also a children's centre on the site, managed by the school, which is inspected separately. In 2007 the Nursery was federated with Robin Hood Infant School, which is on the same site. The headteacher of the Nursery leads both schools and they share the same governing body.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

Thomas Wall Nursery provides an outstanding start to children's school life. It is an extremely stimulating, caring and supportive environment where children thrive and develop enthusiasm for learning under the highly effective direction and leadership of the headteacher. There are excellent relationships between home and the Nursery and parents and carers particularly value the personal attention that their children receive, which means they settle in very quickly to school life. One parent wrote, 'The school provides a very happy and supportive environment for the nursery children. My son is very happy at this school therefore I am a very happy parent.' Children from many different backgrounds get on very well together and their behaviour is exemplary. Children love coming to school. They become thoroughly involved in the varied range of learning opportunities provided for them because staff ensure that activities are firmly based on children's interests and needs and, as a result, children make good progress. Children with special educational needs in the mainstream classes are sensitively supported by adults, enabling them to succeed as well as their friends. A highly skilled team in the Dragonflies class provides specialist care and teaching that enables children to make excellent progress. One parent wrote, 'The staff are brilliant, very caring and professional. My child has come on a lot since starting and loves it there.' Effective support for children who are at the early stages of learning English ensures that they too achieve well.

As a result of the federation, the site has been carefully designed so that the Nursery children share some of the same areas as children in the Reception classes in the infant school. The Nursery children benefit enormously from playing and learning with the older children. This helps them develop their social skills extremely well and ensures that there are always challenges to extend learning, particularly for the more able children. The excellent curriculum promotes all areas of learning very well. They have great fun outside, whether sailing on the pirate ship or hunting for treasure, as well as developing their physical skills well by being very active for much of their time. Children's welfare is exceptionally well provided for so they feel safe and secure at all times and they develop very good attitudes to learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. There is a clear focus on developing children's confidence and self-esteem. Their achievements are celebrated, praised and encouraged, with parents and carers drawn into the process of assessing how well their children are doing. Children and their parents and carers are rightly proud of the 'learning journey' books that provide an ongoing record of the milestones in their achievement. Children chat with great pleasure and pride about the photographs and samples of work displayed in these special books.

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Governance is good. The governing body fulfils its statutory requirements and is very supportive especially in ensuring continuity throughout the federation. Its role in drawing up the school's plans and priorities and in challenging and evaluating the school's performance is less well developed.

The Nursery has outstanding capacity for further improvement, as evidenced by the many improvements since the previous inspection when the school was judged to be good. Most aspects of the school's work have improved to an outstanding level but there is no complacency and leaders and managers are working effectively to ensure that the overall quality of teaching moves from good to outstanding. Good improvement has been made in developing and implementing effective assessment procedures, including the use of assessment to inform next steps in children's learning. Careful monitoring and self-evaluation ensure that there is an accurate understanding of strengths and areas for further improvement to enable them to do this.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Strengthen the impact of the supportive governing body as it works to maintain the school's outstanding effectiveness by:
  - ensuring that governors are more closely involved in setting priorities and contribute more rigorously to school self-evaluation.
- Ensure that children always make the best possible progress by:
  - improving the quality of teaching from good to the outstanding level seen in some lessons, particularly in relation to extending children's language and literacy skills.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of children**

**1**

From entering the Nursery with skills, knowledge and understanding typical for their age, children make good progress and leave having reached levels generally above those expected for their age. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the more able children and those who speak English as an additional language also achieve well. This is because the school identifies their individual needs at a very early stage and provides extremely good levels of support.

Children learn to be safe and healthy from the very start of their time in school. They know it is important to drink water and confidently help themselves to a drink, carefully pouring the water from a jug without needing to ask an adult to help them. They know that they have fruit at snack times because, as one said, 'Fruit is good for

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you and better than chocolate and crisps because they make you fat.’ They have a clear understanding of why it is so important to wash their hands before they have their snacks and after going to the toilet. One child said, ‘We have to get rid of all the muck and germs so we don’t get sick.’ They make an excellent contribution to the smooth running of the day by selecting their names to register on arrival, taking the registers to the office and tidying up their classrooms. They are considerate and care for each other, which was demonstrated when children were playing on the climbing equipment outside and telling each other that they must stand in line and not push, so that no one gets hurt. They show increasing levels of physical confidence and control indoors and out and become very competent in the use of information and communication technology. There is a seamless transition between learning indoors and outdoors. In an outstanding session outside, children were developing vocabulary, map reading and number skills following a trail to find hidden treasure. Children demonstrate concentration and determination to succeed. For example, some were completely absorbed in finding ways to wrap awkwardly shaped ‘Christmas presents’ and then in finding the best ways to secure their packages. They work well together and are supportive of each other, as shown when one child offered to ‘hold it and then you can stick it’.

Children thoroughly enjoy life in the Nursery and parents and carers recognise and appreciate this by bringing them to school regularly and using the breakfast club so that for the majority of children attendance overall is above that usually found among children this age. As a result of the federation children are well prepared for their smooth transition into the infant school.

*These are the grades for children’s outcomes*

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Children’s achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Children’s attainment <sup>1</sup>	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	1
<b>The extent to which children feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Children’s behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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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<b>economic well-being</b> Taking into account: Children’s attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent of children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Sessions are very well organised and resourced, with a good variety and balance of activities led by adults and those where children can make their own choices. Inviting environments inside and in the covered and open outdoor areas encourage children to engage fully in activities that fire their imagination and creativity. Teamwork among the adults is very effective and contributes to excellent outcomes for the children. Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Usually, adults help to extend children’s learning well through challenging questioning which help children think and extend their language skills. Sometimes, however, adults miss these opportunities and, on occasion, adults intervene a little too quickly when working with children in small groups on focused activities. This means that children can miss out on opportunities to work things out for themselves. Children are given lots of opportunities to develop early reading and writing skills. They enjoy writing their ideas and thoughts, as shown when writing letters to Father Christmas, and know that their efforts are valued by staff. However, occasionally staff do not always extend these opportunities to promote further learning or provide sufficient opportunities for children to listen to stories. Planning includes continuous evaluation, and review and assessment give a good picture of individual children’s progress. This ensures that activities meet each child’s needs exceptionally well. The support for children with particular needs, and their families, is of a high quality and one reason why these children are very happy and make excellent progress. These family connections are further enhanced through the extended provision of ‘Honeybees’ and the breakfast club.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The commitment and relentless drive of the headteacher to ensure all children have the very best learning experiences has successfully improved the school from good to

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outstanding. This has been achieved through accurate self-evaluation and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. The consistency of approach of all staff in implementing their shared vision for the Nursery is an example of the effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement. Across the team there is a dedication to removing barriers to learning and celebrating the achievements of children at every stage. As a result, the Nursery has a highly inclusive ethos and all staff are diligent in ensuring that all children enjoy equality of opportunity. Staff, parents and carers and governors are proud of their Nursery and the improvements that have been made as a result of federation. Governors are very supportive of the Nursery; they fulfil their statutory responsibilities and many are regular visitors, but their involvement in setting priorities and monitoring the work of the school is underdeveloped.

The school meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding and parents and carers confirm that the school takes very good care of their children and that children feel safe. The school works in very close partnership with parents and carers to involve them fully in children’s learning. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion through its children’s centre, which forges links and learning opportunities for parents and carers. Community cohesion is further enhanced through its work with local charities and local recycling initiatives. The school’s active engagement with parents and carers helps the children to share, understand and celebrate cultural diversity. The global dimension of community cohesion is a developing area. Partnerships with other agencies and organisations are extensive and have an extremely positive impact on the children’s learning and well-being.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

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## **Views of parents and carers**

The parents and carers who spoke to the inspectors and those who returned questionnaires all agreed that they are happy with their children's experience at school and that their children enjoy coming. They comment that their children cannot wait to get to Nursery each day and that when their children are ill they still want to attend. Everyone feels that the children are very well looked after and cared for. Inspectors fully endorse the views of parents and carers.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Thomas Wall 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 inspection team received 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 115 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	92	2	8	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	88	3	12	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	18	72	7	28	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	68	8	32	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	84	4	16	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	17	68	8	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	80	5	20	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)	12	48	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	13	52	11	44	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	64	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	60	10	40	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	80	4	16	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	21	84	4	16	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.



7 December 2009

Dear Children

### **Inspection of Thomas Wall Nursery School, Sutton SM1 2SF**

I'm writing to thank you for the lovely warm welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your Nursery. One inspector was there for just a morning but I was lucky enough to spend two whole days with you and what a lovely time I had. We came to see how well the Nursery is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning. This is what we found.

- Thomas Wall is an excellent Nursery. You learn lots of interesting things and there are lots of exciting things to do inside and outside.
- Your behaviour is fantastic and you are kind to each other and play well together. You know lots of things about being healthy and staying safe.
- The headteacher, all of the teachers and other grown-ups look after you very, very well. Your mums and dads think so too and they are very pleased with how well you are doing.
- Your teachers work very hard to make sure you enjoy yourselves and have fun while you learn lots of exciting things. Because you try so hard we have asked your teachers to help you learn new things even more quickly.
- The governors are the adults who help the school to work so well. They try hard to help the headteacher and all the teachers. We have asked the governors to check even more closely how well the school is doing so that it can keep getting better and better.

Thank you for helping me and making my visit to your school so special.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins  
Lead Inspector

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