



Horsham Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125809
LEA West Sussex
Inspection number 282004
Inspection dates 16 May 2006 to 16 May 2006
Reporting inspector Carole Skinner AI

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Horsham Park
School category	Maintained		Horsham
Age range of pupils	3 to 4		West Sussex RH12 1RN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01403 253956
Number on roll	67	Fax number	01403 253956
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2000	Headteacher	Ms Debbie Carter

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 4	16 May 2006 - 16 May 2006	282004

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Horsham Nursery School draws children from a wide variety of backgrounds, both from the town and surrounding villages. Children enter the nursery the term after their third birthday and most leave at the age of four when they start primary school. The majority attend part-time, but there are a number of full-time places which are given to children with social and learning needs. Approximately a third of the children currently on roll have specific learning difficulties or disabilities. Many children enter the nursery with limited language skills and poor understanding of numbers. The nursery is due to be expanded and relocated in 2007.

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 with a number of outstanding features. The school's own view of its effectiveness is similar, although senior managers are more conservative than the inspectors in their judgements of a few aspects. Children really enjoy their time in the school and parents are very happy with the way it is run. As one commented, "All the staff are caring and understand every child's needs."

Children achieve well. They make good progress in all areas of learning and reach standards similar to those expected for their age. The curriculum is well planned to meet children's different needs and to build on their existing knowledge and understanding. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants work very closely together to ensure good support for all children and to check their progress regularly. They make learning fun and are flexible in adapting planned activities to pursue children's own interests. The care, support and guidance for all children are outstanding. Children's well-being is at the heart of every decision, and their personal development is exceptionally good.

Good leadership and management have created a sense of shared responsibility for moving the school forward. Senior managers are successfully juggling the demands of future expansion and relocation into new premises with the need to ensure that children are receiving the best possible education and care. Although there are good systems for checking how well the school is doing, curriculum co-ordinators are not sufficiently involved in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. Effective teamwork and high expectations place the school in a strong position to continue to improve. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the role of curriculum co-ordinators in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in relation to their starting points, which for many are lower than expected for their age. By the time they leave, they are achieving standards broadly similar to those expected for four-year-olds. The school's own analysis of children's progress identified that boys were lagging behind girls. This is improving as teachers now plan more topics and tasks that appeal to boys and motivate them to learn. When they start school, many children have very limited knowledge of numbers. They make particularly good progress in their mathematical development because teachers take every opportunity to familiarise them with numbers and counting objects.

Many children are unable to communicate clearly when they start school. Adults talk to children all the time and help them to listen carefully, which improves their communication skills. Effective links between the six areas of learning ensure that

children make good progress in all aspects. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are learning English for the first time make good progress because they receive very good additional support and guidance.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding because they are firmly at the centre of everything the school does. Children love coming to the nursery and throw themselves into every activity with great enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment. This is reflected in their good attendance and exceptionally good behaviour. The outstanding outdoor environment helps children to develop a sense of wonder at the world around them. They learn to get on with others through sharing equipment, while high expectations of behaviour enable them to acquire a strong sense of right and wrong. Children learn to appreciate aspects of different cultures, for example, as they listen to each other's languages and taste a variety of food.

Children handle equipment safely and are sensible when clambering on large equipment. They know they must wear goggles to work at the woodwork bench. They understand why they eat fruit for a healthy snack and they have plenty of opportunity for vigorous exercise. Children develop independence by choosing activities and taking responsibility for clearing up at the end of each session. Through role-play and visits, such as a trip on a bus, children learn how to handle money and use a variety of electronic equipment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good because all staff understand how young children learn and have high expectations of them. Teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants work very well together in teams to plan interesting activities for the children. Tasks take good account of children's individual needs and capabilities, and build well on their interests and prior learning. Activities are organised to maximise the use of the limited indoor space and the excellent outdoor area. There is an effective balance between activities that are led by adults and those chosen by children. A constant buzz of excitement and chatter shows how much children enjoy learning. They confidently explore the wide variety of activities and resources, learning to be independent, choosing, sharing and talking about what they are doing. As one parent wrote, "My son can learn through choosing what he's interested in."

Constant talk and interaction between adults and children help to develop vocabulary and communication skills and provide good support for children at the early stages of learning English. Adults make detailed observations to check how well children are doing. The school is currently exploring ways to ensure that ongoing assessments are used more effectively to track children's progress and to help plan the next steps in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it meets children's varied needs and interests well. Although teachers plan learning around themes, they are flexible enough to allow children to influence the way these develop. Daily evaluations focus on what has been learnt and clearly identify the next steps in learning for the children. The introduction of new topics, such as 'Routes and Maps' and 'Things that Move,' has enhanced children's knowledge and understanding of the world, which teachers identified as an area for improvement. The use of computers to aid children's learning is less well developed. High priority is given to the development of physical skills, both in the outdoor area and through initiatives such as employing a tennis coach. The school provides an excellent variety of additional experiences to enrich children's learning. Children have recently enjoyed a visiting storyteller and musicians. They were very excited about the previous day's experience of seeing a 'visiting farm' in their play area.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The outstanding quality of care and support makes a significant contribution to children's progress and their eagerness to participate in activities. Excellent arrangements to help children settle into nursery enable them to cope with new situations. Parents are confident their children are safe and well cared for in school. As one put it, "Staff are very professional, caring and attentive to each child's needs." There are rigorous procedures for ensuring children's health, safety and well-being. Daily fresh fruit snacks and excellent opportunities for regular outdoor exercise help children to lead healthy lifestyles.

Highly effective support and guidance for children at an early stage of learning English, and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, help them to make good progress. Excellent links with children's families provide further valuable support. Initiatives such as the Family Numeracy Project, story sacks and the toy library help parents to support their children's learning at home.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management have created a positive environment in which children's personal development and their progress in learning are nurtured equally well. Following several recent changes of leadership, and despite the uncertainties caused by the nursery's planned relocation, the headteacher has successfully led improvements to the quality of teaching, curriculum provision and learning resources. Staff morale is high and effective teamwork ensures the nursery runs smoothly and efficiently.

The headteacher monitors teaching on a regular basis and this has increased the rigour with which the school evaluates its own effectiveness. Staff and governors have become more involved in checking how well the school is doing and in planning for its future development. All contribute to the school improvement plan, which provides a useful tool to move the school forward. Parents' views are sought regularly and used as a measure of the school's success. However, although the role of curriculum co-ordinators has developed since the last inspection, the part they play in monitoring specific areas of learning is currently too limited. Provision for children at the early stages of learning English is managed very well, as is the identification of and support for those who have learning difficulties or other forms of specific need. To this end, the school maintains outstanding links with many outside agencies. Careful tracking of each child's progress enables teachers to ensure their needs are met.

Although frequent changes of leadership slowed the pace of improvement since the last inspection, senior managers have demonstrated that they have the skills, expertise and enthusiasm to cope with the demands of planning for expansion and relocation while ensuring that the nursery continues to improve on its present site.

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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?	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	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	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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?	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	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	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	Yes
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	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

We had a really good time when we came to see your nursery. The part we enjoyed most was watching you having fun in your lovely outside play area and talking to some of you.

We saw lots of good things while we were there. Here are some of them:

- Your teachers and helpers give you lots of exciting things to do which you really enjoy. We could tell how much you liked the farm animals that came to visit!
- You do well at learning new things, such as counting up to five and finding out about how things work.
- You all get on very well together and help each other.
- We were very pleased to see how good you are at tidying up.
- The grown-ups take very good care of you and keep a close eye on how well you are doing.

We have asked the teachers to see if they can all look for ways to make the nursery even better.

Thank you for letting us come to visit. We hope you all enjoy the rest of your time at nursery.