

# New Mills Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112477
<b>Local Authority</b>	DERBYSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	289294
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Brooker HMI

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	60
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Cara Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Claire Inman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 February 2001
<b>School address</b>	Sett Close Off Market Street New Mills Derbyshire SK22 4AQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01663 745098
<b>Fax number</b>	01663 745098

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Children come to the nursery school from a wide range of family backgrounds but almost all are from White British families. There are more boys than girls. Children attend school part-time either in the morning or afternoon. Most children have had some pre-nursery experience and their skills when they start, although wide ranging, are broadly typical of those expected for their age. A small number of children have learning difficulties or disabilities; currently one child has a statement of special educational need.

## 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 some outstanding features. It provides a happy, caring and supportive environment where children are able to thrive. They make good progress in their learning and outstanding progress in their personal development. One parent summed up the overwhelmingly positive views of the others, saying that 'The teachers genuinely care about the children as individuals. All children are made to feel valued and able to be themselves in this very happy environment.'

Relationships between staff and children are excellent. The school's outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that children feel safe and secure and really enjoy coming to school. Children's personal development and well-being are paramount. They learn how to collaborate, work independently, use their initiative and imagination, and also how to care for one another. These important skills prepare them well for their future education and for later life.

The starting points for most children are broadly in line with those expected for their age. However, a small number have poor communication skills, and there are also significant weaknesses in some children's personal development. By the time the children leave the nursery, they make at least good progress in most areas of learning, and outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

Teaching and learning are good. Children achieve particularly well when work is targeted carefully. Visits to the town and places such as the strawberry farm enhance the good curriculum. These trips and the wide range of visitors provide children with interesting and varied learning experiences that broaden their horizons and promote good progress. The school's accommodation presents day-to-day and longer-term challenges. The sloping outdoor play area and awkward indoor space have always presented difficulties, but staff work very hard, and with considerable ingenuity, to create a stimulating learning environment and to plan interesting activities. Staff use their resources effectively to encourage the children to investigate, explore and become independent.

The school works well with other agencies and with parents to help support individual children's learning and development. Parents feel consulted and well-informed, and appreciate the excellent care, guidance and support that their children receive. As one parent said, 'The staff have always been calm and caring and have a lovely relationship with the children. They help us to support my child's learning'. One example of good practice is the 'story sacks' where staff and parents work in partnership to promote reading.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is passionate about the children's welfare and personal development. She has high expectations and knows all the children very well. This is reflected in the school's accurate, albeit modest, self-evaluation. However, reviews of the school's work do not pinpoint sharply how the best teaching effectively promotes learning. Although procedures for checking the work of the school are developing suitably, they do not involve the governors as much as they should. The school has addressed the issues raised in the last inspection and has demonstrated that it has good capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the learning environment by continuing to work on the accommodation and outdoor play facilities.

- Embed the systems for checking the school's work by evaluating more rigorously the teaching and learning and by developing further the role of the governors.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

However, a small number of children, mainly boys, have poor speaking and listening skills, and there are also weaknesses in some children's personal, social and emotional development. During their time in the school, children make good progress in most areas of learning because of good teaching and outstanding care, guidance and support. The staff place a strong emphasis on personal, social and emotional development in all activities. Consequently, progress in this area of learning is outstanding. Children reach levels slightly above those expected for their age by the time they leave.

The school makes good use of a comprehensive assessment profile to make initial assessments of attainment, to set challenging targets and then to track the children's progress. The information is used diagnostically to guide teaching and to target interventions that meet children's different needs. Children with learning difficulties make outstanding progress because their needs are identified early and they receive additional and effective support from staff.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Children's personal development is outstanding. The emphasis on developing children's self-esteem and confidence underpins their good academic progress and the way that they develop as independent and caring individuals. Children are very well behaved; they feel safe and know that it is important to be healthy. During the day the children drink water and eat fruit and healthy snacks, many of which they prepare for themselves. The children are keen to use the outdoor areas and enjoy all the practical physical activities offered.

Attendance is good because children enjoy coming to school. Children are proud of their positive behaviour because it is constantly reinforced and is also nicely celebrated with the 'treasure keeper' awards.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Children learn the difference between right and wrong and treat each other with kindness and respect because staff have high expectations of them and are good role models. Children are developing a very good understanding of cultures other than their own. They make an effective contribution to the local community by participating in fund raising events; they also embrace recycling enthusiastically.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good, and is outstanding in developing children's personal and social skills. Staff work effectively as a team to ensure that learning activities are carefully planned and very well structured with specific outcomes. There is a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led work. Children make good progress when staff ask questions that challenge and extend the children's thinking. Teaching assistants provide good support and work closely with teachers to keep a careful check on children's progress in all areas of learning.

This information is used well to plan activities that meet the different learning needs of the children, including the most able and those with learning difficulties or disabilities.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. All children have access to a good range of interesting activities that are carefully planned so that the specific needs of individuals are suitably met. The small group provision both for children with learning difficulties and for the more able is helping these children to make very good progress.

Despite the challenges presented by the school's accommodation and outdoor space, the staff make inventive use of resources to develop and enhance children's learning. Digital cameras, magnifying glasses and binoculars are used, for example, to develop the children's observational skills and their curiosity about the world around them. There are good opportunities for children to develop their basic skills in reading, writing, numeracy and information and communication technology across the curriculum.

Visits to local places, together with visitors and special events such as the African drummers, circus skills and Indian cookery, enrich the curriculum and add to the children's enjoyment. One parent summed up well the views of many others: 'The school is constantly doing new and exciting things such as the 'den maker' and 'zoo lab' that spark the children's imagination.'

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its children, and, at times, even for parents themselves. This helps children to feel safe and valued and results in excellent behaviour. Children receive good academic guidance and those with learning difficulties or disabilities have outstandingly good support. Parents commented on the speed and responsiveness of the school in identifying issues and providing suitable support. The school is always seeking ways to strengthen its provision. The recent appointment of a teaching assistant to promote the eating of healthy snacks has had a positive impact on the children's healthy eating. Communication with parents is a strength because it establishes a productive partnership between home and school.

All arrangements are in place for child protection and health and safety. Procedures for safeguarding children meet national requirements.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads her team very well; morale in the school is high and teamwork is a real strength. She is always looking for ways to take the school's provision further by developing new ideas. The school takes care to seek the views of parents and children, and acts on their responses through its subsequent action planning. School self-evaluation is broadly accurate, but tends to judge itself rather too harshly. Systems for checking the school's work are developing. Effective use is made of rigorous assessment information to monitor performance, but procedures for monitoring the school's work, particularly teaching and learning, are not yet sufficiently rigorous. The governors give good

support and feel well informed, but their role in monitoring the school is also under-developed. The resourceful way that the school has strengthened its provision since the last inspection and managed its difficult accommodation demonstrates that there is good capacity to improve.

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## Annex A

## 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>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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	2
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>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

11 July 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of New Mills Nursery School, New Mills, High Peak, Derbyshire, SK22 4AQ

Thank you for making me feel welcome and for talking to me about your work. Lots of your mums and dads wrote letters about your nursery. They told me that it is a very friendly and happy place and I agree with them.

Here are some of the things that I especially liked about your nursery.

- All the grown-ups make it a lovely place to come to work and play. Everyone takes good care of you all.
- The adults who help you have lots of good ideas to make your work interesting.
- You are kind to each other and remember to share and take turns.
- You really enjoy the visitors and the trips that you do, and you also have great fun playing outside and using the cameras.

I have asked all the adults who work with you to make sure that they keep checking up on all your work. I have also asked them to carry on improving the indoor and outdoor areas in the nursery.

Thank you for such a lovely day!

Yours sincerely

Paul Brooker

Her Majesty's Inspector