



Whitnash Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125487
Local Authority Warwickshire
Inspection number 293278
Inspection date 6 February 2007
Reporting inspector Barbara Crane

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Nursery Lane
School category	Community		Leamington Spa
Age range of pupils	3-4		CV31 2PW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01926 335312
Number on roll (school)	79	Fax number	01926 778713
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Judith Fell
		Headteacher	Karen Howell
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Children join this school in September or January, in the term after their third birthday. The school serves a mixed area, with about a third of the children's families facing some challenging social and economic circumstances. Most children come from White British families but just under a quarter come from other ethnic groups, mainly of Indian heritage. Most of these children are learning English as an additional language, and speak Panjabi as their first language. Children's attainment when they start in the nursery is broadly average, although a significant number have speech and language difficulties. The school became part of a designated Children's Centre in April 2006, providing the school's community with access to further support from a multi-disciplinary team of workers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This school provides children with an outstanding start to their education. The staff put the children's needs first and so children flourish. Parents are rightly pleased that their children go to the school. One parent wrote, 'The activities provided are top-notch. Learning is fun and exciting for children.' The excellent curriculum is reflected in a vibrant environment that is full of changing light, colour and things to do and explore. This means that ideas captivate many children and steer their learning. Children make the most of the imaginative outdoor areas to play actively. They know how to keep healthy and safe because of clear guidance from the staff about hygiene and healthy eating. Outstanding teaching and excellent relationships lead to children from all backgrounds and capabilities making excellent progress. Children's achievement is outstanding and by the time they leave the school, most go much further than the goals expected for their age in all areas of learning. Children are happy and confident because adults give them just what they need at the point that they need it. They come into the start of sessions eager to meet the staff and their friends. Adults encourage children to talk about how they feel and not just what they know. Children are quick to learn and use new vocabulary because teachers set up activities in which they can practise what they have learned. Adults play alongside children, using words and actions to boost their understanding. They teach children very well how to link sounds and letters when they read books. The learning areas are rich in images to stimulate children's curiosity but there are fewer printed words around the areas to reinforce children's learning about how sounds can be represented by letters. High quality care, guidance and support result in children's excellent personal development and well-being. Children are treated as individuals, and adults give sensitive help when they need it. Those with learning difficulties or disabilities make excellent progress because their needs are quickly identified and catered for. Support for children who are learning English as an additional language is very effective and they make the same progress as others.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher's vision of including every child and getting the best for them is fully shared by a talented staff team. Excellent self-evaluation and thorough checks on children's progress are used very well to identify where improvements can be made. Action to bring about change is swift and effective. There is outstanding capacity to improve, demonstrated by the positive impact on children's achievement brought about by adaptations to planning to reflect children's own preferences and styles of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that children have more opportunities to make the link between sounds and letters through words displayed in the environment.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children's preparation for the next stage in their education is first rate. Children from all backgrounds and abilities make excellent progress in a short space of time. Their achievement is outstanding in all areas of learning. Most children exceed what might be expected for their age in all areas by the time they leave the Nursery. They make very rapid progress in their personal, social and emotional development. This is because teaching promotes children's independence and ability to work together to solve problems. Children's progress in speaking and the other areas of communication, language and literacy is excellent but their progress in linking sounds and letters does not quite match that in other areas. They lack some opportunities to reinforce their learning through seeing words connected to their activities. Children have fun in the fresh air and their physical skills are very well developed through active play that they know is good for their health. They use information and communication technology (ICT), such as digital cameras and computers, very confidently.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children develop very positive attitudes to learning because they meet with success. Consequently, their attendance is good. Their good skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, as well as their enjoyment in learning and capacity to work together, set them up very well for the future. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Their behaviour is excellent and they follow the simple code of conduct that they helped to devise to shape the outstanding atmosphere of their community. Children are friendly and enthusiastic about working and playing together, regardless of ethnicity, age or gender. They use their own ideas to initiate activities and recruit others to help them. In the large sandpit, for example, a small group gathered quickly around a child who decided to build a structure to carry sand from one place to another. The group adapted the original plan very successfully to achieve their goal and were delighted with the result. Children are fast and efficient at tidying up at the end of sessions, with very little prompting from adults. They put into practice what they have learned about the safe handling of food and taking care when using tools and equipment. Children enjoy their healthy snacks and drink plenty of water.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The staff are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their work. The consistently high quality teaching for groups and individuals springs from excellent assessments of where each child is in his or her development. The information gained is used very effectively to shape the next steps in children's learning. Teaching starts from the

principle that children learn the same things in different ways and so adults plan exciting and challenging activities that enable all to explore their ideas and follow their interests. Teaching is very clear-cut about what will be learned from activities but it also makes use of unexpected opportunities for children to investigate and learn from each other. In an outdoor session, for example, children became intrigued by the way in which string had been caught in ice and set about freeing it. Excellent adult support for this activity extended children's thinking about how they could best work together to do this, as well as their vocabulary connected to the processes of freezing and melting.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

An excellent range of activities is planned to ensure that all of the areas of learning are covered in depth. Additionally, the curriculum is devised so that children learn through using their senses and the environment. This does much to promote children's enjoyment of learning because there is always something fresh to stimulate their curiosity. Every indoor and outdoor space is used to maximum advantage to capture children's interest and boost their learning through practical exploration. In play, children are given excellent chances to imagine and recreate experiences because of the high quality stimulating resources. Creative experiences gained from working with visiting artists and musicians make a significant contribution to the children's high achievement. Very strong emphasis is given to personal, social and emotional development, so that children learn about the good effects of healthy eating and exercise. The pace of sessions is sensitively planned so that children have times of vigorous activity and more reflective times.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

There is a high level of daily care for children and the school provides a safe and welcoming environment. Everything necessary is done to safeguard and protect children. There are excellent procedures for supporting children when they join the Nursery and parents are fully involved so that children feel secure and gain confidence in their new setting. As a result, children settle in happily and learn routines very quickly. Any specific individual needs are identified as children start school, and are fully met. The staff check the children's progress in learning and their personal development very carefully. Targets are drawn from assessments and shared with children's parents. The exceptional support for children with learning difficulties or disabilities, as well as those who are learning English as an additional language, means that their progress equals that of others.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher creates a climate in which the staff, governors and children feel valued and inspired to do their best. Excellent leadership and management have ensured that the school's high quality provision and children's outstanding achievement has been maintained for several years. Everyone shares a vision of including all children, and supporting the achievement and well-being of each child is at the heart of the school's work. The staff know how to achieve this because of well-planned professional development that enhances their skills and knowledge. Accurate self-evaluation means that the school knows what works well and where it needs to focus its efforts next. The analysis of data about children's achievement across the areas of learning is very well used to pinpoint relative strengths and weaknesses. This has led to the identification of the need to improve children's performance, for example in linking sounds and letters. Governors provide good support for the school's work and are steadily developing their ability to ask the right questions to help it reflect on its provision.

The school is very good at gaining support from parents and they hold the school in high regard. The views of parents have been acted upon to set up a lunch club that operates in the adjacent Children's Centre and is extremely popular. Advice and support from other agencies, such as family learning and speech and language therapists, is used very well to enhance children's learning.

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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	2
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

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	2
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	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

Thank you for welcoming me when I spent a day at your Nursery. Everyone was very kind to me and I enjoyed seeing you playing with the ice and making things in the workshop. Your Nursery is a very good place for you and I can see why you love going there. I am writing you this letter to tell you what I found out about it.

- You make lots of friends and enjoy being together. Your behaviour is brilliant. Well done!
- You are learning everything you need to know for when you start the next school because the teaching is so good.
- All of the grown-ups are very kind and give you help if you need it. They take very good care of you and teach you how to be healthy, fit and safe.
- There are so many exciting things for you to do. I can understand why you can't wait to get started when you come in!
- Everyone wants the best for you and the people in charge work hard to make the Nursery run so smoothly.

You are so good at learning to say new words that I have asked the grown-ups to put more words up around activities. This will help you to learn what letters make the sounds in the words. Your parents and the Nursery staff are right to be so proud of you. Keep on enjoying your time at Whitnash Nursery. It is giving you an excellent start to your education.