

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **West Kidlington Nursery School**

Kidlington, Near Oxford

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 122979

Headteacher: Mr E Symonds

Reporting inspector: Mr M Massey  
23785

Dates of inspection: 4 & 5 February 2002

Inspection number: 230334

Short 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 – 5 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Oxford Road Kidlington Oxford
Postcode:	OX5 1EA
Telephone number:	01865 373369
Fax number:	01865 377080
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Laynes
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

West Kidlington Nursery School is situated in an urban area of Kidlington, north of Oxford. There are 52 children on roll, 31 boys and 21 girls. The children are aged from three to five years and they all attend part-time, being taught in one class by a class teacher and nursery nurse. Children are mainly from the local area and come from a wide range of family backgrounds. Children's attainment on entry is broadly average, though a high proportion of children enter the school with below average attainment, particularly in spoken language. They normally start school in the term after their fourth birthday, although younger children may be accepted if there is space. There are no children entitled to free school meals. Around eight per cent of children are on the school's register of special educational need and a very small number of children speak English as a second language. The school has its own governing body but shares the headteacher and Chair of Governors with the partner primary school, which is on the same site.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

West Kidlington Nursery is a good school with many strengths and no significant weaknesses. The recently appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has quickly forged a good working relationship with the staff and governors. Consistently good teaching ensures that children make good progress and are in line to reach the nationally expected levels by the time they transfer to the next stage of education. Based on their attainment on entry, children's achievement is good and standards have been maintained well since the last inspection. The school gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Good teaching results in children making good progress in communication, language and literacy and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- Clear guidance and a very well-organised learning environment lead to excellent behaviour, very good attitudes to work and confident, independent children.
- The school has a very good partnership with parents, with the result that parents' views of the school are excellent.

#### **What could be improved**

- The teaching of literacy, in preparation for the next stage of education, could be improved for younger children.
- Governors could monitor provision more systematically.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in May 1998. The good quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. Children continue to make good progress and standards have been maintained over the last four years. The development of the outside area, identified in the last report, has been slower than the school would like due to continued vandalism. A new security fence and closed circuit cameras have now been installed and development is continuing. In spite of the difficulties satisfactory improvements have been made with the extension of the outside space and the provision of a large, permanent climbing frame. Flooding in bad weather means that all of the outdoor space cannot always be fully used. There has been a good improvement in the use of information and communication technology, with children regularly using the partner school facilities and developing good skills in this area. Standards have been maintained in communication, language and literacy and mathematics. There has been a good improvement in children's personal, social and emotional development.

## STANDARDS

Children achieve well during their time at West Kidlington Nursery School in communication, language and literacy and mathematics. In personal, social and emotional development they achieve very well. The vast majority of children are in line to attain the expected standards by the time they move into Year 1. Children are confident speakers and very good listeners. They talk openly to visitors, teachers and other children, often initiating conversations by asking questions or proudly sharing the work that they have done. When listening to stories they concentrate for long periods of time, they empathise with the characters and are eager to answer questions although predicting what might happen next is difficult for some of them. They make up stories that are written out for them by staff and many of the older and higher-attaining children know their initial letter sounds and write individual letters clearly. In mathematics, a large majority of children count up to 10 confidently. Some higher-attaining pupils count up to fifty. They use equipment to make groups of twelve and describe the properties of shapes accurately. Children have a good knowledge of shapes and name circles and triangles, with some higher-attaining pupils naming shapes like cubes. Their very good personal development is reflected in the confident way that they work on new activities and talk to visitors and others. They work well together, taking turns and waiting patiently. They clear up after themselves and have a good idea of what is right and wrong, treating others with respect and care. The individual attention given to children with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good. This means that these pupils achieve well and are fully included in all the activities.

## CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children enjoy coming to school. They delight in many of the tasks set for them, concentrating for long periods of time and working hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. This makes a secure and ordered environment for new children who then settle in quickly.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Children are confident, independent learners, who relate well to other children and adults. They are happy to take responsibility for their own learning, sharing equipment and experiences with other children and often offering support to one another during activities.
Attendance	Children attend school regularly and arrive promptly.

The excellent behaviour of children is a significant factor in enabling all children to realise their full potential as they are free to work without interruption and complete tasks fully. The patience of children when sharing equipment and taking turns gives confidence to new arrivals, who quickly settle into the school routines.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery
Quality of teaching	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.*

Consistently good teaching was observed throughout the inspection. The teaching of personal and social development is very good. The teachers know children very well and provide good support for

them, enabling them to take part in all the activities fully. Classroom management and organisation is very good. A wide variety of activities and resources are well laid out and children are given a good understanding of classroom routines and how to behave. Consequently, the class is a well-ordered, hard working learning environment where all children are valued and make good progress. The use of the computer suite in the partner school and the availability of computers in the classroom means that children are making very good progress in information and communication technology. The working relationship between the nursery nurse and class teacher is excellent. High expectations are shared and the clear and detailed planning reinforces the good quality teaching and support, giving clear guidance to pupils. Older children are well prepared for the next stage of learning by the introduction that staff give them to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Specific teaching time is given to both literacy and numeracy and elements that will be expected of children in Year 1 are introduced at a level that these older children can respond to. Some younger children, however, do not have enough prior knowledge to participate in the literacy sessions fully.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	All the areas of learning are fully covered. There is a strong focus on children making independent choices and many resources are well laid out to enable this to happen. Visits to local places of interest with parental and other adult support positively enhance the curriculum.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good. Staff know children very well and give effective support on a personal level to ensure that individual children are fully involved in lessons and make progress.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Good. Children are well integrated into lessons and individual support is provided when required. Children receive a full curriculum entitlement.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Teachers give clear guidance to children on how their behaviour affects others. They have high expectations of pupils and have established very good routines to promote children's personal, social and behavioural development, which prepares them well for life in a culturally diverse society.
How well the school cares for its children	Very good. All staff have received appropriate training in child protection. Procedures are clear and information is clearly laid out for staff. Assessment procedures are rigorous and cover all areas of the curriculum.

Activities are well laid out in the classroom and outdoors. Resources are made readily available and children know where they are and have been taught how to use them. The classroom is well laid out with a full range of activities constantly available. There is often a specific teaching focus that is implemented across activities, for example in art, information and communication technology and language development. These curriculum links constantly reinforce learning and ensure that children make good progress. Teachers know children very well, starting with home visits, and consequently have a good understanding of their needs. The partnership with parents is a strength of the school. Parents receive good information about their children and are actively involved in their children's education.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
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Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The recently appointed headteacher has quickly gained an insight into how the nursery works and has a clear vision of the way forward. He is very well supported by the teacher and nursery nurse, who are committed to promoting high standards and good quality provision for children.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Although there is no formal system of monitoring governors have a sound understanding of how the school works and they are kept well informed about developments. They provide sound support to the headteacher and staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher has established good procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and gives regular feedback to staff. The school carries out its own internal assessments and has good systems for monitoring the progress of children.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school budget is still managed by the local authority. The school has maintained a good level of resources, which are well used.

The principles of best value are applied soundly. The headteacher is also the headteacher of the partner school. He has a very good understanding of Early Years education and this means that he has quickly forged a good working relationship with staff and has clear ideas about how he would like the school to develop. Monitoring procedures are very good and this has enabled him to quickly understand how the nursery works and contributes well to his vision for future developments. He delegates responsibility well and holds staff accountable through his monitoring procedures.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children like going to school and make good progress.</li> <li>Children behave well at school.</li> <li>The teaching is good and the school is well led.</li> <li>The school works closely with parents and keeps them well informed about how their children are getting on.</li> </ul>	

The inspection team totally agrees with the parents' views of the school. The pre-inspection parents' meeting and the parental questionnaire identified no negative views of the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**Good teaching results in children making good progress in communication, language and literacy and mathematics.**

1. The basis for the good teaching is the strong framework that the teacher and nursery nurse share for the management, organisation and care of children. The staff embrace the partner school's "values" approach, which emphasises the worth of every individual and outlines 22 core values, such as thoughtfulness and patience. This is fundamental to the very pro-active inclusion ethos of the school. This leads staff to treat children with respect and courtesy whilst expecting, and receiving, the same in return. As a result, the nursery is a calm and well-ordered place in which children are secure and well cared for. Routines are clearly established and specific activity areas are laid out with resources readily to hand. Younger children learn quickly from the example of older children and quickly settle into the class. Literacy and numeracy skills are promoted across a range of activities. A good example was seen when children were learning about the difference between being happy and sad. Reading activities were laid out for children to read sentences such as, "I am happy"; at the same time, half the children used the computer suite to access an art program and drew happy faces, whilst back in the classroom painting activities followed the same theme. Staff worked very hard to talk to individual children and point out the characteristics of happy and sad faces to develop their understanding. The personal interaction and support given by staff to individual children is very good and pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language particularly benefit. Consequently, children make good progress and all children are fully included in the activities.
2. The teachers' planning is clear and the nursery nurse has a very good understanding of what is required. Clear indications of what children will learn are included in the planning, which is based on the local authority adaptation of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The co-operation between the teacher and nursery nurse is excellent and they make a good team. They both use questions effectively to challenge children and make them think, for example when asking them to predict what might happen next when reading a story. Both staff members make regular and accurate assessments of children's attainment and this gives them a clear understanding of how much progress children have made and areas in which individual children need further support.
3. The teaching of literacy and numeracy as a preparation for the next stage of education for the older children is good, although younger children have difficulty taking part fully. Elements of the National Literacy Strategy, for example, are introduced to groups of pupils in a way that they will recognise when they move into Year 1. Big books are used to model reading and children quickly learn that print goes from left to right and carries meaning. Teachers use the pictures in the books well to improve children's understanding of the text and interpret how the characters in the story might be feeling. In numeracy, group activities successfully promote children's use of numbers and the pace of these sessions is brisk and encourages children to listen and work hard.
4. As a result of the thoughtful teaching and well structured activities, children are happy and eager learners, well prepared for the next stage of their education.

**Clear guidance and a very well-organised learning environment lead to excellent behaviour, very good attitudes to work and confident, independent children.**

5. Children are given very clear guidance on how to behave. Values such as co-operation and tolerance are actively taught through monthly themes and form an integral part of the educational philosophy of the school. Children are taught that they need to be patient and wait their turn and

that sharing equipment is expected. They know that they should not interrupt others and the vast majority remember to put up their hands when they want to reply to a question. When children do make mistakes, or forget, the correct course of action is quietly and firmly pointed out to them in a way that does not cause embarrassment. This means that the child is not put off joining in the activity for fear of other mistakes and so a good learning pattern is established. As a result of this caring, but firm, approach where expectations are clear, children's behaviour is excellent.

6. The high expectations of good behaviour are carried over into an expectation that children will try hard. They are expected to sit and listen during activities like story time but they are also given plenty of opportunities to move around the room, selecting activities themselves. This approach means that children do not get bored but access a variety of activities and also take part in group activities where they are expected to listen, answer questions and be aware of others in the group. The variety of activities and good use of resources engages children's interest and further motivates them to work hard. The fact that teachers make conscious links between different activities so that the same learning objective is being pursued means that children quickly understand what they are expected to do and they can therefore apply themselves confidently. Consequently, they have a very good attitude to learning and make good progress.
7. Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. Teachers make very good relationships with the children, talking to them frequently about what they are doing and praising their efforts. The adults are calm, quiet and purposeful and act as very good role models for children. Activities are laid out so that children can make their own choices and in many activities social interaction is actively encouraged, for example when children play outside or share the use of a computer. Because the classroom organisation is so good, children quickly learn routines and where equipment is. They gain confidence in being able to make choices and so rapidly become involved in their own learning, attempting new activities and talking happily to adults and other children. Because clear guidance is given, children know how to be patient and they then become sensitive to the needs of others. During outdoor play they co-operate very well, often playing in twos and threes, for example in the sandpit or when using trolleys. Relationships are very good and children are becoming mature and responsible learners.

**The school has a very good partnership with parents, with the result that parents' views of the school are excellent.**

8. Before entering the nursery every child receives a home visit that lays the foundation for the very good relationship that exists between parents and the school. Parents are encouraged to stay with their children during the first week at the school and are welcomed in as helpers throughout their child's time at the school. Teachers are pleased with the support that parents give to their children, for example by reading books from school to them at home. Teachers then discuss what they have read with the children, reinforcing the parent-school partnership.
9. Information from the school gives parents a very clear view of how their children are progressing and they are told how they can help at home, for example by practising letter formation. Parents particularly enjoy the coffee mornings, which are held regularly. This gives them the opportunity to see what their children are doing, meet other parents and staff and share concerns. As one parent said, "It makes you realise that we all have problems in common; it helps to share them."
10. The discussions held at the parents' meeting before the inspection indicated a high level of parental satisfaction with the school. This was further supported by the results of the parental questionnaire where there was not one single concern expressed about provision in the school.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**The teaching of literacy, in preparation for the next stage of education, could be improved for younger children.**

11. The teacher and nursery nurse take a pastoral role for half of the class each. Because of the age of entry into the nursery around one-third of the children transfer directly from the nursery into Year 1. This means that staff have to prepare them for the National Literacy Strategy. When group activities are undertaken in literacy in preparation for the Literacy Hour in Year 1 each staff member takes the session with their own group, which has children of a variety of ages and attainment. The older and higher-attaining children benefit greatly from the activities as they are based on the children's previous learning. However, younger children who have only recently joined the nursery do not have enough knowledge or skills to be able to participate fully in the activities. It would be beneficial for both younger and older children to teach them in separate groups, based on age and prior attainment, so that the activities could be better matched to the children's attainment and needs. In this way extra challenge could be introduced to older children and younger children could have activities that better supported their learning.

**Governors could monitor provision more systematically.**

12. The Chair of Governors is automatically the Chair of the partner school. Other governors are not automatically on the governing body of the partner school. Although governors have a sound understanding of how the nursery operates, they do not monitor developments systematically. Some governors know the school well and the Chair of Governors has a good knowledge of priorities for development. However, priorities in the school improvement plan are not regularly reviewed and evaluated. This means that not all governors are well informed about how developments are progressing and how well children are prepared for the next stage of education. They are over-reliant on the headteacher and Chair of Governors for this information. A more systematic approach would enable the governors to better support the headteacher in developing Early Years provision and understanding the relationship with the next stage of education. This would mean that priorities in the school improvement plan would be better understood and their impact evaluated. This would give a clearer understanding of the progress children have made in their learning and a good measure for best value judgements.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

13. In order to raise standards further the governing body, headteacher and staff should:
  - 1) Ensure that group literacy activities based on the National Literacy Strategy are focused more clearly on older children who will transfer directly to Year 1 on leaving the nursery.
  - 2) Plan literacy activities for younger children that are based on their prior learning and identified needs.
  - 3) Ensure that governors systematically monitor provision in the nursery through an established routine of visits that focus on:
    - areas included in the school improvement plan;
    - foundation Stage curriculum areas;
    - preparation for the next stage of education.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	7
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	8

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	4	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	43	57	0	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than 14 percentage points.

### 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)	26
Number of full-time pupils known to be 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	4

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

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.*

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	50
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	66802
Total expenditure	65295
Expenditure per pupil	2511
Balance brought forward from previous year	N/A
Balance carried forward to next year	N/A*

\* An LEA managed budget

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	52
Number of questionnaires returned	17

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	82	18	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	82	18	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	76	24	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	12	24	0	0	65
The teaching is good.	88	12	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	35	0	0	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	12	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	35	0	0	12
The school works closely with parents.	65	35	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	65	35	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	88	6	0	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	12	0	0	71