

Horsham Nursery School Children and Family Centre

Inspection report

Unique reference number	125809
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	381134
Inspection dates	24–25 April 2012
Lead inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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 sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	0–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Barker
Headteacher	Debbie Carter
Date of previous school inspection	18 March 2009
School address	Harwood Road Horsham West Sussex RH13 5UT
Telephone number	01403 224444
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Email address	office@horshamnursery.w-sussex.co.uk

Registered childcare provision	Horsham Nursery School Children and Family Centre
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	37
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	18 March 2009

Age group	0–4
Inspection date(s)	24–25 April 2012
Inspection number	381134



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Introduction

Inspection team

Eileen Chadwick

Additional inspector

Clifford Walker

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 18 learning sessions which were provided by four teachers as well as early years staff assisting children in their learning. A total of eight hours was spent observing teaching over two days. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior school staff and curriculum leaders. Inspectors also spoke with children during the inspection. They took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, looked at school self-evaluation and planning documents, governing body minutes and school assessments which showed children's attainment and progress, and other documentation provided by the school. Inspectors read the 54 parents and carers questionnaires received as well as those completed by staff.

Information about the school

Horsham Nursery is larger than most other schools offering similar provision. The percentage of disabled pupils and those identified with special educational needs is above average. The majority of these children are at Early Years Action Plus. The main areas of need are speech, language and communication. The school is integrated with a children's centre and offers a range of extended services through agencies such as health professionals, speech and language specialists and family support workers. The school provides childcare for babies and children aged six months to three years ('The Under Threes'). The wrap-around care for children of all ages includes breakfast, after-school and holiday clubs. The accommodation for children between six months and three years includes sleep and sensory rooms and its own outdoor area. The accommodation for three to four-year-olds comprises three teaching areas in one large room and there is an extensive outdoor area. The two to three-year-olds in the childcare provision have recently joined learning sessions for the three to four-year-olds in the nursery. There have been staff changes for the three to four age range where half of the staff joined the nursery in September 2011.

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. Parents and carers are extremely positive about how the school supports their children's learning and development. It is a very inclusive and harmonious community. It is not an outstanding school because not enough teaching ensures all children make excellent progress in their learning.
- Children's achievement is good and by the time they leave the nursery their attainment exceeds age-related expectations. Children make good progress in their learning and for some it is outstanding, especially for the babies and toddlers. However, in the rest of the school, lower attaining children's progress occasionally slows when staff do not promptly intervene to move their learning forward during purposeful play.
- Teaching is at least good and a small minority is better. Children choose from a vast range of high quality resources in order to follow their interests when leading their own learning. However, on a few occasions during adult-led group learning, activities are not consistently matched to children's abilities.
- Children's behaviour is good both in the classroom and in the outdoor area. They play happily and harmoniously together and quickly settle into school routines. Excellent relationships and high levels of care ensure the children are kept and feel extremely safe and secure.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is a very strong leader and she has established a drive for excellence in staff. The senior team's informed checks on teaching and robust professional development arrangements are securing rapid improvements in teaching. Assessment for each child is very thorough. However, tracking systems are not sufficiently refined to enable leaders and staff to readily evaluate the progress of different groups of children. Excellent partnerships, including those with parents and carers, support children's well-being and learning extremely well.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of children's good and better progress as soon as possible by ensuring that:
 - adults consistently intervene to provide good support for lower attaining children in their language and social development
 - adults' questioning consistently challenges children's thinking
 - teachers always make good use of assessment to plan activities which build on what children already know.
- Refine assessment systems to enable school leaders, staff and governors to evaluate the impact of provision on the progress of different groups more securely in order to accelerate children's achievement still further.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

When children enter the nursery at three years of age their attainment is in line with the levels expected for their age. They make good progress so that by the time they leave their overall attainment exceeds age-related expectations in all areas of learning. The children develop their language, thinking, and early literacy and mathematical skills well. They make good progress in early reading and show a great interest in stories and enjoy sharing books. The majority are able to use their knowledge of sounds and letters to identify sounds at the beginning of words and some can already write their names, often forming letters reasonably accurately. Children's mathematical development is good and this was seen during adult-led group work when older children accurately counted at least five objects and some were beginning to add one more to a small number of objects.

Children's communication, language and literacy skills are successfully developed through exciting activities during free choice and adult-led learning time. For example, singing, dancing and experimenting with musical instruments enable children to develop their language, sound awareness and a sense of rhythm very well. Children successfully learn to interpret meaning in stories through staff's use of real-life experiences to bring stories alive. For example, the children are growing beans in conjunction with listening to Jack and the Beanstalk. They are developing good observation skills and are finding out about the conditions needed to enable beans to grow.

Parents and carers who returned the questionnaires were very pleased with how well their children are achieving. The nursery has been particularly effective in closing the gap between the achievement of boys and girls. This has been done by providing activities which appeal to both boys and girls, not only for developing their language and numeracy but also for their creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The progress of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is good overall. However, there is still a very small

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minority of children across the school who are not working at the levels expected. Very occasionally the progress of children with weaker language and social skills slows when staff, during child-initiated learning, do not intervene quickly enough to advance their language, communication and social skills.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good with some very strong features. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree. The curriculum has a very positive impact on children's progress. Children are provided with a wealth of first-hand, memorable experiences both indoors and outside which promote good quality learning. A good balance is struck between children learning and choosing for themselves and the direct teaching of basic skills by adults. Children flow freely between the indoor and outdoor environments with staff skilfully supporting them to make choices and to take responsibility for their own learning. Staff give a strong emphasis to enabling children to learn through practical activity and talk. Good questioning usually helps children to develop their language and thinking. However, on a few occasions, adults' questioning does not fully challenge children's thinking.

Staff stimulate children's curiosity and language particularly well through scientifically based activities. One such activity involved children using magnifying glasses to observe the movement of a giant snail. Skilful teaching stimulated children's curiosity, introduced new vocabulary and promoted their respect for nature. This activity was very popular and, during free choice, a child demonstrated his curiosity by comparing a small sprouting flower bulb with the large snail, asking the inspector if the bulb was a baby snail. Role play resources are of high quality and provide strong opportunities for children to interact with others and to develop their imagination. Adults often intervene successfully to stimulate children's learning during role play. On one such occasion, role play became vibrant and exciting when a member of staff quickly supplied additional resources, for example plastic flowers, to enable children to extend their creative thinking. Teachers ensure all areas of learning are catered for and that activities are available to meet the developmental needs of children at a range of levels.

Assessment of children's learning is very thorough and staff usually use this information well to plan activities that are interesting and challenging. This includes tailored support for children who may be disabled or have special educational needs. However, during adult-led group learning, staff do not always make the best use of assessments for meeting children's needs. This means that activities are a little easy for some children or too hard for others, including the two to three-year-olds who have begun to learn alongside the older children in the nursery.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Children's behaviour is good. Children of different ages and backgrounds learn and play together very happily. There is a delightful atmosphere during indoor and outdoor learning and at breakfast, lunch and tea times. Children love coming to

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nursery because there are plenty of interesting and worthwhile things to do. They take turns and listen to each other sensibly. Their understanding of rules, sanctions and routines promotes a happy and smooth day-to-day running of the nursery. From the earliest days they learn to take some responsibility for managing their own learning and often sustain concentration well. However, occasionally during adult-led group learning, children's concentration wanes and they become a little fidgety when activities are not so well matched to their needs.

Children say they feel very safe and understand the need to move around the nursery sensibly. However, on one occasion a few boys became over excited and were spotted running from one activity to another. They quickly conformed to expectations when reminded of safe practices. Children understand how to handle equipment safely when, for example, under the supervision of staff, they use simple woodworking tools and put on safety spectacles without being reminded. Children's understanding of right from wrong is developed well through a consistent approach to behaviour management. There are very few upsets and, when these occur, children demonstrate they can usually resolve conflicts without the need for intervention by staff. Childcare provision for the extended day ensures children experience a very happy and safe start and end to the school day. Nutritious and tasty meals enable the children to eat healthily.

Parents and carers are unanimous that children are kept and feel safe and behave well. This confirms the children's view and the school's documentation that good behaviour is typical for this school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's accurate picture of the effectiveness of the nursery has led to rapid improvements in the quality of teaching since the start of this academic year when there were significant changes to staffing. This has overcome any possible adverse impact of the staff changes on children's achievement. Senior leaders work closely together to relentlessly improve provision. They have quickly established a shared vision and quest for improvement among all staff. The key successes have been in moving the minority of satisfactory lessons and provision to good and sustaining the high quality teaching of more established staff. Senior leaders are very robust in monitoring teaching, and strong commitment to professional development and the sharing of good practice are key reasons why teaching is improving so well. Several curriculum leaders are new and are being trained and empowered to play a full part in raising achievement. Senior leaders and staff are very robust in their analysis of children's attainment and progress but tracking systems do not enable nursery leaders, staff and governors to readily evaluate the progress of different groups over time.

The governing body is supportive and has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery. It is rigorous in ensuring that children are safe and secure and all statutory requirements regarding safeguarding and child protection are fully met. The nursery ensures there is no discrimination and there are good

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learning opportunities for every child and the school is working hard to close the gap for the few lower attaining children who do not reach age-related expectations.

The curriculum ensures all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage are covered, and activities stimulate and excite children in their learning. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Children develop their curiosity and sense of wonder in the world around them particularly well.

Since the last inspection, the school has maintained children's above average attainment and has improved partnerships with other providers. Partnerships are now excellent. The work the nursery carries out with parents, carers and families and partner agencies, for example health professionals, has an extremely positive effect on the progress and well-being of the children. This clearly demonstrates that the school has the capacity to improve.

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The Early Years Foundation Stage delivered in the registered childcare provision

The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. The registered childcare for children aged between six months and three years fully complies with registration requirements. The setting is integrated within the nursery school and has very good facilities and resources. Professional training for staff is highly effective. The environment is a very safe and stimulating place for the children to learn. Extremely successful induction procedures and excellent relationships and partnerships with parents and carers help children to settle quickly. Parents and carers are exceptionally pleased with the provision provided.

Children are very happy, behave well and make good progress in their learning and development as a result of good planning, teaching and learning. From the start, there is a strong focus on developing children's curiosity, observation and speaking skills through practical enquiry. An excellent range of activities, including toys, equipment and play resources, awaken children's interest and curiosity across all areas. Babies and toddlers make outstanding progress in their development because of excellent teaching and high levels of care from their key workers. They particularly enjoy exploring the 'sensory room', joining in with songs such as 'Wheels on the Bus' and practical activities which enable them to use their senses to explore different materials. The two to three-year-olds progress well through good teaching. They have started to join the provision for three to four-year-olds which enables them to experience a wider range of activities and resources. They progress well when selecting activities for themselves. However, during adult-led group learning, their progress occasionally slows when activities are a little hard or too long for them.

Children make extremely good progress in developing healthy lifestyles by discussing their healthy fruit snacks with staff and, as a matter of routine, washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet. This is complemented by their great enjoyment in learning outdoors and exploring the setting's garden.

All statutory requirements are met. Children in the breakfast, lunch and tea clubs are very well cared for. They have worthwhile activities and enjoy healthy lunches. All key issues from the previous inspection and those from the actions raised during a monitoring visit have been met. Leadership and management are good. The assessment of individual attainment and progress is very thorough. However, assessment systems do not enable leaders, staff and governors to readily evaluate progress of different groups over time.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage of the registered childcare provision, inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage for the registered provision	2

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



26 April 2012

Dear Children

**Inspection of Horsham Nursery School Children and Family Centre,
Horsham RH13 5UT**

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave inspectors when we visited your nursery. We loved seeing you so happy and enjoying all the wonderful things to do and learn indoors and in the outdoor area. We really enjoyed talking with you and finding out about the interesting things you do.

First, you need to know your nursery is a good one. Here are some of the many things your school does well.

- You make good progress and you do well in all your learning. You really enjoy looking at books and are starting to know some sounds which make up words.
- Those of you in 'The Under Threes' get off to a good start and enjoy all of the activities. Babies and toddlers settle and do extremely well.
- You help to make your school a very friendly place because you behave well and are sensible both inside and outside.
- All the adults look after you exceptionally well and keep you safe.
- Your headteacher leads you all extremely well and all the staff and governors think very carefully about what is best for you.

This is what we are asking your school to do to improve.

- Make sure all lessons are as good as the best so you make at least good progress all of the time.
- Make better checks on your progress.

I hope you will continue to enjoy the nursery. You can help by continuing to behave well and taking great care with toys and equipment.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Chadwick
Lead inspector

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