

Rothesay Nursery and Children's Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109419
Local Authority	Luton
Inspection number	309974
Inspection date	29 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Sheelagh Barnes

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	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jonathan Lodge
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Brownjohn
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2004
School address	59 Rothesay Road Luton Bedfordshire LU1 1RB
Telephone number	01582 726966
Fax number	01582 726966

Age group	3-5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Rothesay Nursery School is much smaller than most schools, but large compared to other nurseries. It operates within challenging socio-economic circumstances. The school provides for children between three and five, but many leave to transfer to other schools at four. Children stay for differing amounts of time depending on which school they move on to next, so that mobility is much higher than in most schools. The proportion of children who speak English as an additional language is much higher than average. The proportion of children who need extra support with their learning is above average, with a high proportion having severe and complex needs. The school is allocated as a resource for a number of these children, many of whom, because of the nature of their needs are working significantly well below the levels expected for their age. Attainment on entry is varied, because of the very small cohorts, but overall standards are exceptionally low compared to the expectations for children's ages. The Nursery has a Healthy School Award and has just been told that it has been designated as a Children's Centre.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school is effective in providing a good education for its children because of good leadership and management and the wholehearted commitment of all staff, especially the headteacher. Children greatly enjoy all of the things the school has to offer. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection and the school has a good capacity to continue to improve further.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the areas of strength and those which need to be improved still more. This information is based upon a good system of monitoring and assessment. However, while the recording system the school uses accurately tracks the progress of the great majority of children, it does not provide for the systematic monitoring of attainment and progress of children who have already reached the standards normally expected by the time they move to their next school. Whole team meetings to discuss children's progress are held on a weekly basis and lead into planning future activities. Teachers know children well and ensure that they provide good levels of challenge for them. However, planning documentation does not always explicitly state how those who have already mastered a task are going to be challenged further, so occasional opportunities are missed.

The progress made by children of all abilities throughout the school is good overall, due to the good quality of the provision. Standards children attain are overall below those expected for their age, although their achievement is good. Teaching is good. It is particularly good in the support provided for children who need extra help for particular physical or learning needs. Children with English as an additional language are provided for effectively.

Teachers work hard and have good relationships with children and other staff. This sets a positive tone for the whole nursery. Behaviour is good and children concentrate on what they are doing for extended periods of time, because they are so interested in the activities provided. Information to parents is good and the school takes good regard of parental opinions. Parents are extremely pleased with the school. Those who responded in the questionnaire were unanimous in their praise, saying how much their children enjoy school. They say such things as 'The atmosphere is brilliant!' and 'My child is keen to come to school every single day.'

The curriculum is good. It covers all of the required areas of learning in suitable depth and is effectively supplemented by a good range of interesting and exciting opportunities, such as daily outdoor provision in the extensive garden. The care, guidance and welfare the school provides is good overall. The provision for pupils to learn about a healthy lifestyle and make healthy choices is good. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the systems for checking the standards and progress of potentially higher attaining children.
- Ensure that planning documentation explicitly highlights opportunities to stretch those who have already demonstrated that they have begun to master an activity.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children settle well into the nursery and make good gains in their learning. Achievement is particularly good in speaking, listening and early reading skills, mathematical development, physical development and creative development. It is good in communication, language and literacy overall, personal development and in knowledge and understanding of the world. While a significant proportion of children reach the early learning goals for their age, standards attained by the end of Foundation Stage are below those expected for children's ages overall. Children who need extra support with their learning, including those who are formally resourced for their particular needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well and attain the challenging targets the school sets them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children hugely enjoy being in school and attendance is good considering their young age. Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children generally relate well to each other; disputes and bad feelings are rare and are dealt with speedily by all staff. Those who need extra support for physical or academic reasons are included fully in all aspects of school life. Children develop a good understanding of the need to stay safe and of the value of adopting a healthy lifestyle through such things as regular hand washing and choosing healthy food. They are suitably prepared for the next stage in their education. The school encourages children to make choices, such as what activities to join in with and to learn to take on responsibility for themselves by putting on coats and aprons, and hand-washing. However, opportunities to take on responsibility within the school community, such as monitoring roles or justifying the choices they make, are more limited.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good quality of teaching and learning is one of the major contributory factors to children's good progress. All adults work hard to establish a good working environment. They develop children's speech and language effectively through question and answer as children play. Children make a good start to their school life because of the good emphasis placed on developing their personal and social skills. As a result, the nursery has a happy atmosphere where children can concentrate fully on the task in hand. Assessment is regular and forms an integral part of the school week. Teachers use the knowledge gained of children when planning learning sessions. However, planning does not explicitly highlight opportunities to stretch those who have already demonstrated that they have begun to master an activity. A good range of exciting activities maintains children's interest in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good range of activities that includes all of the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage. Planning shows good detail of the opportunities for the children to experience plenty of structured activities and free-play experiences. The provision is good for children

who have additional learning or language needs. They are integrated well in classes and have plenty of good support to help them become involved in school life, although there is less explicit planning for the potentially higher attaining children. The school's good links with parents help to enrich learning through strong and positive relationships with children and their families.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is a calm, safe and caring community. It places the health, safety and welfare of the children as high priorities and complies with all of the legal requirements for safeguarding them. A good team spirit is evident in the way all adults work together in harmony to guide and support children. As a result, children who need extra help with their learning are guided closely to help them achieve success. The school works well with outside agencies to provide additional support for specific issues. Academic guidance is good. Children have individual targets for improvement but the criteria for measuring and collating the progress of the most able are not fully in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's very good leadership is reflected in the warm, welcoming nature of the school and the good achievement of the children. She provides a good steer for the school and is well supported by the deputy headteacher and the 'area leaders' who effectively help her to manage the provision. Together, they have a good understanding of what the school does well and what needs to be improved. They have a clear vision for the way the school will develop and are committed to the school's continuing improvement. Each keeps a careful check on children's progress and acts swiftly to tackle any issues. Governance is good. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well and actively support the school. Individual governors have specific links with most aspects of the school, although there is no-one responsible for overseeing provision for children with English as an additional language at present.

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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
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

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?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

30 April 2008

Dear Children,

Inspection of Rothesay Nursery School, Luton, LU1 1RB.

Thank you for welcoming us to your school when we visited recently and for being so polite and friendly. We really enjoyed meeting you all and talking to you. The really good things about your school are.

- You like coming to school a great deal and you have great fun working and playing together.
- You learn a lot about how to get on with each other.
- Adults take good care of you.
- Your teachers make sure that you have lots of exciting and interesting things to do.
- They teach you well so that you make good progress and learn a lot.
- You learn a lot about staying safe and healthy and how to make wise choices in what you eat.
- Your headteacher works hard and knows what to do to make your school even better.

The things I have asked your the headteacher and staff to do next are.

- Keep better records on what children who can do harder work are doing.
- Make sure that teachers help you keep learning even when you have completed your tasks successfully.

We really enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn inside the school and in the garden. We know you will carry on trying your best and enjoying your school. We wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Barnes

Lead inspector