



The Gill Blowers Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131175
Local Authority LUTON
Inspection number 293716
Inspection dates 7–8 February 2007
Reporting inspector Marianne Harris

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Mossdale Court
School category	Maintained		Levendale, Luton
Age range of pupils	2–5		Bedfordshire LU4 9JL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01582 575100
Number on roll (school)	100	Fax number	01582 591965
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Sheila Roden
		Headteacher	Mrs Deborah Harmon
Date of previous school inspection	27 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small nursery occupying two sites, which serves the local community. Both are based in converted ground floor flats in high-rise blocks. There are strict criteria for admission to the nursery, based on need. One of the first criteria is that children live in high-rise flats or have learning difficulties and disabilities. Consequently all of the children come from the immediate area, which has been designated one of high social need. The local area is culturally diverse and a small proportion of the children are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. The school offers part-time sessions for all children and also day care for children with particular needs, including babies. The school works in partnership with many national organisations to ensure that their work reaches the most vulnerable children in the locality.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school at the very heart of the local community. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of its work and know that their children are extremely well cared for and make exceptional progress.

When they join the nursery, children have very low attainment. Their general knowledge and language skills are sometimes poor and many have not socialised with other children. Children make phenomenal progress and achieve exceptionally well because teaching is excellent. Children's needs are accurately assessed and plans drawn up for every child so that the next steps they need to take in their learning are carefully planned. The rich variety of activities captures the imagination of the children. Learning is so much fun that they concentrate for long periods of time and their behaviour is exemplary. The classrooms are bright and stimulating and children are very enthusiastic about helping to plan what they are going to learn. Consequently, when they leave the nursery, they reach standards that are expected for their age.

The senior management team has been most successful in ensuring that every child has his or her needs met. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are carefully assessed and outside agencies, such as speech therapists or family workers, are called in so that their expert skills can be used to support the children. The few children who are at an early stage of learning English, or for whom English is not their first language, receive excellent support so that they soon pick up the language. In large group sessions children with particular needs are very well supported so that they can join in discussions. However, sometimes these groups are too large and a small minority of children find it difficult to join in fully.

Children's personal development is outstanding. The exceptional care and support they receive from all staff mean that they learn to become part of the school community, helping with small tasks, such as setting the tables and tidying up. They form very good relationships with adults and other children and genuinely care for each other. The excellent curriculum supports them further as they learn about the local area through trips and visitors into school.

Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher manages the two sites so well that provision in all classes is of the same, very high, standard. All staff and governors are fully committed to providing the highest standard of education and care for the children and their families.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that groups are small enough to allow all children to join in with group discussions.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

From an exceptionally low, starting point children make excellent progress. When they move to their primary school, children have reached standards that are broadly expected for their age. They make particularly good progress in their language and mathematical skills because there are dedicated sessions that encourage children to discuss their ideas and talk about their work. Staff take account of the fact that many children live in high rise flats and have no garden. Many planned activities that involve physical exertion are offered to the children so that they can make very good progress in their physical development. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world are also promoted extremely well so that their general knowledge is broadened. The extraordinary opportunities children have to explore creative activities result in standards that are broadly average in this area of learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. Staff are very good role models for the children, treating them with great respect and involving them in the planning of their work. This means that children are very keen to learn and look after one another. They willingly take on small jobs around the classrooms and play together well. Their behaviour is exemplary. There are no squabbles because the children genuinely like each other. They feel part of the nursery because staff take the time to find out what it is they are interested in. Each session begins and ends with 'parliament time' when children have the opportunity to talk about what they need to learn and recap on what they have achieved. This makes an outstanding contribution to their personal development and equips them very well for the skills they will need in later life. The children enjoy coming to school and their attendance is good. They are on time and enthusiastic. The rich cultural diversity that exists within the community is celebrated with the exploration of various festivals and stories that reflect many different cultures so that children understand the various beliefs of others. Every effort is made to ensure that children wash their hands after using the lavatory, although sometimes children have to be reminded, and they all wash their hands before eating. Children are very confident when talking to all adults and know that they are safe and very well cared for.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. All staff take responsibility for a small group of children so that their needs can be assessed accurately and activities planned which meet these needs and the interests of the child. This means that all children, whatever

their ability, are fully involved in their learning and take an active part in planning activities. As a result, children make excellent progress. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities receive specialist support and learn to work with others and gain the skills they need. Children who are new to learning English are very well supported so that they soon learn the language and can join in with all the many activities offered. 'Parliament time' gives all children a very good opportunity to discuss their work and those children with particular needs are well supported during this time. Most children are very keen to join in, but sometimes the groups are too large and the very small number of children who are reluctant to speak in a large group do not always have the same opportunity to participate as they would in a smaller group.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is excellent and enriched by many visits that broaden the children's general knowledge. All of the areas of learning for children under five are covered in great depth and have equal importance. Consequently, children have many opportunities to explore a wide variety of activities and work with an adult. The programme for personal development is extremely good and results in children who are confident and very keen to learn. The children experience many trips into the local area and have carefully recorded their journey to a local farm and a supermarket. Sessions where particular skills, especially learning letter sounds or mathematical vocabulary, are very well planned so that children can learn basic skills that will equip them for later life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support given to the children are second to none. All children, whatever their needs, are accurately assessed and plans are drawn up so that these needs can be met. Appropriate support is put in place where needed, and much work is carried out to find out what interests the children. Consequently, children are always keen to learn because tasks and activities are relevant to them. These needs are reviewed regularly so that, when anything changes, plans can reflect this. Every care is taken of the children and support given to their families where needed. The skills of external agencies are fully utilised so that children and their families can feel very well supported. Child protection procedures are robust, and staff are fully trained in keeping children safe.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. With the full support of the governing body and the staff, the headteacher has been very successful in creating a school which provides a very high standard of care and education on two different sites. There is a constant review of what is happening so that all children can have their needs fully

met and their families can be involved. The whole ethos of the nursery is to be at the heart of the community, serving it well, and it is very successful. Governors have been recruited to reflect the local community and for the particular skills they can contribute, such as financial management. All staff are involved in monitoring provision and this results in a team that is fully committed to the children and to improving their practice. The school's own self-evaluation is modest because staff can always see areas that can be improved and sometimes lose sight of the fact that their provision is of such a high quality that they are often called upon to spread their good practice. At the time of the last inspection there were no major issues to address, but the school has, nevertheless, looked for ways to improve. This indicates that its capacity to improve further is excellent, giving outstanding value for money.

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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	2
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	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?	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

12 February 2007

Dear Children

The Gill Blowers Nursery, Mossdale Court, Levendale, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU4 9JL

Thank you for welcoming me into your outstanding nursery a few days ago and for helping me find out all about your school. I am now writing to let you know what I found out.

I had such a good time and really enjoyed being with you. I was very impressed with parliament time when you all had the opportunity to say what you needed to learn. I also enjoyed the time when you discussed what you had learnt, but felt that one or two of you did not join in as well as you could because the groups were too large. I have asked your teachers to try and make the groups smaller so that you can all have your say.

You were all so beautifully behaved and worked so hard that you made very good progress in your work. Your teachers are excellent and work so hard to make learning fun for you. I particularly enjoyed looking at the fruit with you and hearing about the fox who wanted to eat your gingerbread - I hope he didn't get the chance. I loved looking at all your photos that told me about your visits and your garden areas are really lovely.

Thank you once again for being so wonderful. Good luck in the future and maybe I will see you all again.

Marianne Harris Lead Inspector