



# Dorking Nursery School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 124912  
**Local Authority** Surrey  
**Inspection number** 293136  
**Inspection date** 31 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Bernice Magson

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>	West Street
<b>School category</b>	Maintained		Dorking
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-5		RH4 1BY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01306 882397
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	71	<b>Fax number</b>	01306 882397
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Laura Parker
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Beckett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 February 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

Dorking Nursery School is situated in the centre of Dorking. It admits children to full or part-time education from Dorking and surrounding villages. Extended services are provided on the same site. A third of Nursery children have significant learning difficulties and disabilities or speech and communication needs, including some in specialist provision. A small number of children speak English as an additional language. The Nursery is part of a federation of schools, including nursery, primary, secondary and special schools.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Dorking Nursery is an outstanding school that provides children with an excellent start to their education. The staff and governors seek constant improvement and strive for the very best provision. Parents are very appreciative of all the school offers. One parent reflected the views of many as she commented 'It's absolutely fabulous here. Children learn very well because of the freedom to explore through wonderful activities'.

All groups of children achieve excellently. Their personal development is outstanding. Children enjoy school. They skip happily into the building and play excitedly, discovering the world around them through an excellent range of activities, which are appropriate for their age and ability. Children are calm, purposeful and independent. Their behaviour is excellent, exemplifying very well the school's policy of 'sharing and taking turns'. From a very low starting point on entry, many children reach standards close to those expected for their age by the time they leave the nursery.

Teaching and learning are of high quality. A daily cycle of 'plan, do and review' ensures that all staff work confidently and securely in their roles. Team work is excellent. There is very good evidence of sustained learning by children, because activities are planned very well. Adults have very high expectations and set challenging tasks that cater for each child's needs and build very well on previous knowledge and skills. Children from different backgrounds and with different needs are very well-integrated. The school aims to 'value the whole child' and it provides excellent care, guidance and support, which is sensitively matched to the needs of individuals. Staff work hard to make best use of the Victorian building, but facilities are somewhat cramped and sometimes hamper a smooth handover of children at the end of the morning sessions. This gives less opportunity for parents to communicate with staff at this time of day.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher leads by example and is constantly working to improve the quality of education for the children. The school has excellent procedures to evaluate and review any of its developments. Since the last inspection there has been very good progress in the quality of education provided for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities or communication problems. Staff and governors have correctly identified the need to make the provision for mathematical development more relevant for the children. The school has an excellent capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Extend opportunities, indoors and outside, for children to improve their mathematical development.
- Review arrangements at the end of the morning session to enable better communication between staff and parents.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Achievement is excellent. Standards vary considerably each year because of the wide range of learning needs of a significant number of children. Many start school with very poorly developed personal, social and communication skills. Most children make excellent progress and reach standards close to those expected for their age by the time they leave the Nursery. This is because adults assess the progress of each child every day and then use the information to extend their learning. A very good feature is children's excellent levels of independence as they take charge of their learning. They love to explore the world around them, choosing their own equipment with confidence. The very few children speaking English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers because of very good specialist support. Children with severe learning needs make rapid progress too. Initially, many have difficulty in explaining their needs and understanding instructions. However, they learn very quickly because the staff are very skilled at giving support, such as with photographs or pictures to explain instructions. Often staff can be seen in role-play activities, teaching children through play. Children make some use of their mathematical knowledge in play, but this could be improved.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Children's personal development and well-being are excellent. Children enjoy school and attend regularly. Relationships are outstanding. Children are respectful of the needs of others and play together very well. They have a very good understanding of right and wrong. Behaviour is excellent and the school has a calm working atmosphere. Both in the classrooms and outdoors children have very good attitudes to learning and are fully absorbed in most activities. Their learning is independent and purposeful. With pride they choose work to add to their 'Special Books' as a record of their achievement. They have a good knowledge of how to stay healthy and eat sensibly. During the inspection children were seen to ask for raisins to eat and, others chose to drink milk at the breakfast bar.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. During the inspection, they watched with awe as clumps of earth slipped off garden tools as they washed them, evoking many questions. Children appreciate important features of their own and others' cultures. They enjoy learning of the traditions of many ethnic groups from visitors and through special events.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

The quality of teaching is excellent and, as a result, children make rapid progress. Team work is outstanding. Through daily discussions staff have become skilled professionals. They have a very good understanding of the best teaching styles to use with each child to maximise learning. Staff share their expertise very well and, as a result, the learning environment is vibrant and activities are challenging. Continuity in learning is outstanding because all adults share in the planning process. Policies are applied consistently. Sessions are very well-organised, especially for learning in personal and social skills and language. Music is used very well to provide calmness, both indoors or out. There are very good examples of adults using role-modelling in play so that children learn by example. Adults listen very carefully to the responses of children and watch their actions very well. They adapt their questioning skilfully, always mindful of the targets planned to extend each child's knowledge and skills. Any progress is recorded daily. There is excellent encouragement of the children with severe learning difficulties and disabilities and they progress very well towards their individual targets.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The school has an outstanding curriculum that fully meets the needs of all its children. Central to its success is the very good organisation of facilities which offer learning experiences in all areas of learning, both indoors and out. The curriculum follows numerous themes, which are introduced by staff and extended in response to children's interest. There is a very good emphasis on the acquisition of language. The school is set to review its curriculum for mathematics to ensure tasks enable children to practise their skills more often. All children are offered very good opportunities to control their own learning. Available space is used effectively to stimulate children's learning, sometimes in unusual places. Causing great interest to children during the inspection and, set up in the cloakroom, was a display of toy farm animals to manoeuvre around a paper path. The outside environment is very attractive. It provides a wealth of additional opportunities and is very popular with children. Staff and governors have noted a rapid improvement in children's physical development since its recent refurbishment. Visits into the town enrich the curriculum further and special events and visitors extend learning very effectively. For example a local gardener visits weekly to help children learn about growing plants and caring for the environment and this contributes to their excellent understanding of economic well-being.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

The care, guidance and support of children are excellent. Parents and carers have considerable confidence in the pastoral care and support given to their children, which

starts at the initial home visits. They recognise the school's philosophy that 'values every child', and are happy that their children feel safe and secure. All arrangements for ensuring health and safety, risk assessment and child protection are fully in place. Staff teach children how to make right choices when looking after themselves. Staff sensitively encourage children to share and take turns. Children are advised how to stay healthy and care for others. Regular visits by the 'PAT' dog (Pets as Therapy) encourage the more vulnerable children to understand much better about the care of animals.

All adults and parents have an excellent understanding of children's standards based on a very good system of monitoring of their achievements. Targets are set and reviewed daily to ensure that the development of children's knowledge and skills is relevant. Staff encourage, suggest and cajole children as they help them, standing back when possible and only intervening if necessary. If required, outside agencies provide additional support for speech or occupational therapy.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school is led very ably by an outstanding headteacher who has a very good understanding of how the young child learns. She provides the school with a very clear direction. Under her leadership and management staff have many opportunities for professional development, which enables them to reflect and improve on their practice. Sometimes local schools and other professionals join staff to listen to national speakers who visit school for conferences on Early Years Provision. As a result the headteacher has created a very skilled staff team.

Staff are highly competent in identifying the school's areas for development, introducing change, monitoring actions and evaluating outcomes. There are very good opportunities for all staff to extend their skills of leadership and management through the School Change Team. They took a leading role in the recent development of staff facilities in the school house. Governors provide excellent direction for the school, undertaking their roles very responsibly. They present reports to committees of any monitoring of provision to ensure that their monies are spent wisely. Currently they are evaluating the changes to facilities for children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with language and communication problems. Funds are managed very efficiently and the school works hard to overcome any difficulties which occur from their use of a Victorian building. The headteacher recognises that current arrangements for going home are not ideal for the morning children. The school has an excellent capacity 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	3
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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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>	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**

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed finding out about what you are doing. It was good to read some of your 'Special Books' and see some of the things you have made. I think that you have an excellent school.

What I really liked about your school is:

- you enjoy learning about new things and your teachers give you lots of exciting and interesting things to do
- you are very good at making up your own mind about what you choose to do
- you are very kind and polite to each other
- your headteacher and teachers work hard to make things better for you.

To make your school even better I have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to find more ways for you to practise counting and playing number games. Also I think that they could improve home time arrangements for the morning children.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours truly,

Bernice Magson

Lead Inspector