



Wharf Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124913
Local Authority Surrey
Inspection number 293137
Inspection date 8 March 2007
Reporting inspector Nicola Davies

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	The Wharf
School category	Maintained		Woolsack Way
Age range of pupils	3-5		Godalming GU7 1JG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01483 415220
Number on roll (school)	67	Fax number	01483 417193
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Keith Syson
		Headteacher	Mrs Mandy Heslop
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This nursery school is located in the centre of Godalming but draws children from across the borough. Most children are of White British heritage but the Nursery includes children from a range of ethnic and language backgrounds. Around a quarter of children have learning difficulties and disabilities which is a rise since the previous inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Wharf Nursery is a good school with many outstanding features which enables all children to make good progress during their time there. One of the key strengths of the school is the excellent relationship it has with families. Parents cannot praise the Nursery highly enough, many of them noting the quality, not only of the support for their children, but also for them. 'The Wharf cares about the families of the children, not just the children themselves' was a typical comment. These excellent, caring relationships with families mean that all children make a good start and settle very quickly into the setting. One factor in this is the wide range of extra services which the school provides. As one parent wrote 'Although my child has only just joined the nursery, I felt a member of the 'Wharf Family' long before this'. These excellent relationships with parents and carers, along with consistently good teaching and an excellent curriculum based on individual needs, mean that all children flourish within the environment and make good progress in their learning and excellent progress in their personal development and well being. They attain levels above those expected by the time they leave.

Excellent individual attention and support for the particular needs of children with learning difficulties and disabilities means that the education they experience is first class and leads to the excellent progress they make from their starting points. A significant factor in this is the outstanding range of partnerships the nursery has developed, not only with parents, but also with a wide range of professionals and other specialist agencies. These highly effective partnerships mean that parents whose children have learning disabilities or difficulties feel very well supported and particularly praise the way the school provides 'invaluable expertise, guidance and advice'.

Leadership and management are good. The school is well led by the highly respected and effective headteacher. Daily evaluations and an effective team system mean that information and new ideas are shared very well between the enthusiastic and professional staff. Staff and governors are involved well in the process of self evaluation. As a result, the school has already identified that it needs to establish a more detailed system for monitoring and evaluating the impact of its provision on children in order to continue to adapt and improve. The school's continuing success in maintaining the high quality of care and education it provides, combined with its quick identification of areas for further development confirm its good capacity to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of provision on children

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

There is a very wide spread of ability and particular needs in this inclusive school. Some children start at the school with levels of skill and knowledge which are above those typical for their age, but an equal number face more challenges and difficulties. Overall, children's attainment is in line with expectations for their age. They benefit from knowledgeable and effective support from staff and an enjoyable, changing range of adult led and child initiated activities. By the time they leave, many children are working at levels which are above those expected for their age and all children have made good progress from their starting points. This represents good achievement overall. Progress in personal, social and emotional development are especially good. The strong focus on activities to encourage children's communication and speaking and listening means those who are bilingual or learning English as an additional language achieve as well as other children.

The school works extremely well with children with learning difficulties and disabilities, so that they can take a full part in, and gain from, activities. As a result, they make excellent gains in their learning. The school is developing the way it summarises achievement from the information contained in children's thoughtful individual portfolios.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. Parents testify that their children 'absolutely love' coming to the school, one relating how disappointed her child is when she realises it is not a 'Wharf Day'. Children feel safe and very secure in the caring environment the school provides. This helps even those with the greatest difficulties to settle quickly and concentrate well on their activities. Children form very good relationships with both adults and other children, for example through the small group activities or sharing lunch with others. Such activities also help their personal development as they take turns to assist the adults who eat with them or learn to wait politely for others. Overall, children manage their personal needs and feelings very well.

The outcome of children's excellent relationships with adults means they quickly develop the confidence to try out new activities and are often able to explain their learning to adults, even to those who are less familiar to them. Such experiences help them to develop skills they will need at 'big school' and in later life. Fostered by the school's 'Healthy Living' curriculum focus, children develop an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and well, for example, reminding each other to wash their hands after visiting the toilets. They also relish the many opportunities for adventurous physical exercise which the setting provides.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Adults understand the different needs of the individual children very well and plan sessions to include a variety of activities to provide experiences across all areas of learning. Children thrive on these opportunities and show good levels of motivation and concentration which lead to good learning. Adults involve themselves well in activities and keep a regular check on children's progress through their observations on weekly 'focus' children. This monitoring provides a mechanism for adults to extend particular children and ensure they undertake challenging activities across all areas of learning. There is a good balance in the teaching between allowing the children to choose and providing activities which are specifically tailored to match their 'next steps' such as small group sessions. However, on occasions, the management of activities means that all children are not all given equally good opportunities to contribute.

Adults are always on hand to encourage and support children and this is particularly effective for those with learning disabilities or difficulties. Staff use their very good understanding of these children to encourage them to undertake challenges which are just within their reach. This extends their skills very effectively and leads to the excellent progress they make.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Children benefit from an excellent range of stimulating activities and experiences. These are very carefully planned to cover all areas of learning and to help meet children's particular 'next steps' well. There are good opportunities for girls and boys to develop physical skills through challenging indoor and outdoor play. The school overcomes the limitations imposed by the site on exploring the natural world very well by introducing natural phenomena into the setting. For example, children were entranced by the visit of some rabbits to the school during the inspection. Similarly, in the previous two weeks, an opportunity to observe eggs hatch into chicks resulted in very high quality learning for children. It provided an excellent stimulus for children's speaking and listening, early writing and number recognition, as well as very high quality creative work.

The curriculum is adapted very well to meet the ages and particular needs of the children in the setting. One successful example is providing older children with opportunities to gain experience of a longer day. Similarly, staff build on children's particular interests to provide linked activities which extend them across all areas of learning. The curriculum for some children includes small group meal times which promote children's understanding of health very well and enhances their excellent relationships with adult and their peers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides excellent care, guidance and support for children which are highly valued by parents and other professionals. Excellent relationships and close liaison with parents and a wide range of agencies means that potential difficulties are anticipated and particular needs are met exceptionally well. This contributes to the excellent provision for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Sensitive arrangements to introduce all new children to the setting according to their needs ensure that children settle very quickly and happily. Similarly, at the end of their time at the setting, very good arrangements are made to help children to adjust to their new schools.

The school pays very careful attention to the individual needs of children and logs the progress that individuals make through the effective 'focus children' system. This is developed into delightful portfolios which are shared with parents as well as tracking sheets which provide 'at a glance' information for adults both in the setting and in children's future schools.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Strong team work is a key feature of this school and contributes to the very good quality of care and education it provides. Staff work very well as a team to provide effectively for the needs of individual children and governors keep a good check on standards and provision as well as carrying out their statutory duties very effectively and conscientiously.

Consistently good teaching and learning and the very high quality of care are clear indications that the impact of leadership and management is good and has been consistently so. However the school has identified that whilst it monitors the progress of individual children and initiatives robustly, a developing area is how well this information is drawn together to provide useful information for staff about how they can adapt and improve it.

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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?	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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	2
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	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	2
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

please see attached document

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Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

22 March 2007

Dear Children

The Wharf, Woolsack Way, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1JG

It was lovely to spend some time with you and see all the exciting things you do. Your families told me some of you feel sad when you can't come to nursery and I could see why.

The Wharf is a very good nursery school because:

- ☺ you are happy and love all the different things you can do
- ☺ everyone takes especially good care of each of you
- ☺ you make friends and learn things together
- ☺ you learn to do things for yourself
- ☺ you learn something new every day.

Your nursery is planning to write down more about how it helps you to learn. This is a good idea and will show just how well it is doing.

Thank you

Nicola Davies
Lead Inspector