



Tarnerland Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114350
Local Authority Brighton and Hove
Inspection number 289884
Inspection date 10 January 2007
Reporting inspector Brenda Spencer

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	St John's Place
School category	Maintained		Brighton
Age range of pupils	0-4		BN2 0GR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01273 294199
Number on roll (school)	113	Fax number	01273 607651
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Stephen Bell
		Headteacher	Frankie Stanton
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Tarnerland Nursery is a small school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin and the other quarter come from a range of seven other ethnic backgrounds. Fourteen children speak English as an additional language. Their home languages are predominantly Portuguese, Italian and Arabic. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is higher than the national average. The school has the Healthy Schools silver award and the Eco School bronze award. As partner in the Tarner Children's Centre, the school has close links with a wide range of additional health, care and educational services. The school runs full day care for children from birth to five, extended sessions and holiday provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school believes 'childhood should be an amazing and precious time to be valued and celebrated for itself as well as being a preparation for adulthood'. So it is at Tarnerland Nursery. The school and parents are quite right that it provides an outstanding quality of education and gives excellent value for money. Its attitude towards seeking excellence in every respect means it should continue to do so.

The provision is outstanding. The curriculum fully lives up to the school's commitment to 'offer our children childhood experiences that they will treasure and that will help them develop to their full potential as citizens of the future'. The excellent quality of teaching and learning and the care, support and guidance children receive result in outstanding achievement. Children build from average starting points to reach standards which are very high in almost all aspects of their learning.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The leadership of the school is forward thinking. Its programme for professional development keeps the school's provision at the cutting edge of best practice. Assessment data is used very well. It shows that all groups are flourishing, although there are some differences in attainment of boys and girls which are being addressed. The development plan arises from thorough reviews of the school's practice but sometimes does not show how it will measure the success of its work on the children's achievement. Staff and governors are a very constructive team. Strong links are forged with other local services and the school sees its role in influencing practice outside its own walls as an important responsibility.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure the way the school measures the success of its development work gives priority to checking these developments have a positive impact on children's learning
- reduce the differences in the skills of boys and girls in information and communication technology and literacy and language.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

On entry to the Foundation Stage, children's attainment is broadly average. All groups make excellent progress, achieving very well to reach very high standards in nearly all areas of the curriculum before transferring to Reception classes. Children's personal, social, emotional and physical development is remarkable and reflects the superb provision in these areas. Spoken language is highly advanced because staff model its use so well and the curriculum provides such rich opportunities for discussion. The school should congratulate itself on how well vulnerable children and those with English as an additional language flourish and do well academically and personally.

The school is far from complacent. Assessment data are used extremely well to compare the attainment of each group year by year with national trends. The school analyses

well the differences in attainment in detail across the curriculum between groups of children, such as girls and boys. This means quick action is taken to address any shortcomings. Presently, the school is acting with success to help boys reach the same high standards as girls in language and literacy. The data show girls, whilst doing much better than their national peers, do not attain as well as boys at Tarnerland in using information and communication technology.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

It is hardly surprising children enter school really eagerly. One parent described it as 'paradise for children'. Children are rarely absent other than for reasons of illness. They are active indoors and outdoors, enjoy good food and are knowledgeable about the importance of hygiene. They are very independent and resourceful but confident about seeking help if needed. The many opportunities they have to select their own activities mean they are highly motivated and sustain interest in what they are doing. They develop a strong sense of responsibility not only for themselves but also for others. One child commented, 'I had a turn yesterday, I don't need one today'. Children help one another and show concern for the wider world through recycling and raising funds for charity. The strong emphasis on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means children are sensitive and respectful. They get along with each other and appreciate their differences. Their behaviour is excellent. Children's views are sought and valued and this means they are very articulate and have strong self-esteem. They are prepared for the future world of work extremely well, developing to a high level the necessary personal, academic and social skills for success.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Staff have a thorough understanding of best practice in early childhood education. They have an impressive ability to help children think for themselves through probing questions and to support children really well in making decision for themselves. Staff plan exciting activities carefully tailored to meet the needs of the children. They are confident enough to work flexibly, responding to the moment, and to abandon plans which may no longer be relevant. Inevitably children's independence, interest and excitement and motivation to learn are very high indeed. The warmth of relationships and encouragement mean children feel confident to try new things. Staff provide excellent models of use of language and investigative behaviour to extend learning which children adopt in their own activities, such as exploring soap flakes, touching, smelling and looking carefully and describing what they see. Staff are alert to the opportunities in conversations with children which arise incidentally, for example what was the difference between the Spanish and English version of a film. Important aspects of learning, such as cultural development, are woven naturally into the fabric of

everyday events. If the quality occasionally slips below excellent, the school knows exactly what is needed to address this.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The high quality of the curriculum is reflected in children's enthusiasm for their activities and the very good progress they make in their learning. The individual preferences they have about where and how they want to learn are catered for very well. The organisation of the day is flexible so children can make choices and revisit activities to work at length. This all helps them learn how to maintain concentration very well. Frequent and interesting visitors bring inspiration to children's learning. The children followed up a visit of sheep by making a cow, milking it and delivering a calf. A full range of stimulating experiences is available both inside and outside. As one parent remarked, 'The meadow is a magical place for children to explore'. Staff seek the views of children about what works for them, for example to encourage boys' writing and try out their suggestions. This research approach supports the school very well in seeking excellence.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Both children and parents feel that their welfare is a main priority, captured by the comment, 'Our son will look back with fondness at this special place and time in his life'. All the necessary procedures are in place to keep children protected and in the care of suitable adults. Staff assess children very well by observing them at their activities and by talking to them and their parents. This information is used to plan and meet very well the different needs of children, for example those using English as an additional language or those with learning difficulties. Their thoughtful conversations with staff provide excellent guidance to children on how to improve as well as encouraging them to think for themselves.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and management supported by highly effective staff and governors. The school has a very clear vision for its development and contributes significantly to influencing improvements in other settings. It works hard to develop extensive links with other health, care and education services. The quality of training and dedication of its community keep the school at the cutting edge of high quality provision. Staff and governors make a very constructive contribution to strategic planning and keeping the provision under review. Sensible decisions are taken to ensure the school's financial stability.

The school's self-evaluation is thorough and takes account of a wide range of external and internal views. The opinions of parents and children are central to the process.

Consequently, the school has an accurate view of its many impressive strengths and what it needs to do to achieve excellence. For example, this process has led to recent and continuing improvements in the achievement of boys in literacy. This is all drawn together in an effective plan for improvement. Whilst the leadership can identify the impact the initiatives have had on children's achievement, some co-ordinators' action plans do not often enough include this in their measures for success.

Since the last very successful inspection, standards have risen despite a rising number of children with learning difficulties. This reflects the improved systems for assessing children's needs and helping them to make substantial progress across the areas of learning. The caring ethos supports all children very well in their personal, social and emotional development. Consequently, the school is going from strength to strength and is well positioned to continue likewise.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	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

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I came to your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you very much.

One of your parents said that your school is 'magical'. I know you think everything is fun and I agree with you. Because everything you do is so interesting and the staff teach and care for you so well, you are learning very well. I was so impressed by how polite and well behaved you are and so thoughtful to one another.

The staff and governors work very hard with your parents and others to make sure your school is the best it can be. They want to think about how all they do will help you grow up into wonderful people. Make sure you let them know when they ask your opinion. I know the boys have told them what helps them write and the staff are trying out your ideas. They are also going to think about how to help the girls use technology as well as the boys so I expect you may have ideas on that too.

Please thank your parents for kindly sending in the questionnaires and letters. These helped me to understand how well the school is doing.