

The Royal Spa Nursery School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Unique reference number | 114351 |
| Local authority | Brighton and Hove |
| Inspection number | 378847 |
| Inspection dates | 26–27 January 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Janet Sinclair |

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

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|--|---|
| Type of school | Nursery |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–4 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 80 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Jean Tothill |
| Headteacher | Sybilla True |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 October 2008 |
| School address | Park Hill Brighton East Sussex BN2 0BT |
| Telephone number | 01273 607480 |
| Fax number | 01273 694335 |
| Email address | admin@royalspa.brighton-hove.sch.uk |

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Introduction

Inspection team

Janet Sinclair

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector made many ongoing observations of the children at work and play, including five part lessons, observing four teachers and several nursery nurses and teaching assistants. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at samples of children's work, a wide range of documentation including policies, particularly for safeguarding, the school development plan and records of children's progress. The inspector also held meetings with members of the governing body and senior staff. The inspector considered the 45 responses from questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

Information about the school

The nursery is average in size. Most children are from White British backgrounds. There are a small number of children from minority ethnic groups, most of whom are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs is above the national average. They are mainly speech and language difficulties. The school provides a lunch club.

Most children start in the September after their third birthday and stay for three terms, occasionally four or five terms, until they move to the Reception year in a range of primary schools. Children can attend the nursery either part time, for two and a half days per week (beginning or end of the week), or full time (parents and carers paying for the additional time). In the following year this more flexible provision became a legal requirement. Additional support staff joined the school at this time. In addition, there have been several staff changes as well as staff illness since the previous inspection. Besides the headteacher, there is one full-time teacher and several part-time teachers.

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 | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 2 |
| Leadership and management | 2 |

Key findings

- This is a good school. The sensitive, thoughtful leadership of the headteacher ensures a welcoming, nurturing environment in which the children thrive. Children behave well and benefit from a safe environment where their needs are well met. Excellent relationships and effective teamwork are hallmarks of the school’s success.
- Relationships with parents and carers are outstanding. They feel very welcome in school and the overwhelming majority are satisfied with what the nursery provides for their children.
- All children, including disabled children, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress given their starting points.
- Teaching is good overall. Teacher-led activities are well planned to promote effective learning, as are small group and individual teaching for children with additional needs. Staff interact well with children in their play and work hard to ensure they follow up on children’s particular interests. However, they sometimes get involved too quickly rather than observing the children and then providing quality interventions and challenging questioning. Additionally, the effectiveness of these contributions is constrained because short-term plans give insufficient detail on expectations for children’s learning. Consequently, staff are not always focused enough on how or when they intervene.
- The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and planning by the co-coordinator ensures coverage of all areas of learning. However, teaching staff in general have limited responsibility for specific areas of learning and so their expertise is not always fully utilised.
- The headteacher and full-time teacher have focused on ensuring all staff work together well to provide good quality provision that ensures children make the most of their learning. However, very occasionally a lack of totally clear success criteria in the school development planning hinders the effectiveness of some activities.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve short-term planning for children’s activities to enable all staff to more effectively extend children’s learning and focus their observations.
- Improve the quality of school development planning and monitoring of teaching so that they are more effective in setting clear expectations for measurable improvement.
- Involve all teaching staff more fully in planning for all the areas of learning so that they make a greater contribution to curricular provision.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the nursery with skills and abilities that are broadly as expected for their age. They make good progress so that the majority exceed expectations for entry to the Reception year. The school tracks children’s progress carefully to ensure all children make enough progress over time, particularly those who are full time or are in the nursery for four or five terms. They all achieve well due to effective provision that meets their individual needs. For example, children at an early stage of learning English achieve well due to effective use of signing, clear enunciation and the use of visual timetables for all sessions. The good provision for disabled children and for those with special educational needs, including the effective support from the local authority and the specific interventions used by the school, ensures these children make good progress also.

Children enjoy the many opportunities they have to listen to stories both by an adult in a quiet corner, inside or outdoors, and to each other. They have plenty of chances to develop their speaking and listening skills effectively. Using stories such as, ‘The Three Billy Goats Gruff’ they repeat phrases such as, ‘Who’s that trip trapping over my bridge’, and discuss the possible feelings of the characters. The story was also used to develop mathematical vocabulary such as ‘over’ and ‘middle-sized’ while in their play, many re-enacted and re-told the story. They learn about the world around them, for example when celebrating Chinese New Year. They enjoy their Dragon Dance and using the chopsticks they made to eat their noodles.

The school has worked well with parents and carers to promote healthy eating and as a result most children who stay to lunch have a healthy packed lunch, which they enjoy. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire consider that their children achieve well and this view is supported by inspection evidence.

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Quality of teaching

Excellent relationships, effective teaching and a secure learning environment promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. This ensures that children are confident, happy learners who respond well to established rules and routines and interact well with each other.

Teaching is well planned to ensure full coverage of the areas of learning and a good balance of adult-led activities and those that children undertake by themselves. Staff use the outdoor environment well, ensuring children have opportunities for physical activity as well as imaginative play. The creation of a hairdresser's shop gave children an opportunity to practise their skills and use appropriate equipment such as hairdryers and shampoo. While all staff engage well with the children and are supportive and encouraging, their interactions are not always challenging enough to fully extend learning when intervening in children's play. This is because planning for activities that children undertake by themselves is not informed by clear enough criteria for learning. Additionally, staff sometimes get involved too quickly and miss opportunities to develop children's own ideas through effective questioning and relevant resources.

Staff organise the learning environment well to encourage children's independence. For example; children change into Wellington boots when they go outside, collect their aprons when they want to paint and select their own snacks. Regular assessments of children's learning are undertaken and these are used well to plan group activities that provide for the next steps in children's learning. Additionally, learning journals provide an effective written and photographic record of their progress. Teachers ensure good attention to numeracy skills through counting as part of small group work and numbers and shapes around the nursery. For example, selecting their house number to put on a model of a house, using calculators in their play and when painting their hands – counting their fingers. The excellent teaching of a child with significant speech delay through the use of toys was extremely successful in getting him to say and follow simple instructions.

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire consider that their children are well taught and this view is supported by inspection evidence. Parents and carers of disabled children and of those with special educational needs were full of praise for the school's efforts. For example, there were comments such as 'there has been a huge improvement in my child's social skills' and 'my child with hearing problems has had excellent support'.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school has effective systems for promoting good behaviour that are consistently implemented across the school and learning is almost never disrupted by unsatisfactory behaviour. Where children do have behavioural problems, staff work well together to come up with a behaviour management plan which they consistently implement. Good behaviour over time is reflected in parents', carers' and children's

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very positive responses to the both the inspection and the school's own questionnaires. There have been no exclusions and no racist incidents recorded in the nursery. Children behave in a safe manner when engaging in activities so that bumps and bruises are minimised. When any anti-social behaviour does occur, staff intervene quickly and sensitively to deal with it. There was no evidence of any form of bullying. Children learn how to stay safe and know that they cannot go on the climbing frame when it is wet. When making their pumpkin soup, they had to learn to use knives safely. The children choose when to have their snacks and know the importance of washing their hands before eating. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers consider that their children are safe and this view is supported by inspection evidence.

Leadership and management

The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. It has maintained its effective provision since the previous inspection while a significant number of changes have taken place. The school has been at the forefront of providing flexible nursery times to meet the various needs of families. It has dealt with the many organisational changes that this has required as well as managing staff illness and change effectively. There has been an increased focus on raising children's achievement through rigorous tracking that enables the school to carefully monitor the progress of different groups and put appropriate strategies in place to accelerate progress. Such actions demonstrate a good commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.

There is a strong focus on professional development for the staff. One example is the school's involvement in the QUILT (Quality in learning and teaching) initiative, which requires completion of several modules. The school has recently completed a unit relating to the teaching of children who speak English as an additional language, which is already impacting positively on provision for these children. Although checks on the quality of teaching and school development plans are fully in place, they are not always specific enough when setting the improved outcomes to be achieved. This limits their effectiveness. Safeguarding is good with effective policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety of children. Site safety is particularly strong.

The curriculum reflects the interests of the children and takes account of the diversity of their backgrounds. Celebrations such as Chinese New Year and visitors such as the author Hilda Offen enhance the curriculum well. However, the expertise of all teaching staff is underused when planning provision. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Staff work hard, and successfully, to encourage cooperation, teach right from wrong, provide opportunities for awe and wonder and promote a cohesive learning community.

Excellent links with parents and carers, for example through the informality at the start and end of the day when parents and carers stay and mingle, 'stay and play' sessions and newsletters, ensure that they are fully involved in their children's learning. The school benefits from collaborative work with other schools such as the

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city cluster of schools and links with a local nursery. The governing body provides effective support and a good level of challenge through its committee work and regular visits. It has played a significant role in the development of the extended provision for the nursery.

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 pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| 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 pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

Overall effectiveness of schools

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 46 | 46 | 8 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 47 | 40 | 5 |
| Secondary schools | 14 | 38 | 40 | 8 |
| Special schools | 28 | 48 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 15 | 50 | 29 | 5 |
| All schools | 11 | 46 | 38 | 6 |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Attendance: | the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance. |
| Behaviour: | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |
| Safety: | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



30 January 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of The Royal Spa Nursery, Brighton, BN2 0BT

I am writing to tell you how much I enjoyed my visit to your school. You were so friendly and clearly enjoy all the activities on offer. This is because The Royal Spa is a good nursery where all staff work hard to help you achieve well and take good care of you.

You enjoy school because adults plan interesting things for you to do and learn. You are doing well and make good progress. You behave well and everyone makes sure you are safe and very well cared for.

There are only a few things that we have asked the adults in your school to make better. Check that all adults are clear how they can best help you in the activities they plan for you. Get all the staff involved in deciding what you will be doing in each of your areas of learning. Improve the checks the school carries out to make it even better.

Once again, thank you all for being so friendly. It was lovely meeting you.

Yours sincerely

Janet Sinclair
Lead inspector

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