

INSPECTION REPORT

WARRINGTON ROAD NURSERY SCHOOL

Castle Street, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 0AR

LEA area: Halton

Unique reference number: 110939

Headteacher: Ms Fiona Kirby

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jean Penchion
4424

Dates of inspection: 10 -11 October 2000

Inspection number: 225163

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Castle Street Widnes Cheshire
Postcode:	WA8 OAR
Telephone number:	0151 4244686
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Jones
Date of previous inspection:	2 July 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Warrington Road Nursery School is close to the centre of Widnes, Cheshire. Children come from a mixture of owner-occupied and council-owned properties and most live close to the school. There are currently 82 pupils aged 3 or 4 on roll, all on a part-time basis. It is a popular school. There are 3 children on the register of special educational needs and only one child with English as an additional language. Almost half of the children have attended the pre-school playgroup that is now being held in the nursery building on four mornings a week.

The children start school in the term after their third birthday. The vast majority stay for just over one year before moving to reception classes in several schools in the area. Overall, the attainment of children on entry to the nursery is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Warrington Road Nursery is a very good school. It offers a well planned and taught curriculum which stimulates and enthuses children to learn effectively. The school has successfully implemented the "High Scope" approach, which aims to develop children as independent and confident learners. Thus from very early stages children are able to make choices confidently, and are learning to express themselves and respond to the high expectations of the staff. The quality of the headteacher's leadership is very good and this is appreciated by staff, parents and governors. The quality of teaching is mostly very good. The staff work extremely well as a co-ordinated team and continually strive for improvement. They are reflective and evaluate their work on a regular basis. The head teacher and governors have been successful in increasing the involvement of parents in the life and work of the nursery since the last inspection. The budget is managed very well and the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Leadership and management are very good.
- The curriculum is very well planned, is broad and balanced, and is relevant to the needs of the children. It is helping children to become independent, confident learners.
- The quality of teaching is good and mostly very good.
- The children have enthusiastic attitudes to learning, and their behaviour is very good. Relationships between children and staff are very good because of the school's strong, positive ethos.
- Links with parents are very good.
- Assessment and recording procedures are very good and parents are effectively involved.

What could be improved

- End of year reporting to parents.
- The setting of specific targets in language, literacy and numeracy.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The key issues identified in the last inspection report (1997) have been developed so well that both points are now strengths of the school.

One key issue required the school to improve the School Development Plan by setting realistic timescales and priorities and establishing closer links with finance. Realistic timescales and priorities are now set and there are much closer links with finance. The LEA provides a finance officer who visits the school each year to set the budget with the headteacher and clerical assistant. The governors are appropriately involved. The key issue relating to improving provision for outdoor play has been addressed extremely well. The detail of planning has been improved, with clearly identified learning outcomes. More varied opportunities for skill development have been established. The outdoor play space has been transformed very imaginatively into a stimulating, challenging and exciting environment for the children to work and play in each day. Further improvements since the last inspection include an enhanced programme of staff development including monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, the implementation of the "High Scope" approach and the extension of the parent and toddler group to four mornings a week.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about the achievements of pupils in relation to the National Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the school.

Performance in:		Key	
language and literacy	B	well above	A
mathematics	B	average	
personal and social development	B	above average	B
			C
		below average	D
		well below	E
other areas of the curriculum	B	average	

At this very early stage in the year inspection evidence indicates that the majority of the children will achieve the Early Learning Goals in all the areas of learning by the time they leave the school, and many will exceed these expectations. The development of language and literacy is good. Listening skills are developing well and older children are able to express themselves clearly and talk about what they are doing. Snack time is very well used as a social occasion when teachers encourage all the children to join in discussion. Books are handled carefully and literacy skills are developed well through the use of story tapes and head sets. All the children enthusiastically join in singing rhymes and songs. In mathematics children correctly name and sort shapes by size and colour and some are able to repeat a pattern. Older children can count and order numbers up to ten. Good progress is made in knowledge and understanding of the world as they learn to manipulate the computer mouse successfully and click on objects, and confidently work the overhead projector to project images onto a screen. They show good skill development in painting, printing and collage and take care to keep work bright and colourful. They move energetically in movement and music, making sensible use of the limited space in the soft play area. In the outdoor play area children develop good physical skills as they balance on the gang plank up to the pirate boat and use the wide range of climbing equipment in the grounds.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: children enjoy the activities in the nursery, they are enthusiastic and keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: most children have already learnt to wait patiently and take turns with equipment and share apparatus.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: children are given many opportunities to become independent, make choices, select equipment and choose materials. Relationships between children and between adults and children are very strong.
Attendance	Good.

The attitudes and behaviour of the children are very good. They listen attentively, respond enthusiastically to questions and share resources and equipment sensibly. When painting, building with bricks or writing their names, they concentrate and persevere very well. They show each other care and consideration and are particularly understanding of children with special educational needs. They confidently and eagerly show their prints and paintings to the group and to their family and friends. They mix well both in and outside the classroom. Attendance and punctuality are good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Lessons seen overall	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is mostly very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and all was at least good. Teaching was almost always very good in language and literacy and in mathematics. Staff have worked successfully as a team to incorporate the Early Learning Goals in their planning for the Autumn term. They are clear about what the children are to learn, and teach in an imaginative and enthusiastic way. Children can make choices confidently, work independently and talk about the activities they have been involved in. There is a good balance of teacher directed work and child-initiated activities and staff provide very positive feedback and encouragement to the children which helps them to make good progress. The four classrooms are very well organised, each with a different curriculum focus and the staff provide a wide range of stimulating and purposeful activities to capture the children's interests. The teaching of children with special educational needs is good, as is the teaching of the one child who has English as an additional language. Significant information is recorded about children and assessments are kept in a comprehensive record for each child which is made accessible to parents on a daily basis.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good: the curriculum is broad, relevant and stimulating. The achievement of the Early Learning Goals is carefully planned within the framework of the “High Scope” approach. All the areas of learning for the foundation stage are taught effectively. Activities are varied, interesting and capture children’s interests, which motivates them to learn.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good: effective procedures for assessing, recording and reporting children’s achievements ensure that most children make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good: the provision for the one child who has English as an additional language is effective.
Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good: all aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contribute very well to children’s personal development. Many activities are provided for the children to respond with awe and wonder at the natural world. The nursery successfully helps all children to be independent, confident and respect the needs of others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good: the children feel secure and confident and know that they are valued. Child protection matters are well known and applied by staff.

The curriculum is very well documented. This helps the school to ensure that all children receive a balance of activities during each week and during their time in the nursery. Detailed language and numeracy teaching programmes are effectively implemented. Children are very quickly becoming independent and confident learners who work well with other children. Parents are welcomed into the nursery each day and are able to have informal contact with staff on a regular basis. They are provided with a weekly plan of the teaching programme so that they can help to support their children’s learning at home. There are no weaknesses in the provision of the curriculum and statutory requirements are met in full.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good: the headteacher provides very strong leadership to the school and ensures that a clear vision and direction is set for staff, children and parents. The teachers, nursery nurses and ancillary staff form a strong and effective team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good: the governors are knowledgeable and interested. The Chair visits the school regularly and plays an informed, supportive role. Governors visit classrooms and are actively involved in organising and running social activities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good: the headteacher and staff have individual targets set to ensure continuous improvement. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and gives feedback to staff. All staff are involved in observing colleagues and strengths and weaknesses are discussed regularly and improvements made to teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Very good: the nursery does not have a delegated budget but it makes excellent use of all staff, time, materials, buildings and grounds. The classrooms are used most effectively, as are the outdoor and the soft play areas. A carefully planned timetable enables the pre-school group to use both classroom and outdoor facilities without impinging on the nursery programme.

The headteacher ensures that there is a broad and stimulating curriculum for all children and demonstrates her own effective teaching skills through working alongside other staff on a daily basis. The school cares for its pupils very well, evaluates its performance and strives to continually improve the environment, curriculum and overall provision. Priorities for spending are planned very carefully with the involvement of the governors. The principles of best value are applied and the budget is spent prudently.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school is well led and managed.• LParents feel comfortable about approaching the school with any questions.• Children like school.• The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.• The nursery is helping the children to be sensible and mature.• Parents are kept well informed about children's progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were no commonly expressed concerns about any aspect of the school.

Twelve parents attended the parents' meeting and 30% of parents returned the inspectors' questionnaires. The inspection team agrees with the very positive views of the parents. Parents have confidence in the school and are rightly proud of it.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Leadership and management are very good.

1 The headteacher has a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and, in consultation with staff and governors has produced a well structured and costed school development plan which identifies appropriate and achievable targets for improving teaching, standards and learning. The vision provided by the headteacher encompasses staff, children, parents and governors. She intends to extend the work of the nursery with the parents to provide relevant parental courses about child health and child rearing.

2 The headteacher works alongside the other teacher and two nursery nurses on a daily basis, taking equal responsibility but also supporting, guiding and observing teaching and learning. Recently she has made more formal observations of teaching and leads well-focussed discussions about classroom practice at weekly staff meetings. All staff are involved in observing teaching in order to become more aware and raise standards of teaching further. The monitoring and evaluation process also includes helpful input from an LEA link adviser.

3 The governors are very interested and involved in the development and progress of the nursery. They are overwhelmingly supportive of the headteacher. The chair of governors gives strong and regular support to the school, and parent governors are actively involved in school and help to organise and run successful social occasions, such as a summer barbeque.

4 The school makes excellent use of its budget. Space is at a premium in the school but careful planning of the taught curriculum enables the school to run and manage an effective teaching programme, whilst also allowing a pre-school playgroup to use the building on four mornings a week. Funds have been used prudently to develop two main play areas and the classrooms are very well provided with equipment and materials.

The curriculum is well planned, is broad and balanced and is relevant to the needs of children. It is helping children to become independent and confident learners.

5 All children have equal access to each of the areas of learning in the new foundation curriculum for children under five. The curriculum is broad and balanced and the children benefit from a wide range of interesting practical, relevant activities. Considerable responsibility is placed upon the children to select their own learning experiences and be able to recall and articulate their experiences later in the session. Most children have only been in school for 4 or 5 weeks, but the majority display great confidence in making choices, working purposefully, both independently and co-operatively, and then talking to other children about what they have done. The arrangement and organisation of the classrooms into subject learning areas which children move round with their teachers on a rota basis, ensures that all children have the equal benefit of learning from well chosen equipment, resources and activities. The work for children with special educational needs is carefully planned to ensure that they take part in all areas of the curriculum and support staff give effective support to children.

6 The provision for the children's personal and social development is very good. The quality of children's relationships and behaviour is very good. Children are able to take turns, show initiative and perseverance when working on their own ideas, and listen very well to their teachers during directed activities and at story time.

The quality of teaching is good and mostly very good

7 The staff work well as a team, plan the curriculum effectively and present resources and tasks in an exciting way. There is a good balance between teacher-led tasks and pupil-initiated activities, and play activities are well maintained. Staff already have good knowledge of the requirements of the Early Learning Goals and they have a good understanding of the needs of young children and what interests them. They require children to make choices, take decisions, be independent in working on their chosen tasks and be able to talk confidently to a group about what they have done. The four classrooms are focused on different areas of the curriculum and over a period of four days staff and children rotate through the rooms.

8 All of the teaching observed was planned thoroughly with clear learning objectives. Appropriate challenges are set for all abilities and teachers follow a child's interests when appropriate. The majority of the teaching is delivered in an interesting and imaginative manner which engenders interest, enthusiasm and a sense of anticipation in the children.

9 All the adults establish good relationships with the children. Staff take every opportunity to talk to the children individually and in groups, encouraging them to express themselves and understand the language in discussions. They foster children's personal and social development effectively and children's self-esteem is boosted consistently through giving encouragement and positive feedback about their work.

The children have enthusiastic attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good. Relationships between children and with staff are very good because of the school's strong, positive ethos.

10 Children enjoy all the activities in the nursery and arrive happily at the beginning of each session with their parent or carer to find their name and their own activity and place both on the display board. They have a sense of excitement and anticipation about what they are going to do and work enthusiastically and with concentration on their chosen task. Children work well individually and some are already able to work well collaboratively.

11 Behaviour is very good because staff constantly reinforce high expectations for the children to listen, take turns, share resources and be sensitive to others. Children treat all the resources with care and respect and work well with all the staff.

12 Relationships between children and between children and adults are very good and children mix well both in and out of the classroom.

Links with parents are very good

13 Evidence from the questionnaires, the parents' meeting and from discussions with parents, indicates that they are proud of the reputation which the nursery has locally. They value the teaching their children receive and have the greatest respect for the headteacher's leadership and management. Parents freely talk about improvements to the curriculum during the past two years. They are aware of how well their children develop and mature in a very short time from entry to the nursery. They appreciate the way in which the school cares for their children.

14 Parents have open access to staff on a daily basis as well as attending an initial meeting about the workings of the nursery and having a home visit to discuss their child's progress and development. Twice-yearly parent-teacher interviews help to keep parents further informed. The school provides parents with a plan of what is to be taught each week so that they can support their children at home and take books home from the well stocked library. Parents have access to their own child's record file and they are encouraged to look at them regularly. These detailed records are passed on to the receiving reception classes. Parents do not receive a final written report when their child moves on to the primary stage.

15 Almost half of the children in the nursery have attended the pre-school playgroup which is held on four mornings a week. Here the parents are able to talk about the needs of children, get to know the staff and the way the nursery operates.

Assessment and recording procedures are very good and parents are effectively involved.

16 The process of assessment begins when a member of staff makes a home visit before a child enters the nursery, and parents' views of their child's stage of development are sought and noted. These initial assessments are incorporated into individual files and the nursery staff then build on the home's input. Regular observations and assessments by nursery staff are used to build a profile of each child during their time in the nursery. Parents are encouraged to look at their child's files regularly and have easy access to them. Staff discuss progress on an informal daily basis as well as on a more formal basis twice a year. A written, end of year summary report is not given to parents. The school has not yet used the assessments sufficiently to formulate simple targets for the next steps in the child's development.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

End of the year reporting to parents

17 Assessment and recording procedures are well structured and organised and provide a coherent record of children's all round progress in the nursery. There is very good involvement of parents in starting the record initially when the home visits are made. Parents are able to track their child's progress through access to the assessment files which are kept in classrooms. Assessment files are sent to the receiving primary schools but the nursery does not complete an end of year summary report of progress for parents and they should now do so.

The setting of specific targets in language, literacy and numeracy

18 There are very effective arrangements for assessing children's progress in language, literacy and numeracy. Assessments are built into the planning sheets and completed immediately after tasks have been completed. The accumulated evidence in the profile now needs to be used to set simple, specific targets for the next steps in the child's development and shared with parents so that they can support their child at home.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school should now:

- 1 Prepare end of year summary reports for parents. (Paragraphs: 14,16,17,18)
- 2 Set specific targets for the next steps in children's development in language and literacy, and in numeracy. (Paragraph: 16)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	16
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	5

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	53	47	0	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	41
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	N/A

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	N/A

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	70

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	131,830
Total expenditure	129,796
Expenditure per pupil	236,28
Balance brought forward from previous year	00
Balance carried forward to next year	2,034

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	80
Number of questionnaires returned	24

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	88	12	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	38	0	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	25	0	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	39	0	11	17
The teaching is good.	79	17	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	79	12	9	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	96	4	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	17	0	0	8
The school works closely with parents.	80	12	4	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	96	4	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	83	17	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	87	4	0	0	9

