



# Whitehills Nursery School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 121787  
**Local Authority** Northamptonshire  
**Inspection number** 292216  
**Inspection date** 6 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Arnalena Bee

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>	Acre Lane
<b>School category</b>	Maintained		Northampton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-4		NN2 8DF
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 842957
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	80	<b>Fax number</b>	01604 842957
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Terry Wright
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Jan Waller
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 May 2001		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Whitehills Nursery has 80 children on roll. 75 children attend part-time and 5 full-time. The children enter the Nursery with levels of attainment that are broadly average. The majority of children are of White British heritage. Children are admitted to the Nursery after their third birthday and leave in the term before they are five. The proportion of children with learning difficulties is average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Whitehills is a good nursery in which adults and children work very happily alongside each other, respecting and valuing what each other says and does. One parent wrote, 'The atmosphere is always so welcoming, vibrant, exciting and creative' whilst another commented on its 'Five star quality education'. Parents' views of the Nursery are overwhelmingly positive. Enjoyment is a keystone in the school's philosophy, and shines through in all that the children do. A lovely example was seen as children observed other children re-enacting the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff', their eyes wide and mouths open as they enthusiastically watched.

Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. Children are very keen and eager to take part in all the exciting and interesting activities they are offered and respond very positively towards each other. Behaviour is excellent. The importance of thinking for themselves is promoted very effectively. Children move around purposefully and, if in doubt, confidently ask for help. All adults are very aware of each child's individual needs and develop very good relationships with the children. The expert way that they question the children as they play, to develop learning, is a strength of the good teaching. Children have many opportunities to make marks on paper and more able children begin to develop an idea of how to write letters and words. However, they are not always successfully shown how to develop their handwriting so that they can learn how to form letters correctly, for example when they write their name.

The children achieve well in the Nursery. By the time they leave, their attainment is higher than that expected for their age. Children are very well prepared for their next stage of education. The use of the outdoor area, in particular the regular visits to Sywell County Park, is a strength of the outstanding curriculum that caters very well for the needs of young children. In whatever the children do, the care, guidance and support they receive are at least good. The personal support the children receive is of the highest quality. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and her staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn. Issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. Although satisfactory, the monitoring of teaching and learning does not clearly identify what adults need to do to get better. The good improvement since the previous inspection and the good improvements in the curriculum and in children's personal development show that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Place more emphasis on developing basic handwriting skills, in particular for the more able children.
- Ensure that monitoring of teaching focuses more on specific areas for development.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The children achieve well because all adults pay great attention to their individual needs. By the time they leave the Nursery, almost all of the children exceed the expected levels for four-year-olds. They are especially successful in the development of personal and social skills because in everything the children do, adults successfully promote personal independence and social skills. The previous inspection report stated that children did not do as well in mathematical and physical development. This is no longer the case. Useful assessment information collected on all children shows the good progress that all children, including those with learning difficulties, make. Adults use information collected on individual children well to identify where improvements are needed so that good progress can be sustained.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Children's overall personal development is outstanding. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children begin to learn about different cultures, for example, by looking at attractive displays which promote the Chinese New Year. Their moral and social development is outstanding. The children develop high quality personal and social skills because of the staff's shared firm and successful commitment to promoting them at all times. As a result, the children develop quickly as individuals and become enthusiastic learners. By learning simple rules such as not running in the Nursery, they begin to understand about the need to keep themselves safe. Attendance is good. The children come in smiling and very eager to get on. One parent wrote that her child often wanted to go to the Nursery at the weekend. During well-organised snack time, which promotes personal and social skills very well, children begin to understand that the fruit and vegetables they are encouraged to eat are good for them. Both in school and during adventurous activities at Sywell Country Park, they begin to learn that it is important to keep fit. Children make a good contribution to the community through their contributions to a range of charities and activities such as inviting grandparents into school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The bright and stimulating areas that have been developed within the Nursery encourage children to want to learn. Teaching is good because interesting activities are planned to support all areas of learning and the children's individual needs. As a result, the children feel secure in their learning and confidently ask if they need help. Learning in most activities is good. More able children, who recognise and write a few letters and words such as their names, are not consistently given good guidance to

learn how to form letters correctly. In a very small minority of activities, opportunities are missed to enable small groups of children to share their ideas. Although the need to listen carefully is promoted well in most activities, very occasionally, listening skills are not continually well promoted throughout the whole session. Assessment information is used well to help staff plan work that successfully helps children to achieve well.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The outstanding curriculum is stimulating and rich and covers all areas of learning well. Children have many outdoor opportunities to learn. The programme to develop children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent. There has been considerable improvement in curriculum provision since the last inspection, in particular relating to the way that Sywell Country Park is used. Photographs of children taking part in adventurous activities show that they thoroughly enjoy these regular well-organised visits. These visits particularly promote the development of children's personal and social skills and physical development very well. A parent wrote about one of these visits and said, 'My son always has a story or song to teach me when he gets home.' The curriculum is adapted well to suit children who have been identified as having specific needs and, as a result, enables them to make the same good progress as their classmates.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The good level of care and support provided for the children is an important factor in the success of the Nursery. As a result, the children are very happy and know that the adults are there to help them. Good links have been made with external specialists to help provide for the specific needs of some children. Adults encourage and help all children, including those with learning difficulties, to achieve well, although there is sometimes not enough challenge for more able children to develop their handwriting.

Adults collect lots of information which shows how well the children are doing and then use it well to enable them to improve further. Parents are very happy with the care provided and wrote supportive statements such as 'I feel that my child is cared for in a safe environment where his individual needs are well catered for.'

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The good quality leadership and management is a key factor in the children's good achievement and their outstanding personal development. The headteacher leads an effective team that shares a clear vision for the Nursery's further improvement and is determined to ensure that all children do as well as they can. The headteacher's monitoring of teaching and learning is satisfactory but still does not always identify

closely enough specific points for improvement. The school's good accommodation and resources are used effectively to enhance learning both indoors and out. Learning is further enhanced by well-organised visits to a local country park. The role of the governors is satisfactory and developing. Governors have a clearer picture of the strengths in the Nursery than areas for development.

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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>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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	2

### 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	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<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>	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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit you. We really enjoyed talking to you and seeing what an exciting time you have in your lovely nursery.

I am writing to let you know what we found out about your Nursery

- We think you are given exciting things to do which help you all do well.
- When you go to Sywell Country Park, you learn about lots of interesting things.
- We think, and your parents agree, that the nursery is well led and managed.
- You are well cared for and kept safe during your time in Nursery and your parents are very happy about this.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you all get on so well with each other and the adults who help you.
- Your nursery has prepared you very well for your next school.

To make the school even better, we have asked your teachers to

- check that those of you who have started to write letters and words are shown how to write each letter properly
- make sure that after adults have been watched teaching, they know what they have to do to improve.

Keep smiling and having fun as you learn.