



Henry Allen Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110195
LEA Buckinghamshire LEA
Inspection number 278378
Inspection dates 15 May 2006 to 16 May 2006
Reporting inspector Bernice Magson AI

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Mitchell Walk
School category	Maintained		Amersham
Age range of pupils	3 to 4		HP6 6NW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01494 726257
Number on roll	90	Fax number	01494 727845
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr E Powell
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr J Shaw

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 4	15 May 2006 - 16 May 2006	278378

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Henry Allen Nursery is situated close to the centre of Amersham. It serves a socially mixed area and provides morning or afternoon education for children aged three to four years. The school takes new entrants each term. The number of children from minority ethnic backgrounds is very low. When children start school most are working at expected levels for their age. A small minority of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities, including four children with a formal statement of special educational need. In 2003, the school received an Achievement Award in recognition of its high standards. The school offers an extended service in the form of a daily lunch club.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection agrees with the school's view that it provides a good education and that some of its work is outstanding. All children achieve well and the majority reach the standards expected in all areas of learning by the end of the nursery, because the teaching is good. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those speaking or learning English as an additional language do well because of the high quality support they receive.

Children receive excellent care and support. The school values each individual. Children are happy and secure; they enjoy their time in nursery and get on well together. Behaviour is outstanding. There is an excellent partnership with parents. Parents value the school very highly and rightly feel that it is a firm foundation on which their children can build.

The curriculum is outstanding. There is a strong emphasis on personal and social development and on promoting language skills. Well established assessment systems are in place, but there is not a consistent approach to tracking children's progress. The school has recognised that this is an area of provision in need of review.

Leadership and management are good. The school is focusing effectively on improving the quality of its provision. The Improvement Plan identifies current priorities and sets out a vision for the future. However, procedures for checking on the school's work are unclear. Nonetheless the school has successfully tackled the issues from the last inspection and has a good capacity to improve further. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that all staff adopt a consistent approach to assessment and recording.
- Ensure that the improvement plan states clearly how and what is to be achieved and includes measures to check on the school's success.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Boys and girls of all abilities achieve well. When they start in the nursery their skills, knowledge and understanding are about those expected for their age. By the time they leave the school the majority attain the levels which are expected for their age. They make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and attain very well, being in advance of what is expected for four-year-olds, because of the high priority placed on this area.

When they start school, a small minority of children have language and literacy skills which are below expectations. Because of good teaching, these children achieve well and attain standards in line with national expectations at the end of their time in nursery. The very few children who learn English as additional language achieve well

as a result of good support, which is focused on their specific needs. Good attention is given to children who have learning difficulties and disabilities. Their needs are identified early and, with high quality support, they attain their own learning targets successfully.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The children's personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral social and cultural development are excellent. Behaviour is outstanding and children have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Children are friendly and supportive of one another, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Children enjoy their time in nursery, and their attendance is satisfactory.

All children participate happily in a wide range of experiences and are eager to learn. Many parents tell how their children love coming to school. One parent said 'My child's confidence has grown and grown.' In play, children choose their activities sensibly and use tools with care. A recent 'Food Lab' has helped the children gain a good knowledge of healthy eating and understand the importance of daily exercise. They have enjoyed finding out about different cultures; for example the festival of the Chinese New Year. An increasing knowledge of basic skills is helping children develop their economic well-being and prepares them well for their next school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good and encourages the children to make rapid progress. Adults skilfully generate warm relationships with children who become enthusiastic learners. Very good opportunities are created for personal and social development which has a good impact on children's learning. There is a strong focus on encouraging independence in physical education lessons the children are encouraged to get themselves ready by taking off shoes and socks. The wide variety of purposeful and interesting activities entices children to learn. Language development is consistently encouraged. All adults are actively engaged in talking to children, whatever the activity and, as a result, children make good progress in improving their speaking and listening skills. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are fully included in all activities and they learn well.

Staff assess children's learning throughout the day, although informal play in the garden is not assessed. At the end of each day there are good discussions to review children's progress. The information is then used to vary the challenge in learning tasks. The school correctly has identified a need to review assessment arrangements to ensure there is a clear picture of the child's achievements and next steps.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding because it meets children's needs fully. It is based on a wide variety of experiences. Staff have a very good understanding of how the young child gains in knowledge, understanding and skills. Learning is developed through play in imaginatively planned activities. Themes developed through indoor and outdoor tasks include all areas of learning. For example, after exploring in the garden, children have grown grass from seeds, measured the tiny shoots and talked about mini-beasts.

The curriculum is enhanced by many visitors and practical workshops. 'Fireman Joe' helped the children learn about safety and about his work within the community. Governors enthused as they described a recent exhibition where children had made their own leaves from felt. All children are fully included in what the school has to offer regardless of their needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding level of care, guidance and support. Staff know the children and their families very well. They have developed a friendly and welcoming environment in which all children feel valued. One parent has attributed her child's good social and emotional development to the 'extremely nurturing environment and lovely caring atmosphere' of the school. The Lunch Club is very popular among children and parents appreciate that it promotes opportunities for independence and social interaction in a different setting.

Procedures for health and safety and child protection are very thorough and effective. Risk assessments take place regularly. The partnerships with parents and other agencies are very strong. Parents appreciate the many opportunities to discuss their child's progress. Procedures for observing, assessing and tracking children's progress are well established although not consistent across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a good understanding of how best to meet the needs of the children and their community and has gained the trust of parents. In conjunction with the staff, the headteacher is committed and focused on improving the quality of provision and this has led to a vibrant and stimulating curriculum. He ensures that staff have good opportunities to undertake professional training. Improvements have also been achieved in the process of self-evaluation. After extensive consultation involving staff, governors and parents, a comprehensive improvement plan has been prepared, which reflects accurately the school's assessment of itself. It identifies immediate priorities and sets a clear vision for the longer term but there are no clear pointers which senior staff might use to measure the success of the school's initiatives. Governance is good. The governing

body has undergone significant change, new members are committed to the school and their roles are developing well. All statutory responsibilities are fulfilled. Improvements in the curriculum since the last inspection indicate a good capacity to improve further. The school gives good value for money.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	3	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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

Children

Thank you for welcoming me to your nursery. I enjoyed seeing all the interesting activities which you do each day. I think that the garden area is superb and I can see there are lots of exciting play activities. I think that your school is good.

The things that I think are really good are: * the lovely activities the teachers plan for you * the way that you all get on really well and share* you are very good at all times* all adults take good care of you and help you to learn * the interest of your parents in all that you do.

I have asked your teachers to make sure that their records show how well you are doing. All the grown ups are trying to make your school even better so I have asked them to keep on with their special plans so that you can learn even better.

I wish you well for the future.

Bernice Magson

Lead Inspector