



# Ashmore Park Nursery School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 104279  
**LEA** Wolverhampton  
**Inspection number** 277122  
**Inspection dates** 3 July 2006 to 3 July 2006  
**Reporting inspector** John Eadie AI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery	<b>School address</b>	Griffiths Drive
<b>School category</b>	Maintained		Ashmore Park Estate
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 4		Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV11 2LH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 558116
<b>Number on roll</b>	77	<b>Fax number</b>	01902 558116
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 April 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Lacey

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by a team of two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This average-sized nursery serves an area of mixed housing towards the edge of Wolverhampton. There are some areas of deprivation locally. Almost all children are White British and all speak English at home. A significant number have speech and language problems or other learning difficulties or disabilities. The school works in partnership with a special school. This project funds outreach support for four children whose needs can be met in this school. Following the retirement of a long-standing headteacher, the school operated under an acting headteacher in the autumn term 2005 prior to the permanent appointment of the current headteacher from the start of the spring term 2006. The internal promotion of the current headteacher had repercussions for teaching arrangements in the school and some temporary arrangements have been necessary. The school has decided to create a post of deputy headteacher and an appointment has been made to start in September 2006.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This school has a justifiably high reputation in the locality as it is a good school with some outstanding features. By the time of the inspection, the school judged its effectiveness to be good, having adjusted well to a period of change caused by a number of staff changes. Leadership and management are currently good and the school gives good value for money. The present headteacher has been careful to build on the strengths of the school as well as reappraising the school's priorities. Parents are very much a part of the school and are enthusiastic in their support. They said such things as 'We have always felt supported and fully informed' and 'The teachers put themselves out to help meet the children's needs.'

Children make good progress during their time in the school and reach levels of skills and knowledge broadly in line with expectations for their age by the time they leave. This is due to the good provision made for them. However, standards in some areas of their language work, particularly their mark making and writing skills and their calculating, are below expected levels by the time they leave. Teaching is good, with all staff being clear about what each child needs to learn next. This is because there are excellent systems of assessment, developed over the years by the current headteacher in her previous role as a teacher. A particular strength in the children's progress is in their personal development, which is outstanding. This is largely due to the very high levels of care and guidance that they are given. The curriculum is good, and is often geared to the needs of the individual child.

The school has made good progress since its previous inspection. Bearing this in mind, alongside the evident desire and capacity to move forward, the school is well placed to continue to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Continue the work already started to raise children's standards in language, particularly their mark making and writing skills.
- Work to raise standards in calculation so that they are more in line with standards in other areas of mathematical development.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children make good progress through the school. They start with levels of skills and knowledge lower than usually found in children of their age. Almost all have had experience of stay-and-play sessions at this nursery and this is shown in that the personal development of most is in line with expectations for this age. By the time they leave to go on to a Reception class, most have reached standards in line with those usually found in children of this age. There are variations in this picture. Standards in children's personal development are higher than those usually found because of the high priority that the school rightly places on developing this area of learning.

However, standards in some areas of their language work, particularly their mark making and writing skills, and in their skills of calculating, are lower than those usually found. Developing mark making and writing skills is a current focus for the school. Because of the very good quality of support provided, children with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress in achieving their personal targets. Unusually for a nursery school, targets for children's achievements are set in all areas of learning. These targets are challenging and most children achieve them.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding and supports the good progress they make. From the moment they enter Nursery, children enjoy choosing their activities, becoming very confident and self-motivated learners. Very good guidance from adults ensures that they learn how to listen to each other carefully, take turns, work together and share, even though some find this difficult. They work and play safely and show great respect for living things, for example, handling snails carefully. Occasionally, they show wonder at what they have found, like a spider and a spider's web. They are aware of how to stay healthy, such as asking for water when it is hot or knowing why it is important to wash your hands, because this is promoted well by the school. Their good progress in developing basic skills and excellent social development prepare them well for their future. By assuming responsibilities, such as milk and fruit monitors, and helping to raise large sums of money for charity, they make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community. They have a very well developed sense of right and wrong, as a result of clear guidance from adults.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is good and children are learning well. Children are given many opportunities to select their own activities within a carefully planned range. The systems to record children's achievements are very thorough and ensure that they all take part in activities or gain these skills elsewhere in the curriculum. Children are very well supported during these activities with staff taking every opportunity to develop children's learning by asking questions. For example, when discussing what day of the week it was, children were encouraged to think of other words that started with the same sound. Support for children with learning difficulties and disabilities is particularly effective, enabling these children to make good progress relative to their abilities. A further strength of teaching is the very warm relationships between adults and children. A parent said 'My child speaks fondly of her teachers.' Effective activities, focused on developing children's learning in language, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, are built into every session. However, the school recognises a need to focus more clearly on mark making and writing skills and calculation.

Assessment is very thorough and is a key strength of the school. Very clear systems have been developed that show exactly what each child has achieved and when. These systems are being used exceptionally well to establish precisely what each child needs to learn next and to set targets for them. These targets include elements that can be carried out at home, so continuing the excellent involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The good curriculum provided by the school provides a rich and varied range of experiences for all children, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. The programme of work builds well on children's previous learning and develops their confidence and independence. It is sufficiently flexible to respond to children's specific learning needs. For example, some children who rarely choose creative activities develop these skills through map making, which they enjoy. Provision for children's personal development is outstanding, ensuring they are confident and motivated. Working with an artist in residence has made a significant contribution to the development of creative skills. Children are excited by the well planned local visits and outdoor activities, which promote their knowledge and understanding of the world well. They look forward to exciting end of term celebrations like a visit to the safari park, which reinforce the term's learning, in this case about animals.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Excellent care, support and guidance support children's well-being and achievement. Rigorous procedures to ensure children's health and safety, including those for child protection, operate very effectively. Thorough risk assessments are in place for external visits, but recording of internal risk assessments is not as meticulous. Excellent links with external agencies help children, especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities, to thrive within the school. Parents and carers appreciate the close, positive and productive links between home and school, which ensure continuity of learning. Parents talk enthusiastically about the levels of care, saying such things as 'Parents and children are very comfortable in a fun and safe environment.' There are outstanding arrangements to help children settle into Nursery and to move to their new school. Children are very well known as individuals. Monitoring of children's progress is outstanding and well chosen targets help them to improve their learning, step by step.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership and management of the school are good. Following the recent change of headteacher, the school has continued to move forward. However, the school recognises that the formulation of a new leadership team and a new deputy headteacher should strengthen the self-evaluation processes. The headteacher has quickly

established her own priorities. Prior to her appointment as headteacher, she was largely responsible for the excellent systems of assessment, which show clearly the good value that the school is adding for the children. There is a strong sense of teamwork and the whole staff team are fully involved, for example, in weekly monitoring of the curriculum to evaluate its effectiveness.

Parents and carers are regarded as a vital part of the team involved in the education of their children. The school works hard to build relationships with them, even before their children start school. Once their children join the school, parents and carers are consulted regularly and have many opportunities to discuss their children's progress. The school has adapted its processes well to respond to the needs of parents and carers. For example, it was as a result of parental consultations that home visits were started. These have been very successful, with increased numbers of parents and carers being visited each year, leading to 100% take up for next term's starters. The school has also forged strong links with external agencies, such as speech therapists, and other schools. These links have had a very positive impact on children's learning and on their smooth transition to their next school.

The school is good at evaluating the success of its provision and how it is improving following a period of adjustment with new and temporary appointments made. The whole staff team is involved in the process, along with input from governors and parents and carers. With this teamwork and the desire to provide the best for the children, the school is well placed to continue to move forward.

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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>	<b>16-19</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>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

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

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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I have asked Mrs Lacey to read this letter to you. We really enjoyed our time at your school and looking at all the super work that you do.

We think these are the best things about your school:

•Your work improves well because you have good teachers. •You love coming to school, behave very well and enjoy everything that you do. •All the teachers look after you really well. •You have lots of interesting things to do. •Your school is well organised. •Your mums and dads are helping you to learn at home.

We have asked the teachers to do these things:

•Help you to make your writing better. •Help you to work out numbers better.