



Wallace Road Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121786
LEA Northamptonshire
Inspection number 281099
Inspection dates 13 July 2006 to 13 July 2006
Reporting inspector Rajinder Harrison AI

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Wallace Road
School category	Maintained		Northampton
Age range of pupils	3 to 4		Northamptonshire NN2 7EE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01604 713422
Number on roll	75	Fax number	01604 718814
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Kim Baxter

Age group 3 to 4	Inspection dates 13 July 2006 - 13 July 2006	Inspection number 281099
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Wallace Road Nursery has undergone substantial changes over the past two years, including the appointment of new teaching staff and relocation into new purpose built premises. Whilst the majority of children are from a White British background, there are a few from ethnic minority groups, but no children are at an early stage of learning English. A lower than average proportion of children has learning difficulties. Attainment on entry is at the levels expected for children aged three in all the areas of learning.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides good value for money. Inspectors agree with the school's view of itself. Children enjoy being there and flourish in an environment where they feel secure and well cared for. Their behaviour and attitudes are good. Relationships are positive and children trust all the adults who work with them. As a result of good teaching the pupils' achieve well. By the time children leave the school, most attain above the levels expected for their age in all the areas of learning and are very confident in using computers. A particular strength is their personal development. This is because the school encourages children to manage their own learning. However, this does pose a challenge for a few who need a little more guidance in choosing activities that extend them fully in all areas of learning. Very good support for children with learning difficulties helps them to do well. Children's progress is very precisely monitored, but the information gained is not analysed in enough depth to identify how well different groups of children achieve and where improvements might need to be made to meet their needs more fully.

Through good leadership and management the school has successfully relocated into new premises and involved all staff in taking lead responsibilities. They have the capacity to improve the school further. Improvement since the last inspection is good in that the curriculum is now good in all respects, especially provision in the outside area. Self-evaluation procedures are effective in checking that all staff receive the support and training they need to help children achieve well. The partnership with parents is strong and they are very happy with the school because, they say, 'it looks after our children well'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop a more rigorous approach to checking that children get the most out of the full range of activities that are provided.
- Use the very detailed assessment information on individual pupils to help identify more precisely what needs to be improved for different groups of children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and children are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Good checks are made to ensure that all children achieve well. Pupils make good progress and by the time the children leave the school, their performance is above the expected levels in all the areas of learning with a few achieving the early learning goals. Their progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is very good because provision for ICT is outstanding. The pupils' social development is particularly good because of the high emphasis placed on encouraging pupils to become confident and independent young learners. A few children are not confident in their speaking and listening skills because they do not concentrate well enough when these opportunities arise. Children with learning difficulties are supported well and make

good progress. The school sets children challenging targets and the detailed monitoring and tracking procedures check that children reach these targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development is good. Their attendance is satisfactory. Children know what is expected of them, but a few interrupt when others are talking, thus spoiling the atmosphere; for example, when listening to stories or to music. Through sensitive interventions staff help them to appreciate other people's feelings and during role play they discuss the consequences of their actions. Their delighted responses and good behaviour show that they enjoy school and want to learn. For example, one child, while observing his plant, said, 'Wow, look how big it's got!' Another when asked what he liked about school replied 'everything'. Children play and work together well, form positive relationships and trust the adults who work with them. They show confidence and independence as they try new things, exercising their freedom to choose wisely. A few, however, fail to select activities that require them to concentrate harder or that are not instantly appealing. Children contribute well to the life of the community. For example, they have created a display in a local shop and have raised funds for charity. They develop respect for different cultures and faiths through events that celebrate diversity. Visitors to the school help them learn about the wider world around them.

Children know how to keep safe when playing outdoors; for example, applying sun cream in the heat. They learn about healthy lifestyles by sharing nutritious snacks, drinking water and participating in physical exercise. The lunch club develops the partnership between the school and home. However, more could be done to promote healthy eating at lunchtimes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

As a result of the good teaching, learning and achievement are good. Teachers' planning is well organised with a strong emphasis on children learning through practical experiences. Those who can do more are given additional challenges. For example, in ICT, teachers provide programs that offer a range of levels and check what the child can already do before moving them on to the next stage. Children are encouraged to manage their own choice of activity and thus develop independence, but a few are not always given enough direction to enable them to experience everything that is planned from week to week. Skilled support staff maximise their expertise and lead teaching sessions very effectively.

Relationships are good and children who need additional help are confident to ask when they are unsure of what to do. Careful observations of children at work help staff identify how well individuals are doing and what they need to do next. Children

with learning difficulties are successfully integrated in all activities and receive good individual guidance. Resources are used imaginatively and children enjoy exploring new role play settings; the 'train' is proving to be very popular despite some quite 'wobbly' drivers. The outside area is a hive of activity which children explore eagerly. They play safely and tend to their plants, for example, with a real sense of wonder. The whole atmosphere is orderly and productive and children enjoy themselves.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and incorporates a wide range of practical activities and visits where children explore and discover as they learn. As one parent put it, 'the work is exciting and imaginative'. The outside area is particularly attractive and well laid out for practical activities. Provision for ICT is a particular strength. Examples of its application include the use of a digital camera for children to record themselves at work and programming the remote control robot in the imaginative play area. The high emphasis on promoting independence helps children manage their own learning, but this does mean that it is not always easy to check that they always select activities in equal balance from all the areas of learning. A few children would benefit from more opportunities to develop better listening skills. Children with learning difficulties are given the extra support they need to integrate fully in everything. A variety of visitors, for example in music or in celebrations in other cultures, enriches children's experiences. Additionally there are special event days, including the 'bring a plant to school day' and 'dressing up day' that add to the joy of learning. Resources are of high quality particularly in the outside area.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support are good and contribute well to the children's enjoyment of learning. Staff help children form trusting relationships and encourage them to work hard and achieve well. They take every precaution to check children are safe and procedures to ensure child protection are fully in place. For example, risk assessments are carried out for all visits and the home-school link books ensure that up-to-date knowledge of individual children is known and used. Partnerships with parents and other agencies are strong and effective procedures are in place to safeguard children's interests. Parents appreciate the way in which the staff get to know each child individually. Checks on children's well-being are very good, and quick and effective action is taken when problems arise.

Assessment procedures are very detailed and well recorded, although opportunities are sometimes missed to check that children explore everything that is planned during the week. Staff know what each child can do and use this information carefully to set individual targets. These targets are monitored diligently and parents are kept fully informed and encouraged to help their children at home.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is led and managed well. Under the headteacher's good leadership and through effective teamwork, settling into the new premises and restructuring leadership responsibilities were managed smoothly and efficiently. The expertise of individual members of staff is maximised to benefit children; for example, the ICT coordinator has helped staff make very effective use of computers to boost children's learning in this area. It is clear that all staff want the children to do their very best. They make full use of resources and facilities to make this happen. They have the capacity to improve the school further. The school operates in an environment where the children's well-being is paramount. This is why parents and children like their school.

Procedures to monitor and evaluate the school's performance are good. Very detailed reviews of each child's progress help staff to set targets for individuals, and parents are also involved in the process. The school recognises that it could do more to analyse the relative achievement of different groups of children to identify more precisely where improvements need to be made. Teaching is monitored well, with frequent discussions to see how it can be more effective; for example, through further training. Staff are fully involved in planning strategies to help the school improve. Through their regular visits, governors support staff well and gain a clear overview of strengths and weaknesses. Relationship with parents and other stakeholders are good. Parents are kept fully informed of developments through regular newsletters and other channels including the school's website and their views are taken into consideration when decisions are made.

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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	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	3	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	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

Thank you so much for the friendly way you chatted to us when we visited your nursery. We really enjoyed seeing your happy smiles and visiting your lovely outside area where you have some really exciting things to play with. What beautiful plants you have grown! They really make the place look so pretty. We know your families think the nursery is good and we agree.

The things we liked the most:

- You are happy, behave well and look after yourselves so sensibly.
- We loved your bright, cheerful classrooms and listening to you talk about all the exciting things you do, like playing on the climbing frame and riding your bikes.
- We think all the grown ups that work with you want to help you learn as much as you can.
- Everyone takes great care of you and we know you like eating lots of healthy food like fruit and vegetables and cheese and breadsticks – it all looked so yummy!

Here are a few things that we think the grown ups can do to make the nursery even better.

- They can make sure that all of you try all the interesting things adults get ready for you.
- By looking at how well you all get on, they can find ways to make your activities even more interesting.

I hope you go on enjoying all of the exciting activities which help you learn and play.