



# Ludwick Nursery School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number 117079  
LEA Hertfordshire

Inspection number 274702  
Inspection dates 13 June 2005  
Reporting inspector Linda Murgatroyd

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

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Type of School	Nursery School	School address	Holwell Road
School category	Maintained		Welwyn Garden City
Age range of pupils	3 - 5		Hertfordshire
			AL7 3RP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01707 323693
Number on roll	149	Fax number	01707 323693
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Cllr. Margaret Birleson
Date of previous inspection	16-18 November 1998	Headteacher	Mrs Janet Hoare

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Age group	Published	Reference no.
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## Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the Ludwick Nursery School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Ludwick Nursery School is a large nursery school situated in Welwyn Garden City in an area of relatively high social disadvantage. The school has 149 children, 69 boys and 80 girls, all of whom attend part-time. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage; a small but rising number are from a range of minority ethnic groups, and only a very few do not have English as their first language. There is a very small number of looked after children. Almost one fifth of children have special educational needs, including nine children who attend the school's specialist group for children with speech and language difficulties, and who are fully integrated into the mainstream nursery.

The school has a close partnership with Squirrels Nursery, on the same site, and many children attend both settings during the day. The school is working to develop this partnership further, to become a children's centre. The two settings provide a range of family support services, which are very much appreciated by parents.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

The school's overall effectiveness is good and this view is shared by both inspectors and the school. Although many children come into the nursery with skills below those usually found in children of their age, they make good progress. They achieve particularly well in personal, social and emotional development, and in mathematical development. Children with special educational needs achieve well because good provision is made for them. All children behave well and feel happy and well-cared for as a result of the school's encouraging climate and good quality of care, guidance and support. Parents are pleased with the school's work.

The quality of teaching is good, with some outstanding teaching, although children would do even better if they received more feedback about how to improve their work. Although the teaching of speaking and listening is very good, there is not enough emphasis on teaching letter sounds and their use in early reading and writing. The headteacher's good leadership gives a strong direction to the school's work and staff and governors are united in pursuit of common goals. Governors play a key role in the school's development, and the school's systems for self-review involve all staff and governors. The partnership with Squirrels Nursery is successful in providing a good range of services for children and families. The main issues from the previous inspection have been addressed, and the school is well placed to improve further. Because of the quality of the provision, the school provides good value for money.

**Grade: 2**

### What the school should do to improve further

Increase the focus on the teaching of letter sounds and on providing opportunities to develop the early stages of reading and writing, so that children make more progress in these areas of learning.

Improve the use of assessment to:

- ensure that the learning intentions in teachers' plans for literacy are explicit and challenging
- improve the oral feedback for children so that they learn more about their successes and know how to improve their work in future.

## Achievement and standards

Some children enter the nursery with good levels of skill and understanding, but this is not a general picture, and many children's speech and language in particular are underdeveloped. During their time in the nursery, children make good progress in all areas of learning, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Mathematical development has been a recent area of focus for the school, and because of this emphasis many children are achieving well for their age.

All staff work hard to improve children's speaking and listening. Children learn to listen to staff and each other, and to express themselves. Their progress is good, but despite this they do not reach the expected standards for their age because of their low starting points. By the time they move on to primary school, over one third of children recognise some letter sounds, but the majority do not reach these levels. The proportion of children who can write more than their own name is lower. The school is aware that girls do better than boys in their language development, and is developing a range of strategies to improve the achievement of boys in particular, but these have not yet had sufficient impact.

The school has a relatively high number of children with special educational needs, including an enrichment group for children with severe speech and language difficulties. These children are very effectively supported, and make good progress because of the good teaching they receive. The few children whose first language is not English also make good progress. Achievement in all areas of learning improved last year compared to previous years, particularly in mathematical development.

### **Grade: 2**

## Personal development and well-being

The school evaluates children's personal development as good overall and inspectors agree. This is because of the school's strong focus on the well-being of each child. The presence of a strong sense of working together as a family and the hard work of the staff ensure that all children are fully supported by the school. Children's enjoyment of school is shown clearly in their outstanding enthusiasm for all activities. For example, children show great pleasure in activities such as playing with a model castle and dragon, and in the range of media provided for painting. Most children behave well. Very good support for children who have behavioural difficulties helps them to adjust quickly and meet staff expectations. Staff ensure that all children learn effectively to take turns

and share equipment. Children are encouraged to become independent because staff explain clearly what is expected of them. The children regularly support a range of charities and raised money for the Tsunami disaster. Attendance levels are satisfactory.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Staff help them to understand their feelings and raise their self-esteem effectively. Children's social and moral skills are well developed in discussion times. Their good knowledge of their own and other cultures results from exciting activities based on festivals such as Christmas, Divali and the Chinese New Year.

Children have a good understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles because of the school's strong accent on ways to keep healthy. Their knowledge is evident, for instance, in their understanding of the need for washing hands before handling food. They also enjoy physical activities, particularly using the outside play equipment, and they play together well in the playground.

**Grade: 2**

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

The inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that teaching and learning are good overall. Staff understand how young children learn and they make good progress as a result. In the best lesson seen, the staff member had high expectations of children's work and so children of all abilities were properly challenged. Staff use questioning effectively to deepen children's understanding. For example, in an outstanding lesson, the use of questioning enabled children to think very deeply about numbers and learn to find the largest. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and communicate these very effectively. As a result, children behave and concentrate well. Most planning caters effectively for children with different capabilities. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are given good support and consequently they achieve well.

Teaching of mathematical development is particularly strong because of the school's recent emphasis on this area. However, at times, literacy planning does not focus sharply enough on what teachers want children to learn. This means that staff do not always have measurable ways to assess children's attainment, and some opportunities to promote early reading and writing skills are missed. Some activities within classrooms do not always have clear teaching objectives displayed and so extra adults coming into the room cannot easily find out about the focus for learning.

Records show that children's achievement is assessed satisfactorily in all areas of learning. However, staff do not consistently explain to children what they have done well and say how they could improve their work. This means that children are not clear what their strengths are or how to make their work better.

**Grade: 2**

### **Curriculum and other activities**

The school has planned an interesting curriculum and children have opportunities to learn through a good range of inside and outside activities. Close attention is paid to developing children's basic skills and their personal and social development, including awareness of healthy lifestyles. Displays around the school celebrate children's achievements in many areas of learning. The curriculum is made more exciting because children go out and visit local shops and wild life areas. Visitors to the school include young musicians, and adults bring in pets and babies. Before and after school care gives children a chance to develop their skills in a safe environment. All legal requirements are met in a safe and healthy environment. Inspectors agreed with the school's evaluation that the curriculum is good overall.

**Grade: 2**

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school is very successful in providing a secure, happy and caring environment. The staff's commitment to ensuring children's well-being is outstanding and those parents spoken to confirmed how pleased they are with all the school does for their children. Staff know children well and are quick to pick up any worries that they have. Children are confident about approaching any adult, knowing that they will be listened to and given help. Child protection procedures are in place and all staff know how to raise concerns. The school works very successfully with other agencies to ensure that children in difficult circumstances are supported well. Children with special educational needs are given effective support by staff. The school evaluated this area as good and the inspectors confirm this judgement.

**Grade: 2**

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school which she shares with all staff, and because of this, there is a focus on ensuring a high standard of education and care for all children. Governors hold the school to account very effectively and have a strong commitment to the development of every child. The headteacher and staff benefit from the strategic support provided by governors.

The headteacher and governors' views of the school's strengths and weaknesses are broadly accurate. All staff and governors are involved in monitoring and reviewing the school's work and planning improvements through the school improvement plan. The plan identifies appropriate priorities, but the targets for improving communication, language and literacy provision are not sharp enough. The school recognises this, and plans to revise them later this term.

There is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and inclusion among all staff and governors. The school makes very good use of many external agencies to support its work and to address barriers to learning amongst children, especially in the partnership with Squirrels Nursery. The views of parents and children are listened to, and when appropriate, parents' suggestions are acted upon. All the main issues from the last inspection have been addressed. Because of the good leadership and management, the school has a strong capacity to make further improvements.

**Grade: 2**



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**INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	<b>2</b>
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	<b>1</b>
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	<b>2</b>
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	<b>2</b>
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	<b>Yes</b>
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	<b>Yes</b>

**ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	<b>2</b>
The <i>standards</i> reached by learners	<b>3</b>
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	<b>2</b>
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	<b>2</b>

**PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING**

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	<b>2</b>
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>2</b>
The behaviour of learners	<b>2</b>
How well learners enjoy their education	<b>1</b>
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	<b>2</b>
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	<b>2</b>
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	<b>2</b>
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	<b>2</b>

**THE QUALITY OF PROVISION**

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	<b>2</b>

**LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	<b>2</b>
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	<b>2</b>
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	<b>2</b>
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	<b>2</b>
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	<b>1</b>
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	<b>Yes</b>

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	<b>Delete as appropriate</b>
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse.	<b>NA</b>
Learners are educated about sexual health.	<b>NA</b>
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe.</b>	<b>Delete as appropriate</b>
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.	<b>Yes</b>
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place.	<b>Yes</b>
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	<b>Delete as appropriate</b>
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	<b>Yes</b>
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	<b>Delete as appropriate</b>
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams.	<b>NA</b>
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form.	<b>NA</b>
Education for all learners aged 14-19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy.	<b>NA</b>

Alexandra House      T 0207 421 6800  
33 Kingsway          F 0207 421 6707  
London WC2B 6SE      [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



Ludwick Nursery School  
Holwell Road  
Welwyn Garden City  
Hertfordshire AL7 3RP

14 June 2005

Dear Children

You probably remember that we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed our time with you, and would like to thank you for talking to us and showing us what you were doing during the visit. We were there to see how well your school helps you to learn, and what we saw and heard helped us to decide that your school is doing a good job. We were very impressed by how well you all behave and how much you enjoy being at Ludwick Nursery School.

We want you to know that these are the things we liked best about your school.

- Your teachers plan very interesting things for you to do and their teaching makes sure that you learn well, especially in mathematics.
- In school you learn to work together and look after yourselves very well.
- Everyone at the school takes good care of you, so that you feel safe and happy.
- All the staff and the governors know what they want the school to be like, and work hard together to make it a good place to learn and play.
- The way Ludwick and Squirrels work together makes sure that those of you who attend both settings are well looked after all day.

We found some things that we think could be better.

- Your teachers could do even more to help you to read and write.
- They could tell you more clearly what you do well and what you need to do to learn even better.

We think that all the staff at Ludwick can work together to improve these things. We hope that you go on enjoying all the exciting activities that you do at your school which help you to learn and play.

With best wishes

Linda Murgatroyd  
Lead Inspector