

Pastures Way Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109423
Local Authority	Luton
Inspection number	356539
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Susan Vale

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Heredia
Headteacher	Jan Allen
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2008
School address	Pastures Way Luton LU4 0PE
Telephone number	01582 600691
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed eight lessons and parts of lessons involving three teachers, the learning mentor, and several support staff. They observed children working in small groups and with one-to-one support, as well as at play. The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the teacher in charge of supporting those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school documents, including assessment and tracking information, policies and procedures, governing body minutes and individual children's 'learning journals' for evidence of progress. In addition, inspectors took into account 17 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and those completed by staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well are assessment and progress and tracking systems used to help raise children's attainment and progress?
- How effective is the provision for children who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language?
- How effective is provision for those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities?

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized Nursery school. Around three quarters of the children are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds and around a third are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Other than English, the main languages spoken are Urdu, Polish and Shona. Around a third of the children have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, a number of whom have complex learning needs mainly related to physical or behavioural difficulties. There is a children's centre attached to the Nursery but it did not form part of this inspection. The Nursery school has achieved the Under 5's Healthy Eating Award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Pastures Way Nursery is a good school. Children are very well known as individuals and they and their families are at the centre of all that the Nursery plans for and does. There are excellent links with children's families, who are supported right from when their children are first visited at home. One parent commented, 'Pastures way is the ideal environment for young children to learn and develop through play. The staff are always supportive and positive; I could not imagine sending my children to another Nursery.' Inspectors agree: the inclusive, warm and welcoming environment is a delightful way for children to start their education.

Children start in the Nursery with a wide range of skills and experiences, but their overall attainment on entry is below that expected for their age. Increasing numbers of children are identified with special educational needs and/disabilities. Those who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language are provided for well. All children achieve well and make good progress in developing a range of skills as well as learning more about the world in which they live. In some areas of learning, such as in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy and physical development, many children make even better progress and exceed the levels expected for their age by the end of their time in the Nursery. There is no significant variation in the achievement of different groups.

Children's behaviour is good and staff deal well with those who find it more difficult to behave well. Gentle encouragement and reassurance and the excellent use of the sensory room soon has these children back on track. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are well aware of what constitutes right and wrong behaviour, seen in their use of timers to wait for their turn to have a go on the tree swing. Real interest and a developing love of learning was evident as children moved around the Nursery, encouraged by the adult support to try out new activities, and 'to have a go'. The birth of the baby snails continues to feed the curiosity of the children and the very well-organised creative curriculum inspires them to be active participants in their learning. Children get on well together, they clearly feel safe, and the Nursery is a harmonious place to be, resulting in equality of opportunity for all. They adopt healthy lifestyles and join in several physical activities throughout the day, utilising the excellent outdoor learning environment very well. Despite this enjoyment of learning, the attendance of a few children is low and the Nursery is aware that more needs to be done to encourage families to see the benefit of regular attendance for their children.

Teaching is consistently good. The most effective aspects include the way staff model good language in order to support the development of speaking and listening skills. The assessment of what children know, understand and can do and the tracking of their progress are also good. The Nursery is aware that it is time to refine and reflect on how the staff gather and use the information they have in order to make it more accessible for

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all and to show progress more clearly. Leadership and management are good. Self-evaluation is accurate and the Nursery has addressed the issues from the previous inspection very well. The governing body is very supportive and holds the school to account well. The Nursery offers good value for money and clearly demonstrates that it has good capacity to sustain the continuous rate of improvement evident since its previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Review and simplify the collection of assessment data so that this information is easily accessible to all and clearly shows the progress which both individual children and different groups of children make.
- Raise the attendance rate through increasing parental awareness of the positive impact that regular attendance has on their children's learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

Although attainment is broadly average, in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy and in physical development, children make rapid progress and their attainment exceeds expectations for their age due to the strong emphasis put on the development of these areas by adults. Children are keen and enthusiastic learners and they respond extremely well to the outstanding creative curriculum on offer. Overall, they achieve well. They have made good progress in developing their spoken language through, for example, involvement in the initiative 'Every Child a Talker'. This was seen in storytelling sessions where staff model language well and children are becoming increasingly confident in re-telling their own stories. This is particularly pertinent for those children new to learning English. They are confident and happy learners, whether working in small support groups, mark making and learning how to write numbers, or creating their own role play activities. For example, they built 'bowling alleys' out of big blocks and added up the numbers of skittles they knocked down.

Children are exceptionally clear in their understanding about what makes a healthy lifestyle, whether making fruit kebabs or healthy pizzas. They independently dip in and out of the fruit on offer and really enjoy the healthy lunches. This is a particularly pleasant time as they sit and chat in their 'family groups'. Those learning English as an additional language made particularly good progress when they were playing in the sand outside, because of effective adult intervention and the good 'modelling' of language by adults. As a result, they really enhanced their vocabulary and their speaking skills. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including complex learning needs related to physical or behavioural difficulties, receive specific support and are guided very well by staff. They make good progress because staff ensure that activities are adapted to their needs and that just the right amount of help is given. This approach allows the children to find things out for themselves.

Although there are children who present some challenging attitudes, staff deal with these challenges well. Children from a small number of families do not attend regularly and the Nursery recognises the need to encourage better attendance. The spiritual, moral social and cultural development of the children is good and the learning environment positively reflects the lives and cultures of the children attending the Nursery.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for children's outcomes

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

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?

Good teaching, with some outstanding aspects, and an outstandingly stimulating curriculum ensure that children make good progress in their learning. Adults listen to the children and know their individual interests and recognise the next steps in their learning well. Experienced support staff are effective in caring for and moving children on in their learning. Most adults are good role models for children's language development, which helps to extend their vocabulary and understanding well. For example, in the very popular newly-built outdoor house, adults clearly focus on developing children's spoken language. This is of particular relevance for those children who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language.

The sessions when children move freely between the four indoor classrooms and the excellent outside facilities enhance the opportunities which the children have and supports their learning. Regular meetings where staff plan the curriculum around individual children's needs and interests ensure that activities are relevant, supportive, but above all fires the children's imagination. The creative partnerships which have been running for the last two years have had a significant impact on the excellent curriculum. Staff are highly diligent in the way that they make observations and collect information for the children's

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individual 'learning journeys'. These are a lovely record of the progress and activities which the children make. On top of this, the Nursery also follow the local authority's 'progress tracker' and uses national developmental checks. While there is a unified approach to assessment and the collection of data, the way in which it is done is overcomplicated, does not give a clear enough picture of the progress that children make and it is not easily accessible for all staff. Parents and carers fully contribute to their children's learning and are encouraged to express their views about the progress their children make. Children themselves also have the opportunity to express their own views about their progress.

The care and support children receive are good, although not enough has been done to encourage regular attendance. Despite this, a warm, welcoming, inclusive environment greets all who come. Support for children whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable is an established part of the nursery provision, and the children are cared for very well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The Nursery is well led and managed by the leadership team and there is a clear comprehensive view of how they see it developing as it continues to expand and the children's centre evolves. The Nursery is run very efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Governance is good and the Nursery is fortunate to have such a stable and well-established governing body. Statutory requirements in relation to safeguarding were fully implemented at the time of the inspection. Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Excellent communication between home and school begins when children are first visited at home before they start at Nursery and parents and carers are encouraged to be part of their children's education as much as possible. Days such as the Saturdays set aside for 'Dads and co' encourage children and fathers to try out activities on offer at the Nursery and enhance the links between parents and carers and the school.

Community cohesion in relation to the Nursery community is particularly good, and children are fortunate to come from a wide diversity of cultures. These are celebrated through activities such as 'Black History Month' and celebrations of other cultures and beliefs. An area for further development is children's knowledge and understanding of other parts of the United Kingdom. The Nursery has a strong and effective commitment to ensuring that all children have an equal opportunity to thrive at school. It uses its good knowledge of each child's individual needs and interests well to secure this, particularly for

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those children with special educational needs and/disabilities and for those who are new to learning English. There are good links with a variety of other agencies who help to support children and their families. As one parent commented, 'All the staff are friendly, helpful, knowledgeable and most important - willing - to assist, help and integrate all who attend the setting.'

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Very few parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Of those who did, the vast majority were very positive in their views regarding the Nursery, and all indicated that their children were happy and safe at Nursery. One parent felt that they did not receive enough information about their child's individual progress. The inspection team looked into this and felt that the open door policy of the Nursery and the good individual 'learning journeys' on each child are very informative about individual children's progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Pastures Way 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 17 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 144 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	94	1	6	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	88	2	12	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	15	88	2	12	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	82	3	18	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	82	3	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	76	3	18	1	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	88	2	12	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)	14	82	3	18	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	82	2	12	1	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	71	5	29	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	71	4	24	1	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	82	3	18	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	94	1	6	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



29 June 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Pastures Way Nursery School, Luton, LU4 0PE

It was lovely to meet you and watch you play when we came to visit your Nursery. We really liked some of the activities that you do. We enjoyed watching you make those giant bubbles, playing outside with the new playhouse, and I really enjoyed my fruit kebab that you made!

You go to a good Nursery that is led and managed well.

Adults look after you well and make sure that there are lots of interesting things for you to do. This helps you to make good progress in your learning, and to achieve well.

You make particularly good progress in developing your speech and listening skills and in your understanding about numbers and physical development. For example, some of you run and jump and climb very well.

You enjoy learning and most of you behave well.

Your parents and carers are very pleased with your Nursery and the links between the Nursery and your parents and carers are outstanding.

The many activities that are provided for you are outstanding. They include lots of exciting things for you to do, such as working with the artists, and following the creative curriculum you have been doing.

Your teachers and other adults really support you in helping you to develop your skills, knowledge and understanding, particularly of the world around you.

I hope that you continue to enjoy the fun things that there are to do. Even in good schools there are things that can be improved, so I have asked the adults to look again at the way they check your progress. We have also asked them to work with your parents and carers to improve attendance. You and your families can help by making sure that you come to Nursery every day.

Yours sincerely

Sue Vale

Lead inspector

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