

Hirst Wood Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107186
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	309339
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Roger Gill

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 (total)	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Nicky Austin
Headteacher	Mrs Rosemary Morgan
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2005
School address	Clarence Road Shipley West Yorkshire BD18 4NJ
Telephone number	01274 584368
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Age group	3–5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school provides nursery education for children in the Early Years Foundation

Stage (EYFS). It serves a wide geographical area with a broad social mix. The school is in the process of developing Children Centre provision on its own site and works closely with an affiliated provider for children 0 to 5 years, which is situated in an adjacent primary school.

Neither of the facilities for day care or drop in for parents, carers or child minders formed part of this inspection. The vast majority of children are from a White British heritage but, increasingly, children are from minority ethnic backgrounds (typically from Russia, Poland and Pakistan) and are learning English as an additional language. The school has a fully integrated, resourced provision catering for a small group of children with a wide range of complex learning, behavioural and physical needs. Beyond this, the proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly typical for a school of this size. There have been several changes since the last inspection. The school has regular support from the Creative Partnerships organisation. The governing body, originally established in 2004, has experienced a sizeable change in membership, and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in November 2008. The school building has been remodeled to provide Children's Centre accommodation and to fulfil disability access requirements.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hirst Wood is a good school with some outstanding features. Children love the welcoming and inclusive atmosphere in which they play and learn with the utmost confidence. Many parents and carers understandably describe it as being a, 'fantastic place in which to develop independence and creativity.'

Very accomplished leadership by the headteacher and good support from governors have transformed the accommodation into an accessible and exciting place for learning indoors and outside. The building is now ideally suited to include children with complex difficulties and afford strong links with the Children's Centre. These developments are all aspects of the good progress that has taken place since the school's last inspection.

The detailed planning for the many 'extravaganzas' provided by the Creative Partnerships scheme demonstrates admirably the school's commitment to independence and creativity. Children make dens, plan trails around the grounds, enjoy barbeques and build sculptures in a very safe way. Regard for children's welfare is outstanding but not at the expense of promoting self-assurance and a sense of adventure. Children eat very healthily in school, especially those that stay all day. They know a great deal about keeping safe and join in energetically in thinking about their learning. This enthusiasm is reflected in the good levels of attendance and the knowledge and skills children are gaining for their future lives. Overall, children's personal development is first-rate.

Children's skills and knowledge are above the expected level for their age when they leave. This represents good achievement from their starting points, which are broadly typical in relation to national expectations. This good achievement stands them in good stead for the next stage in their education. Thoroughly engaging learning, set within a very good curriculum, underpins children's good progress. Visits to the local canal and art gallery, opportunities to learn flamenco dancing or African drumming and children's own ideas about what they want to learn all provide powerful avenues for exploration. Teaching, which is good, is planned carefully but allows plenty of opportunities for children to be flexible and spontaneous. For example, some children invented their own story entitled, 'Max and the Gingerbread Man'. Skilful teaching allows the children to develop their own ideas rather than restrict them to the planned task. This falls within the spirit of learning throughout the nursery: children's interests and needs come first and these provide adults with inspiration for how learning can develop.

Parents and carers, who are unanimous in their praise, agree that the positive way their children regard learning is due to the very many interesting things that they do in school. This love of learning is discussed at the valuable workshops for parents. Those that attend declare them to be, 'highly informative'. Sometimes, parents, carers, children and school staff work together, for example, on building a wall for Humpty Dumpty to sit on. Children led the evaluation when they declared that, 'the wall would have to be rebuilt because it was not wide enough'. In this way, parents and carers could see how they could help their children at home.

Leadership works well within the principles of the EYFS; it has engendered tremendous collaboration among the entire staff team and excellent partnerships with parents and carers. The headteacher has a very good understanding of how all the facets of provision fit together: education for the growing number of children from minority ethnic backgrounds; the inclusion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; and the need to induct new staff, governors and new members of the leadership team. As a result, everyone in the school is aware

of the school's strengths but also the challenges that it faces. Owing to the headteacher's resolve, children's achievement has been maintained at a good level, despite the turnover in staff and the disruptions caused by the building works.

In evaluation of its own practice, the school is extremely clear as to why it is not yet an outstanding school. The headteacher and governors, who lead and manage well, are keen to make the new leadership team fully effective in finding more ways to raise standards and achievement. They have good plans to improve standards and the school in general, but there has not been time for these to be fulfilled. Similarly, a relative shortcoming in otherwise good teaching is the way that ideas about what children need to do next are assessed and communicated to all staff. Nevertheless, in view of the many advances made in the last three years, the school has demonstrated a good capacity to progress even further and provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the way teaching assesses and communicates what children need to do next in their learning.
- Develop ways in which the new leadership team can raise standards and achievement even further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's good achievement is due to strong teamwork among all adults, particularly for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These children make similar progress to their peers. Starting points are broadly typical of levels expected nationally for the children's age. However, a significant minority of children enter the school with skills and knowledge below these expectations, particularly in areas of learning associated with reading, writing, problem solving and number work. Standards attained by the end of Reception are above those expected for their age across all areas of learning, particularly in personal development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Progress in these respects is outstanding. This, in part, is due to the encouragement they get in acting responsibly and taking decisions within their learning. Moreover, children are very involved in solving problems and finding things out for themselves.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children enjoy everything that they do. They delight in using musical instruments, digital cameras and role play areas that are equipped with culturally diverse clothes for dressing up. They love making food, for example, some children were engrossed when making Barfi in celebration of Eid. They mixed the ingredients with great dedication. Moreover, children are very aware of which foods are good for them because they take an enthusiastic interest in the fruit they eat at snack time. Spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. Outstanding behaviour is commonplace because children follow the superb lead provided by adults. Children feel extremely confident to make judgements about the way they learn. For example, some children decided to make rules for the classroom. They made signs to persuade others to sweep up their sand and put things away. Cultural development is good and improving, particularly since children are beginning to find out about life in Eastern Europe having already learnt about customs in Pakistan.

Quality of provision

Effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development

Grade: 2

Teaching has a good impact on children's learning. This is because teaching is skilled at devising exciting and purposeful tasks for children to do. The combination of pre-planned activities, new avenues that arise from children's own ideas and what comes from self-generated play is productive in terms of learning. The assessment of learning is very carefully recorded in children's records of achievement, which are greatly admired by parents and carers as evidence of what has taken place. Staff observe children at play, they jot down children's comments when something is being taught directly and staff talk together well as a team within the classes. New tasks are devised well, based on the assessments made, but the school lacks a formal method of assessing and disseminating next steps in learning that would make sure that every adult was aware of them.

The curriculum has a very good impact on children's learning and development. Plans for teaching are flexible depending on children's interests. The curriculum is superbly enriched and extended. Children have regular opportunities to work with a highly skilled practitioner from the Creative Partnerships project, for example. Moreover, visits within the locality are very beneficial. Learning about the locality and places further afield, based on families' countries of origin, helps to provide good community cohesion. The school has a tradition of success in using computers and a digital camera to take 'stills' and make movies. The school recently won a local award for the children's animated movies about animals rescuing a ball from the canal.

Effectiveness in promoting children's welfare

Grade: 1

The care and support provided are highly influential in creating children's outstanding personal development. The curriculum is full of activity and adventure, but superbly designed risk assessments are most effective in ensuring that all concerned follow a comprehensive agenda for safety. Safeguarding arrangements are in place as required. Parents and carers have regular updates about their child's learning and can attend excellent workshops, the purpose of which is to study how children learn in school. As a result, parents feel empowered because the school gives them, 'lots of ideas for things to try at home'. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are particularly well included in learning and the life of the school. Parents are most complimentary about this aspect of provision. The sensory room is very well equipped to provide a multi-media experience for all children, including those who need a moment of calm. It, like the school in general, develops in children an exemplary sense of well-being and involvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, staff and governors have created a good school. The development of a children's centre on site has triggered a complete reorganisation and upgrading of the building. This time-consuming project has been managed very well. Moreover, children's learning prospered because they were able to observe the builders at work. The long-term plans for the school, in terms of its provision for children aged 0 to 5, are combined well with the daily routine. Thus, everything runs smoothly; parents, carers and children are proud of the school

and the team spirit is high. Thorough self-evaluation makes sure that the headteacher and governors know exactly what the school is like. Therefore, the developmental issues of assessment and the influence of the leadership team on standards and achievement are well known. Despite the turn around in governors, there is a core group of knowledgeable members and the school's self-evaluation is a valuable source of information for new governors.

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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 is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do children in the EYFS 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/or disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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 effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Hirst Wood Nursery School, Shipley, BD18 4NJ

I came to your school recently. You may remember because some of you thought I looked like your local postman, so I became known as Postman Pat for two days. Thank you very much for making my job so enjoyable.

Your school is a really good place in which to learn. You get on and play well together and have learnt many interesting things by the time you are ready to go onto a Reception class.

I especially enjoyed watching you play. Your story trays, 'car shoots' made from plastic guttering and flower watering projects made me want to join in. All the adults who teach you provide very interesting things for you to do. I loved talking to some of your parents and carers because they like what goes on so much. They told me about the things that they enjoy, like the trips to the local woods and the family winter barbeque with fruit kebabs. Your headteacher and staff make every child in your school feel special, which is why you all behave so well.

I am suggesting two things that I think will help you all do even better. All the adults can do even more to plan and talk about what you need to do next after you have learnt something. Lastly, there are quite a few new people who help your headteacher to run the school. They all need more time to work together and put their plans into action, so that your learning can be even better in the future.

You can all help as well – please keep coming up with interesting comments and bright ideas when you are playing so that adults can listen to what you are saying and plan your next activities.