

Boundstone Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125810
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	293362
Inspection date	9 May 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 category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3-5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	137
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Griffiths
Headteacher	Sheena Smart
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2002
School address	Upper Boundstone Lane Lancing BN15 9QY
Telephone number	01903 753995
Fax number	01903 766083

Age group	3-5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Boundstone is a neighbourhood nursery school. It also provides full day care and out of school care for children from three months to five years. There is specialist provision for 16 children with severe speech and language difficulties. The school is set to be a full service Children's Centre in April 2008. All but a few children are White British. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than the national average. On entry to the Nursery, children's attainment is below the level expected, particularly in communication.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Boundstone Nursery is a good school with outstanding features where children achieve well. Its success is attributable to the key qualities it pursues so children can flourish, namely, 'belonging, communicating, collaborating, caring, integrating and thinking'. Consequently, parents use language such as 'more than happy' to describe how they feel about their children's education and care.

The provision is strong. The curriculum is outstanding. Whilst the care, guidance and support for children are good overall, the care for their personal welfare is exceptional. The teaching and the academic guidance children receive are good. The inclusion of children from the special support centre into the Nursery deserves strong praise. As a result, children from the centre build successfully on their well below average starting points in communication.

Standards reached by the end of children's time in the Nursery are above the level expected for their age. By the time they leave, children's personal, social and emotional development is high. Many more children than is typical reach the expected standards for their age in communication, language and literacy. This reflects how well staff promote spoken language and ask probing questions so children consider and explain their thoughts. Children also do well in their understanding of number. The school has a good insight into the overall progress made by individual children through their well kept learning journals. However, these do not offer efficient ways of tracking the progress of groups or of individual children within particular strands of the curriculum. Tackling this issue is a key priority in the school's plans for improvement.

The leadership and management of the complementary team of headteacher and deputy provide the school with an accurate view of what it does well and where it can seek improvement. The future is a challenging and exciting prospect as the school is targeted to become a fully fledged Children's Centre. Presently, the governors' level of involvement is only just satisfactory. Governance is not sufficiently strategic or evaluative to give the school the real critical challenge it deserves at this time of transformation. While other issues have been addressed this remains to be improved since the last inspection. Given the strength of the leadership team, the skill of other staff and the support of parents the school is well placed to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Establish ways of documenting children's progress to easily measure the gains of individuals and groups in each strand of the curriculum.
- Develop the strategic and evaluative role of governors so that they provide the necessary support for the school's development.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery school is below the level expected, particularly in communication. Children achieve well and reach standards that are above the level expected overall. They make good progress in most respects. Their progress in personal development is outstanding. By the time they leave standards are high in personal, social and emotional development and above average in the use of number. Many more children reach the expected standards for their age than is typical in communication, language and literacy. The school's

aim for children 'to be keen to learn and accept challenges and to be well prepared for their future' is very successfully met.

Displays around the school and the children at work are testimony to their remarkable powers of persistence, self-reliance and creativity. Parents are justifiably appreciative of the progress made by children in the special support centre, described by one as a 'really strong starting block' for those with language and speech difficulties. Analysis of exit attainment data suggests that there is scope for higher attainers in the Nursery to extend their thinking skills and this is being planned for.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school is seen typically by parents as a place with 'an atmosphere of joy and fun'. No wonder then that children bound into school eager for the day's activities. Any absence usually relates to childhood illnesses. Children show a highly developed sense of self-preservation, for example, in their sensible use of woodworking tools and hygienic habits. They eat good food with relish, encouraged by their activities in the weed free allotment. Their cooperative nature in role-play or in building large constructions is impressive. Their behaviour is excellent. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children show social responsibility through recycling, composting, fund-raising and maintaining their environment and resources in an exemplary manner. Their personal development and the gains they make in communication skills mean that the children are well placed for a secure and happy future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Many parents recognise that the reason their children blossom is down to the 'professionalism and attitude of all the staff' as one parent describes it. Every child is known very well to the teaching staff. The school recognises children's needs and expresses them from a child's viewpoint in terms such as, 'I need people around me who will...support, guide and stimulate my learning experiences – even messy ones!' The way in which adults can see the learning experience from the child's perspective is a strength of the provision.

Staff are all engaged in talking to children about what they are doing, posing thought provoking questions and encouraging children to make decisions. Consequently children develop into self-possessed individuals and increase their understanding of language. The relationships are very warm so children feel confident to try things out and they realise a mistake is not a disaster. Additional adults such as students are well briefed so they can make a useful contribution to promoting learning. Staff meet the needs of children of different abilities well, allowing for all to make at least good progress. Within this the school recognises there is scope for teaching to tease out extra challenge for higher attainers in planning their next steps in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is of high quality, enabling children to make excellent progress in their personal development and well-being. The balance of adult led and child initiated learning and the use of inside and outside to promote learning are highly effective. Parents recognise that 'children

are all treated as individuals'. This is evident in the flexibility of the provision. If, for example, a child needs extra space and time to build a large aeroplane using a range of materials and different making techniques, it is provided. When it rains opportunities are provided for children to practise fine muscle control using fishing lines and playing with rubber ducks in the puddles.

Parents appreciate the opportunities for learning through play because they see how motivated their children are. The importance given to valuing multicultural Britain is evident in displays, resources and, for example, by extending a story to look at festivals around the world. The effectively used range of visits and visitors helps children understand very well how to keep safe, everyday life and to appreciate music and art. Every child really does matter and the inclusion of those in the special support centre in the wide range of activities provided is a strength of the school's work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This aspect of the school's work is good with outstanding features. Children and parents feel their welfare is a key priority of the school. This is reflected in the quality of programmes such as family learning. The strong relationship with families does much to secure children's emotional well-being. 'The warm welcome cannot be beaten or rivalled': a comment of one parent that sums up the views of many. Excellent links are in place with a range of agencies to ensure the diversity of children's additional needs is met. All the necessary arrangements are in place to safeguard children and to ensure they are in the care of suitable adults.

Staff know the children extremely well. What the children do and say is carefully observed, noted and used to plan relevant next steps in learning. This information is filed in comprehensive learning journals which parents take great delight in reading. However, this system does not provide an easily accessible way of tracking children's progress or ensuring there are no gaps in the learning. Plans are in progress to address this.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher in partnership with the recently appointed deputy provides good leadership and management of the school. They have a clear sense of direction for the future underpinned with a principled approach to meeting children's needs. Consequently, all children achieve well. The headteacher and deputy are supported by highly skilled staff who understand how to promote young children's learning well. The distribution of leadership and management roles has improved since January. This is allowing for appropriate professional development of teaching staff and enabling them to better contribute to school improvement.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and based on a wide range of views including those of parents. The school's strengths and points for development are identified, as are the ways forward. Presently ways are being devised to more efficiently identify rates of progress not only for individuals but for different groups and for different aspects of the curriculum. This should enable the school to analyse and measure its success more precisely.

The school faces an exciting future. It embraces willingly the prospect of serving the community better as a fully integrated Children's Centre. However, governors remain reliant on the school's professional leaders to provide strategic direction and to evaluate the quality of its work. This

is an area that has not improved well enough since the last inspection. Other aspects have been successfully tackled. The capacity to improve is good given the quality of leadership of the headteacher and deputy, the knowledge and skill of the staff and the overwhelming support of parents.

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Annex A

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	2

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?	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?	2

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.

Annex A

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	2
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	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

10 May 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Boundstone Nursery, Lancing, BN15 9QX

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I came to your school recently. I enjoyed meeting you and looking at what you were doing very much.

One of your parents said you 'thoroughly enjoy your time' in school. I could tell that this is so by the way you came in so happily and quickly found something really interesting to do. This also helped me to know that this is a good school. I know you are very young compared to me, but you are very well behaved for your age and so helpful to one another. I could tell from the models on the wall such as the aeroplane, the picture of the dinosaur and the books with flip pages that you really concentrate on what you are doing. You are lucky to be taught and cared for so well and to have such fascinating things to do. Many of your parents wrote notes to tell me so.

The school is run well. There are exciting plans for your school to provide even more for you and your families. I have asked the governors to think about how they can do more to help the school plan for the future. The staff are also looking to find ways to check more closely on how well you are making progress. I hope you will help them by giving your opinions and continuing to enjoy all the things you do in school.

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

Yours faithfully,

Brenda Spencer Lead inspector