



# Hungerford Nursery School Centre for Children and Families

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 109755  
**Local Authority** West Berkshire  
**Inspection number** 288487  
**Inspection date** 12 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Sean O'Toole

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery	<b>School address</b>	The Croft
<b>School category</b>	Community		Hungerford
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-5		RG17 0HY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01488 682628
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	68	<b>Fax number</b>	01488 686998
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Nick Furr
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jane Simons
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 April 2002		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The Nursery draws children from a wide area. Almost all are from White British heritage. The school is located in an area of relative economic advantage. Very few children have learning difficulties and attainment on admission is average. Children start at the Nursery either shortly before or after their fourth birthday and almost all have benefited from pre-school educational experience and attend full time. The Nursery has been rebuilt since the previous inspection and was designated as a children's centre in August 2006. The centre has been inspected by the Early Years division and there is also a separate report available on the care provided.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

'We could not purchase, at any price, a better pre-school education. A love of learning is nurtured in a relaxed, industrious atmosphere where the individual's needs are most certainly observed and respected', wrote one parent. This statement captures the essence of this outstanding school. Because the children are always at the centre of the school's work they thrive physically, academically, socially and emotionally. They are prepared excellently for the next stage of education.

Staff nurture the children's confidence and learning skills through their outstanding teaching and a challenging curriculum. Individual assessments of children are used very effectively by staff to plan the next steps in learning. They are especially successful in promoting personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. The school has correctly started work on adding detail to the assessment of knowledge and understanding of the world. High quality care and exceptional links with parents ensure that new entrants settle quickly and soon adapt to the Nursery's routines. As one boy said, 'I love coming to nursery, my teachers are nice and they help me'. Children build excellent relationships with adults and their behaviour and attitudes are exemplary.

Several factors contribute to the school's success. The inspirational headteacher has built a high calibre team who are totally committed to school improvement. The transition to a children's centre and new building have been managed exceptionally well and everyone is clear about their role. There is no complacency here and staff are ambitious for the children's success. The extension of opportunities for outdoor learning is a clear illustration of the staff's commitment to building on excellence and making learning fun. There is excellent capacity to build on the school's substantial strengths.

Parents speak highly of all the school provides. As one said, 'I want to be four and to come here'. Every child in this school matters and this is reflected in the outstanding provision for those with learning difficulties and the more able. As a result, when they leave, boys and girls are working at levels which are in advance of those expected for their age in all of the areas of learning. Their achievement is outstanding because of the rich opportunities to explore, investigate and work independently and with others.

### What the school should do to improve further

Extend the assessment of knowledge and understanding of the world to include a focus on identifying children's specific skills.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Right from the start children are involved in making decisions about their learning. They benefit from lots of support and guidance from the staff who quickly pinpoint the next steps in learning. As a result, standards in all of the areas of learning are in advance of those expected for the children's age. Boys and girls work very well together

and their personal, social and emotional development is especially good. These skills give them the confidence to tackle the very challenging and interesting curriculum.

Progress for children of all abilities and backgrounds is outstanding and their achievement is high. Children with learning difficulties make excellent progress, thriving on activities which are geared to their specific requirements. The more able are set challenging work such as 'writing' in their own words the story of the Three Little Pigs. Opportunities to explore language and improve vocabulary and knowledge of the sounds of letters contribute much to the high quality of children's work in communication, language and literacy. Children achieve outstanding levels of performance in their physical development because of the high quality of the outdoor environment.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The day starts with an excited buzz as children eagerly rush in to work. It is obvious that the children love learning. They are highly motivated and have exemplary attitudes and behaviour. They have a well developed sense of responsibility, show care for each other and are always willing to help, especially with tidying up. Children make exceptional progress in understanding how to be healthy and safe because of the emphasis on exercise and learning to use tools and equipment correctly. They enjoy the healthy school meals and independently serve themselves with healthy snacks and drinks. Lunchtime is a very sociable time when children try new foods and share in conversation. They love the challenges of the outdoor play area and can often be seen using equipment inventively such as in building a chocolate factory from big bricks.

Children develop an excellent awareness of belonging, not only in the nursery but as part of the wider community. Teamwork is especially effective and children have highly developed negotiating skills; they listen readily to ideas and willingly respond to others' suggestions. Their outstanding personal development and well-being, linked to high levels of achievement prepare them excellently for their next schools.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Sessions are planned thoroughly taking account of the children's needs and abilities. Staff are knowledgeable about how young children learn. There is an excellent balance between the direct teaching of skills, opportunities for the children to learn independently and individual or group support. The teaching of basic skills is threaded successfully throughout the session and makes a substantial contribution to children's success in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.

One of the most successful aspects of the teaching is the way that staff question the children and encourage them to respond. In one session the children investigated torches and colour changes. The teacher then introduced a book of science experiments which absorbed the children and enhanced learning. Staff are keen and accurate observers of the children's progress and record their achievements in detail. Assessment is accurate and includes video evidence which is shared with parents. It is especially effective in identifying the progress made in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development but is not as well developed in pinpointing the children's achievements in knowledge and understanding of the world.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding and children thrive on its variety and challenge. Learning is made practical and interesting so that children of all abilities can grasp new ideas. Staff are skilful in including everyone. Individual play plans to support those with learning difficulties are of high quality and all staff use them to maximise the children's progress. Parents value the opportunities provided. As one said, 'I wish my school had been as interesting'. Staff are quick to adapt their planning to build on the enthusiasms of the children. After one girl had made a puppet, the idea was developed to make up a very entertaining play. There is outstanding provision for personal, social and health education. The fostering of teamwork, encouragement of independence and promotion of initiative are essential aspects of this highly effective provision. Excellent links with parents, integration with the early years provision, outstanding contacts with other schools and the community contribute much to the school's curriculum and children's learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school provides outstanding care, support and guidance. This provision is greatly appreciated by parents and contributes much to the way children settle and become confident learners. Staff create a haven of calm and purpose in which children are nurtured and consequently enabled to fulfil their potential. The school is safe and secure. Health and safety matters receive immediate action. Staff encourage the children to be adventurous in their learning but make sure that all risks are fully covered. All policies and procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of children are applied robustly. Staff know the children thoroughly and respond to their needs. They are highly skilled in offering support and encouragement. They keep parents very well informed of their children's academic progress and personal development. Academic guidance is of high quality and staff use the information from assessment to guide the children on their next steps in learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding and supported excellently by a knowledgeable and effective governing body. The headteacher has guided the school through its recent changes with great skill and success. Parents, staff and governors are full of praise for the ways in which the school has maintained its vibrant ethos through a time of reconstruction. All the points raised in the Early Years Inspectorates' report have been successfully addressed.

A particularly strong feature is the successful delegation of responsibilities to staff. The headteacher clearly knows the staff's gifts and talents and uses them to good effect. This has helped to create a high performing team who feel valued and empowered to use their initiative. Thorough self evaluation has helped the school to build on the strengths outlined in the previous inspection report. As a result, children's achievement is outstanding aided by the high quality of the curriculum. The school's success is rooted in the belief that all children deserve the best. Sharply focused analysis of teaching, sometimes using video, has enabled all staff to see their strengths and areas for development and resulted in consistently high quality teaching. Governors also play their part in asking probing questions and rigorously evaluating the school's progress in meeting the targets in its improvement plan. Long and short term goals are clearly stated and provide an excellent basis for the school to improve further.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

### Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I had a fantastic day when I visited your school. Thank you for helping me to find out about it. I enjoyed it very much, especially watching you build the chocolate factory, writing about the Three Little Pigs and watching your puppet show. It was lovely to hear all the nice things you said about your teachers and what you like to learn. Your mums said how much they like the school and some of them would like to be children again so they could come to nursery too.

Lots of wonderful things happen in your school.

- You are really good at playing together and taking turns.
- Everyone works hard and listens carefully.
- You work very hard and do lots of interesting things. I was really impressed by how good you are at concentrating for a long time.
- Your teachers are super and they make learning fun.
- Everyone in the Nursery helps to make it a special and caring place.
- You learn new things very quickly.

I have asked the teachers to get even better at checking on some of the things you learn.

I hope that you will always be as happy and successful at school.

Sean O'TooleLead inspector