



Ham Drive Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113051
LEA Plymouth
Inspection number 279081
Inspection dates 9 May 2006 to 9 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mo Roberts HMI

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Ham Drive Ham Estate
School category	Maintained		Ham Estate
Age range of pupils	3 to 5		Plymouth, Devon PL2 2NJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01752 366389
Number on roll	85	Fax number	01752 366813
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Jean Milner
Date of previous inspection	1 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Sue Bates

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 5	9 May 2006 - 9 May 2006	279081

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors.

Description of the school

The nursery school is situated in inner city Plymouth, in an area with significant levels of social deprivation, although the children come from a mixture of backgrounds. Most children attend either a morning or an afternoon session. Eighteen children with particular needs attend all day. Children start in the September following their third birthday. Many of them have below-average language and social skills when they start and approximately a fifth enter with learning difficulties or disabilities. The school is part of an Excellence Cluster, which offers it various support, including help with the children identified as having a particular gift or talent. The baby and toddler unit in the building, although managed by the headteacher, does not form part of this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. Staff hold a strong conviction that all children can succeed. Children are well cared for and develop excellent personal skills. This is due to the calm and well-organised approach adopted by the staff. Children achieve well thanks to a broad curriculum and the kindly, patient guidance given to them by all adults in the school. They make exceptionally good progress in physical development and benefit greatly from a spacious outdoor area and the tranquil garden. Good teaching and the wide range of activities ensure all children are included and do well. The monitoring of teaching and learning is systematic, but it lacks a sharp enough focus to ensure the curriculum is as outstanding as it was graded by the school. All other aspects of the school's self-evaluation are confirmed by inspection evidence. Assessment is detailed and is used effectively to set targets for children's learning. However, in the 'free choice' time, staff cannot quickly gain access to these targets to support their work. Parents are justifiably very pleased with the high levels of care and attention their children receive. The school is led by a dedicated and effective headteacher. The governing body has recently grown in strength and its ability to support the school. The school gives satisfactory value for money. It is well placed to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure the curriculum is enriched and adapted even further to meet the children's needs.
- Ensure all staff working in the large shared area have access to the children's individual targets so they can fully extend their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's achievement is good. They make substantial progress in acquiring new skills, knowledge and understanding in the year they spend in the nursery. The strong focus on personal, social emotional development ensures children have a good start to their school life. They are keen to explore and learn from everything they do. The vast majority reach the expected levels for their age by the time they leave, despite their low attainment on entry. They rapidly improve their vocabulary and speaking skills whilst also learning to cooperate with each other. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities make outstanding progress thanks to the high level of support they are given. Those who learn quickly are challenged effectively.

The children's independence and confidence are a joy to observe. Achievement in mathematics is slightly less secure and the school is taking appropriate action to address this issue. Songs and music, together with movement, are frequently enjoyed. This helps develop physical skills well beyond what is expected for the children's age. They are adept at using a variety of equipment and enjoy creating a range of artwork.

Role play is skilfully used to explore new areas of knowledge and to extend language and social development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The children's personal development is outstanding because of the high priority the school places on their well-being. Children quickly develop positive attitudes to learning and are exceptionally well behaved. They have a strong sense of what is right and wrong. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good, with experiences such as watching the seeds they plant growing in the garden adding to their sense of awe and wonder. Visits to local places and themes such as 'festivals' ensure children learn about their own culture and gain some, but not extensive, knowledge of other cultures. Children develop their independence well. Their self-esteem is fostered through all activities, but especially in role-play and drama activities. They work enthusiastically at cleaning up and know the importance of doing things safely, for example, 'walking feet' rather than 'running feet' are used in the nursery. They are willing to try all sorts of healthy snacks from their self-service table, but are less keen to make healthy choices at lunch. Children keep healthy through very energetic outdoor play. Their achievements in all areas of learning prepare them well for the next stage of learning. Attendance is good and parents report it is hard to persuade children to stay home, even when they are not feeling well, because they enjoy school so much.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Staff know the children very well. They use this information to ensure that the activities on offer provide good opportunities for all to learn. They plan sessions that include a wide variety of things to do and explore. Resources are stimulating and staff spend a lot of quiet time playing alongside children and showing them how to use language effectively. Children quickly learn new words as a result of this attention. Staff give exceptionally good support to those with specific learning needs. They keep a clear record of all children's progress. New learning targets are set for children at appropriate times. These ensure all children, including those who learn quickly or have additional needs, remain challenged to extend their learning. However, when children are free to select for themselves in the large nursery area, staff do not have sufficiently easy access to all the children's latest targets, so their support is general rather than specific to each child. Good adult involvement in the outdoor area contributes substantially to children's strong physical skills. Staff questioning and interest encourage children's inquisitiveness. Children are helped to share and to cooperate so they learn together happily.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum, which is good, is broad and well planned. There are plenty of practical activities both indoors and outside. It is designed to give children space to make decisions and to follow through their own ideas; this effectively supports their growing independence. Children with learning difficulties are fully involved. There are appropriate activities that stretch those who learn quickly. Provision for personal, social, and emotional well-being is exceptionally good. Children are given a strong sense of belonging when they sit in a circle with their own special adult (keyworker) to undertake activities. The curriculum, however, lacks a strong multicultural element. Resources are effectively used to stimulate vocabulary development, for example, in the recent 'builders' headquarters' in the garden play house. The quality of imaginative play is also enhanced by the provision of extra items that the children request, such as a sheet to make a roof for teddy's house in the construction area. The staff effectively use the interactive whiteboard and computers to enrich the curriculum as well as to develop children's information and communication technology skills. Mathematics provision has been extended recently. In the creative area staff encourage children to make decisions and many children experience their first successes in this part of the nursery.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The nursery is safe and secure. Staff work very effectively with parents and carers to ensure children are well looked after. They are trained in child protection procedures and fully understand their responsibilities in this respect. Parents speak highly of the guidance and help they receive from the experienced and dedicated staff. Parental requests for extended care have been acted on, resulting in thriving breakfast and lunch clubs, as well as lively after-school provision. Risk assessments are carried out regularly, and daily in the case of the outdoor area, where vandalism and littering occur.

The children's personal record books give an effective overview of the good progress children make. The key workers provide good support for each child in their group, helping them understand what they need to do next. However, some staff are not aware of the targets of children not in their own key group. Staff make themselves available for discussion with parents at the end of each session and are seen by parents to be very approachable and interested in each child. Many parents have developed their own learning by becoming active participants in the school. This is an effective part of the school's work for the wider community.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. There is a strong collective will to achieve the very best for the children. With the expansion of the services at the school, the headteacher has sensibly delegated some middle management duties. Middle management in turn is developing useful small teams within the nursery to ensure each child's needs are fully met. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is carried out regularly. However, it is not sufficiently tightly focused to have a full impact on the provision. The school is aware of its strengths and weaknesses, only slightly overestimating the quality of the curriculum. The school development plan outlines an appropriate set of issues for further development. For example, it rightly identified mathematics as an area for development when children's mathematics scores showed a potential weakness. The budget is just within the required bounds. Money has been kept back to allow the good staff-to-child ratios to continue next year. The governing body has recently grown in strength and expertise. Individual governors have begun to act in the role of 'critical friends' to support and challenge staff. Governors ensure that statutory requirements are met. The issues from the last inspection have been dealt with. However, the changing nature of the school's intake means that monitoring the provision is a continuing priority. The nursery is well placed to develop further.

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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	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	1	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	2	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	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	3	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	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

Thank you very much for talking to me and helping me find my way about your nursery when I came to visit you. I especially enjoyed waving the ribbons to music and watching your play about Goldilocks and the three bears.

I think all the grown-ups help you to have a lovely time at nursery and to learn lots of new things. There are exciting activities to do and it was very good to see you happily deciding which ones to choose. You are really good at playing together and you listen well to grown-ups. Thank you for behaving so kindly to each other. Your school is a good and a lovely place to be. The plants you are growing make the garden a really special place.

I have asked your teacher to spend a bit more time watching the activities you do with the grown-ups. This is so she can see if there is any more that can be done to make learning even more fun for all of you. I also asked her to make sure that those grown-ups who don't know you as well as your keyworker have a nice easy place to find out what your next learning step (target) is, even when you are in the big area. Maybe she will write them on little cards and put them in a little file box. I know you will be helpful and pass it around if a grown-up you are working with needs to look at it. It is just in case you can't remember what your next learning challenge is.

Please try to eat lots of salad and healthy fruit at lunch - just like you do at snack time. Keep on riding those bikes and running around so you grow up to be healthy and fit.