

Slough Centre Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109760
Local Authority	Slough
Inspection number	356619
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mohammed Khan
Headteacher	Mrs Diane Lister
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2008
School address	Buckingham Avenue East Slough SL1 3EA
Telephone number	01753 521975
Fax number	01753 521975
Email address	office@slough-nursery.sch.uk

Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision

Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected
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Age group	3–4
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who observed 10 learning sessions or part sessions taught by five different teachers and early years practitioners. The inspection team examined the school's policies, assessment of pupils' progress data, pupils' work, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. They held discussions with the headteacher, staff, and members of the governing body. There were informal conversations with parents and carers. The inspectors analysed 94 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, and others by staff.

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

- How successful are the school's strategies to develop children's English language skills?
- To what extent is information and communication technology (ICT) used to support teaching and learning?
- What is the impact of federation on Slough Centre Nursery?

Information about the school

Children at this nursery are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. About half of the children are of Pakistani heritage. Around 20 different home languages are spoken in the school. A high proportion of children are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Children are introduced into the school at the beginning of the term before their third birthday. The school federated with a local nursery in September 2009. The headteacher is leader of both schools and divides her time equally between the two sites.

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

Slough Centre Nursery has built on the strengths identified at the last inspection. It is now an outstanding school. Children make exceptionally good progress in all areas of learning because of high quality teaching and the exciting learning activities provided. All groups of children are highly valued and thrive in the school's very positive and harmonious community. An outstanding partnership has been established with parents and carers. Parents and carers are extremely pleased with the care and education provided. They appreciate the help offered to help them support their children's learning. Their comments included. 'My child is excited every morning', 'Fantastic Nursery', 'My child wants to come at weekends. He cries on Saturday' and 'Everything is great'.

Children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills well below those expected for their age. Language and social skills are low on entry. Teachers, early years practitioners and learning support assistants work very well together in providing high quality learning experiences. Considerable emphasis is placed on developing language skills and children make rapid gains in this area. Assessment information is used well to tailor activities to children's different needs. Information and communication technology (ICT) has improved since the last inspection and children use this well to support their learning. School improvement planning has rightly identified the need to extend this provision and maximise the potential of technology. Children make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of outstanding care, guidance and support, and the first class relationships between adults and children. Children grow in confidence and develop independence. Safeguarding is outstanding and children feel extremely safe. They adopt healthy lifestyles. Community cohesion is a real strength and children's spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Children are extremely considerate and supportive of others. Behaviour in the Nursery is often exemplary. They have a very good understanding of different cultures and faiths. Children make exceptionally good contributions to the school and to the wider community.

High quality leadership and strong teamwork among the staff are at the heart of the school's success. An experienced and established headteacher provides exceptional vision and direction. She is extremely well supported by other key leaders. All staff are committed to doing the very best for children and their families. The federation with another school is working well and has provided good opportunities to share practice and develop emerging leaders. The partnership with all other nursery schools in Slough is equally productive. Self-evaluation is systematic and accurate, and effective action is taken to bring about improvements. Since the last inspection, provision and children's progress has improved from good to outstanding. The school is very well placed to sustain its strong track record of improvements.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the provision for information and communication technology so that greater opportunities are offered to support teaching and learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

Children thoroughly enjoy their learning. They make exceptionally good progress from their starting points and by the end of their time at the nursery, attainment is broadly in line with that expected. Children's achievement is good.

Children make rapid progress in communication and language skills because adults promote speaking and listening through all activities. Children learn new words from singing the range of songs from their 'song book'. They love books and listen to stories attentively and with interest. They identify letters and their sounds. They tell stories of their own and these are carefully recorded by staff and displayed. The strong emphasis on language work enables children who are learning English as a new language to make exceptional progress. For example, in one highly successful activity, a nativity model was used to tell the Christmas story. Adults were good role models for speech and the children gained new vocabulary such as donkey, frankincense and myrrh. They counted the figures and suggested that Jesus might be brought presents. Children with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties receive well-targeted support and make rapid progress. The exciting activities on offer and the high quality teaching enable both boys and girls to perform exceptionally well. Effective planning and imaginative teaching ensure that gifted and talented and the more-able children are challenged and extended.

Children use ICT well to support their learning. They use computer programs to consolidate their language and number skills. Digital cameras are used confidently in recording their learning. Children have great fun painting. After being inspired by the story 'The Snowman' by Raymond Briggs, children created snowman paintings on black sugar paper. Other children had used sweet potatoes to create colourful printed patterns on fabric or paper. The well-resourced outdoor learning area is enjoyed by all. Children ride tricycles and other vehicles with increasing coordination and control. Their balancing and climbing skills are developing extremely well with the clear guidance from adults.

Children feel extremely safe and know who to turn to if they are upset or need help because of the high quality relationships established with very caring staff. They enjoy healthy snacks. Children know that fresh fruit and vegetables are good for you and participate enthusiastically in regular exercise in the outdoor learning area. The youngest, rising threes, have settled very well into daily routines and are already taking considerable responsibility for their learning. High expectations from adults and excellent relationships lead to exemplary conduct. Through celebrating festivals such as Chinese New Year, Christmas, Diwali, Eid, Easter and Vasakhi, children are developing an appreciation and very good understanding of different cultures and faiths. Children's attendance is broadly average. Their outstanding progress in basic skills, and well-developed personal and social skills, prepare them successfully for the next school.

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These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Children's attainment ¹	3
The quality of children's learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children's behaviour	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Children's attendance ¹	3
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching successfully promotes outstanding learning and enjoyment for children. Staff have a very secure understanding of how children of this age learn. Assessment has been strengthened and provides a clear overview of each child's attainment and progress. This information is used very effectively to plan the next steps of children's learning. Children's achievement and learning experiences are well recorded with annotations, photographs and teachers' reports in 'All about me' books. A parent commented, 'The written account of my child's progress is especially useful.' Learning support assistants are effectively deployed and children benefit from the high ratio of adults to children. There is a very good balance between adult-led activities and those chosen by children. Children are given plenty of opportunities to be creative, explore and learn independently. There have been further improvements to outdoor learning facilities since the last inspection and this area is used well, particularly in promoting children's physical development. Children's learning is further enhanced by visits and visitors. For example, regular visits to Burnham Beeches increase children's knowledge of animals and plants, and provide considerable opportunities for language development.

Care, guidance and support underpin the school's very positive ethos. Highly effective induction arrangements enable children to settle quickly and thrive. The well-organised, safe and welcoming environment is much appreciated by children, parents and carers.

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'Teachers are so friendly and welcoming' and 'Relationships between teachers and parents are exceptional' were typical comments from the community. Provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is exceptionally good. In partnership with other agencies, the school is very successful in supporting children and their families needing extra help. Visiting speech therapists make a valuable contribution to children's progress. As one parent wrote, 'The school has helped my child with his speech. The staff are very understanding.' There are effective procedures to monitor and promote good attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers are successfully promoting excellent provision and outstanding outcomes for children with the full support of a highly committed staff team. All are firmly focused on each child doing as well as they can. Developing highly effective partnerships with parents, carers and other nurseries is also part of the school's ambition, vision and aims. The monitoring and development of teaching is given considerable attention and this has resulted in consistency in practice throughout the school.

Governance has improved with a more settled membership to the governing body. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. All statutory requirements are met. Considerable emphasis is placed on safeguarding. Policies and practice to protect and safeguard children are robust, simple and highly effective. All staff are very well trained in this area and safe practices are promoted extremely well through learning activities.

The very strong partnerships forged with parents, carers and other agencies contribute considerably to the organisation's success. The federation with a local nursery has benefited both schools. Teachers from different nurseries review the curriculum together and effectively share experience, expertise and practice. A number of staff have had further opportunities to develop leadership roles while the headteacher is working at the other nursery. The school strives to meet and exceed the needs of parents and carers. Parents and carers have welcomed events such as workshops in letters and sounds, numeracy, mark making and writing to help them support their children's learning.

Equality of opportunity is promoted extremely well. All children and families are highly valued and have full and equal access to the outstanding provision. The setting is highly inclusive and tackles discrimination very effectively. Community cohesion is promoted

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exceptionally well and the school has a very clear understanding of the diverse community it serves. The curriculum and learning activities are highly effective in promoting children's knowledge and understanding of different cultures and faiths. There are established links with children in Ghana and India.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

A much higher than usual proportion of parents and carers returned their questionnaires. Nearly all parents and carers who returned them are happy with their children's experiences at the school. They are particularly pleased with the sense of enjoyment, the quality of teaching, safety in school, how the school helps them to support children's learning at home, the information provided about their children's progress, leadership and management, and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. These positive views are consistent with the inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Slough Centre Nursery 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 94 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 112 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	80	18	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	74	22	23	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	68	72	24	26	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	62	66	30	32	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	71	76	21	22	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	68	72	24	26	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	65	29	31	1	1	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)	54	57	33	35	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	62	66	29	31	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	60	31	33	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	63	67	26	28	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	65	69	24	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	73	78	18	19	1	1	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

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.



9 December 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Slough Centre Nursery School, Slough SL1 3EA.

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and sharing your learning with us. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we have found. Your nursery is brilliant.

These are the school's main strengths.

- You love learning and the exciting activities provided.
- The school is an attractive and welcoming place to learn in.
- Great teaching helps you to make excellent progress.
- You behave really well and get on extremely well with others.
- The activities you do at school are exciting and fun.
- You know how to be healthy and fit.
- You feel very safe because the adults look after you very carefully.
- You show a very good knowledge of different festivals and how people live in different parts of the world.
- Your headteacher leads the school exceptionally well. She is very well supported by other staff.
- You are well prepared for your next school.

We have asked the headteacher and teachers to do one thing to improve areas of the school's work.

- You could use ICT even more to help your learning, and the school has good plans for this to happen.

You can all help by continuing to do your best. We wish you all success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead inspector

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