



Westminster Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110953
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 278558
Inspection dates 21 November 2005 to 22 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs June Sharpe CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Nelson Street
School category	Community		Crewe
Age range of pupils	3 to 5		Cheshire CW2 7LJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01270 560319
Number on roll	53	Fax number	01270 651724
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs J Rhodes
Date of previous inspection	15 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs E Smith

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 5	21 November 2005 - 22 November 2005	278558

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Children attend part-time from the beginning of the term following their third birthdays. They come from a wide range of home backgrounds and several localities in and around Crewe. There are places for 104 children; 53 girls and boys currently attend. This number will rise in both January and April 2006. A small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attend, including several who are showing early signs of having speech and language difficulties. Most children are of white British heritage. A small proportion come from minority ethnic groups, mainly Bangladeshi. Occasionally, children start nursery unable to speak any English. The local authority is looking into the possibility of converting the nursery into a Children's Centre 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

The inspector agrees that Westminster Nursery is a good school that provides good value for money. It is a very happy and caring place, where young children thoroughly enjoy activities and learn from them. Since the previous inspection, standards have improved, and an outstanding partnership with parents and the community has been forged. Standards are high because teaching and learning are good across the curriculum. Staff work together as a team to ensure that girls and boys of all ethnic heritages have the support they need to do as well as they can. Children achieve particularly well in personal, social and emotional development, and this assists their learning in all other aspects of their work. The nursery is well led and managed, and the headteacher's outstanding leadership of staff through the uncertainties about the future is ensuring that children's education does not suffer. Her positive response to the challenging circumstances reflects her dedication to the best interests of children, staff and parents. Staff and governors know their school very well. Their knowledge of what they do, however, is better than their understanding of how well the nursery is performing as a result. They do not always analyse the good quality information they have from assessing children's attainment when deciding what the nursery should work on improving next. Nevertheless, the nursery is very well placed to improve in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make full use of existing information about children's attainment in all areas of learning when planning how to take the school forward in the future.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When children start nursery, their attainment is typical for 3 year olds. They make good progress in the early learning goals (working towards the national standards to be achieved by the end of the Reception Year). Progress in personal, social and emotional development, however, is rapid in the first few months. This is because of the very strong emphasis that staff place upon helping children to settle in happily and to understand what is expected of them. Children's good achievement in this aspect of their learning enables them to do well in all other areas and to meet the challenging targets set by staff. Consequently, by the time children transfer to Reception classes, their attainment is better than usually seen for children of their age. Children with LDD receive good support, which helps them to make similar progress to that of other children. Children who are learning to speak English make good progress because of the close attention that staff give to improving listening and talking skills. The progress of children at the very early stages, however, slows down when they work in large groups of children, for example at story time. Nevertheless, the nursery is right to think that overall standards and achievement are good, as also indicated by external quality assurance awards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

A consistently positive approach and high expectations of staff ensure that children's personal development, including attitudes and behaviour, is good. Children love coming to nursery and enjoy all their activities – as one parent said, 'My child can't wait to get here'. Children quickly learn to follow the routines, for example everyone instantly helped to tidy up when they heard the music start to play. They follow simple rules, such as when one very eager child waited patiently for a coloured band, indicating that there was room to join in the imaginative play. Although disappointed by having to wait, he did not make a fuss. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They know that they must share toys and equipment and take fair turns. Children experimented with moving toys on different surfaces and were delighted by finding out why the speed changed. Children's understanding of how to keep safe and healthy is good. They know, for example, that they must sweep up the sand on the floor so that other children do not slip. The outstanding relationships and ability to get along with all other children contribute very well to children's future economic well-being. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The nursery is right to think that teaching and learning are good overall. Happy and hardworking staff prepare lessons very well. They work as a team with children's best interests always at heart. They know how young children learn best and plan work accordingly. The strong focus on high quality verbal interactions with children boosts children's learning in all aspects of their work and enables them to make good progress no matter what their attainment. Staff provide interesting activities, such as experimenting with colours in a light box. Children are eager to try them out and confident to work with different adults and other children. Staff assess how well children are doing as a regular part of their day-to-day work. They know children well, especially the children in the groups for which they have main responsibility. This knowledge helps staff to pitch children's work at the right level in order to take learning forward. Although staff know what they want each child to learn next, targets are not written down to give all staff a clear understanding of what to focus their efforts most strongly upon. Staff quickly notice when children are showing signs of having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and they provide the right kind of support. Children who show early signs of having speech and language difficulties, for example, benefit from regular good quality specialist help.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and includes many opportunities for enrichment, such as visits out of nursery and community visitors to nursery. It is planned with careful reference to national guidance, and is based on helping all children to learn as a result of playing indoors and outdoors. Planning for personal, social, health and citizenship education, such as sex education, is adjusted carefully to the specific needs of very young children. Owing to the poor weather during the inspection, the outdoor curriculum was limited to a short playtime. Photographs and planning, however, indicate that children often have good opportunities to choose to work outdoors and to take part in many exciting activities. The nursery provides a very attractive environment for learning and good quality resources stimulate children's curiosity and interest. Governors want to improve the outdoor premises and resources, but current uncertainties about the future of the nursery are holding plans back.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The nursery looks after its children well, and staff are constantly concerned for their welfare. They ensure that children are happy, enjoy coming and transfer to Reception classes with ease. Thorough arrangements for children to phase gradually into attending nursery give them a successful start. The school's outstanding partnerships with parents and the community, including a large number of support agencies, ensure that children do as well as they can. Staff are alert to problems and flexible in their response. For example, the nursery has revised its admissions policy with regard to toileting in order to ensure that no child is discriminated against. Good child protection arrangements are in place, and the nursery takes health and safety seriously. This is seen in plans to provide more shade outdoors in order to protect children from too much direct sunlight in the summer. Staff and governors are disappointed that they have had to put their plans on hold because of the current local authority review of provision.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall, and the nursery is very well thought of by parents. The headteacher has been very effective in recent years in improving the quality of education and in involving parents more fully in their children's learning. The nursery holds a Quality Standards Kite Mark (FLIGHT) in recognition of its outstanding partnership with parents. The headteacher has also successfully created a sense of teamwork amongst staff. They support her well by carrying out management responsibilities. The headteacher's leadership and support of staff during the current challenging period of uncertainty about the future of the nursery is outstanding. She is keeping a very watchful eye on complex developments, whilst making sure that staff morale does not slip and that children's education does not suffer. The need to respond

urgently to consultations and proposals is reflected in the nursery's plan for future improvement.

Governors have only held delegated powers since 2003 and had responsibility for managing the budget for one year. They meet their responsibilities satisfactorily. The headteacher and governors know the strengths and areas for improvement in nursery provision very well, and have an accurate view of its overall effectiveness, confirmed by several significant external quality assurance checks. They are not as good at analysing the information from the thorough assessments that staff make of children's attainment. Consequently, they do not always focus on checking how well the nursery and specific groups of children are performing, as a result of improvements in provision. The nursery is improving at a good rate, despite the sensitivities and difficulties that staff and governors are experiencing. It has a good capacity to keep on improving in the future.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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?	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	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?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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	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	3	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	Yes
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	NA
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 had a lovely time when I visited your nursery this week. Thank you for talking to me and for letting me see all the clever things you can do.

What I liked most about your nursery

- You like coming to nursery and everyone is very happy.
- Your teachers and other adults care for you very well and make sure that you are always safe.
- You very quickly make friends with other children and help with tidying up.
- There are a lot of very interesting and exciting things for you to do.
- Mrs Smith and all the other adults work very hard to help you to learn as much as you can.
- Your parents and carers think that your nursery is very good too.

What I have asked the nursery to do now

- Mrs Smith and other adults should look at all the things they have written down about what you can do. This will help them to know what they need to do next to help you to learn.

I hope that you will continue being such kind and helpful nursery children.