

# Grasmere Nursery School and Children's Centre

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109420
<b>Local Authority</b>	Luton
<b>Inspection number</b>	309975
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Pangbourne

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Children's centre
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	148
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Dave Hathaway
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Valerie Thompson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 September 2004
<b>School address</b>	Icknield Way Luton Bedfordshire LU3 2BT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 593426
<b>Fax number</b>	01582 593426

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<b>Age group</b>	3–4
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a large Nursery school and Children's Centre that provides a wide range of family support services, including the Tadpoles baby and toddler unit and full day care. A large majority of the children come from White British backgrounds. Very few speak English as an additional language. The school has part time places for up to 16 children with severe and complex learning difficulties, such as significant global delay, Down's syndrome, cerebral palsy and autistic spectrum disorder. At the time of the inspection, 11 places were filled. As a result, the proportion of children with statements of special educational need is higher than in most Nursery schools. The children from the Tadpoles Unit make up around one third of the Nursery roll with others being admitted from home or other local pre-school settings. Their attainment is broadly typical for their age. Usually, their personal, physical and language skills are well developed.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good Nursery school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about it. One wrote, 'I think this is a fantastic school. The staff are kind, educational, compassionate and jolly good fun!' The children love it too, rushing to come in at the beginning of sessions. They say 'We love coming to Nursery!'

Children's achievement is good. From a starting point that is broadly typical for their age on entry to the Nursery, they are on course to exceed what is expected for four-year-olds when they leave for entry to primary school in all the areas of learning. All children make good progress because an imaginative curriculum is taught well and gives them a good start. Children with severe learning difficulties or a statement of special educational need make similarly good progress because of the extra support they receive. There is a strong focus on developing early literacy, numeracy and computer skills. The outdoor area is used appropriately to extend learning and plans are in place to improve this further to maximise its use and give children more opportunities to develop their skills outside. Staff know the children very well and match activities closely to their needs. They keep detailed records showing children's stage of development, based on the recent guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage, but this is too new to give a clear picture of each child's progress.

Children's personal development is good. They become independent and keen learners who enjoy Nursery enormously. This is reflected in their good attendance and considerate behaviour. Children develop a very clear understanding about healthy eating and make an outstanding contribution to the community, willingly making choices and joining in all that is offered to them. They receive good care, support and guidance and this helps them to do well and grow in confidence. Excellent partnerships with parents, other schools, outside agencies and the many students who train in the Nursery, greatly benefit the children's learning. The wealth of family support services are praised by parents and provide a very effective link between home and school.

The good leadership and management of the headteacher contributes positively to the Nursery's success. She is ably supported by the specialist teacher for children with learning difficulties, the family worker and key staff. All show a strong commitment to continual improvement. The roles of staff are being restructured to meet the Nursery's needs as a Children's Centre and increased liaison is planned between the Tadpoles day care and the Nursery to improve continuity further for the children. The governors watch over the Nursery well. They and the headteacher have an accurate view about how well the Nursery is doing and work together to bring about improvement. The quest for further improvement and those that have taken place since the previous inspection show that the Nursery has a good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

As a Nursery School, the Foundation Stage is completely covered by the Overall Effectiveness section.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Carry out the plans to make further enhancements to the outdoor provision, so that the outdoor areas can be fully used to extend learning.

- Develop the new assessment system across the whole setting to give a clearer picture of the children's progress during their time in Nursery.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

All children, including those who need extra help to learn and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress because of the good teaching and the stimulating curriculum that encourages them to learn. The children who come from the Tadpoles Unit benefit from its good provision. When they enter the Nursery, social, physical and speaking skills are particularly well developed for most children. By the time children leave Nursery, most of them are on course to exceed the early learning goals at the end of their first year in primary school. They continue to do well in social, physical and speaking skills because the Nursery places great emphasis on developing these skills.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children play happily together and most behave well. The behaviour of a very small number of children, mainly those with specific learning needs, who do not always conform to the Nursery's high expectations, is managed well and causes minimal disruption. A real strength is the excellent contribution children make to the community. They readily make decisions for themselves about where to go, what to do and who to join in with. They look after each other and take care of those with particular learning difficulties. Healthy eating is extremely well fostered and children develop their social skills effectively at snack time, where they also develop good manners. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe. The children develop a good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through the stimulating activities, such as learning about their own and other cultures. The good focus on developing early literacy, numeracy and computer skills, together with the emphasis on good manners, means that children have a good basis for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is consistently good throughout the Nursery. All adults work closely together to support the children and to encourage them to do well. The children respond positively to their high expectations. Adults use questions well to include all children and develop their learning. Staff often use imaginative methods to captivate the children's interest, such as experimenting with torches in a darkened room or using a wide range of voices when reading a story. Parents praise the learning through play. Good organisation means that children know the routines well and move around confidently. Through regular assessments, staff have a good understanding of what children can do and what they need to learn next.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

A parent sums up the good curriculum well. 'My daughter is almost buzzing because she can't wait to make up her mind what to do first!' Visits and visitors add interest and excitement for the children. For example, children have recently been for a walk in the local area, which has

provided a focus for much work to develop basic skills. Caring for pets is encouraged and children delight in helping to look after the guinea pigs, tortoises and giant snails. Music has a high profile and children enjoy singing and playing instruments. Provision for those who need extra support to help them learn and those who speak English as an additional language is strong and contributes to the good progress these children make. The outdoor area is used effectively from time to time during the day, but recent extensive building works has meant that its use has not been planned in as a matter of course to extend learning across all areas of the curriculum throughout the day. The school has identified this as an area for development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The Nursery's very caring ethos means that children and their parents feel valued. A parent wrote, 'I know that my child is safe and well cared for by the staff. She has developed and grown in confidence in this secure environment.' Procedures for safeguarding children are robust and staff are well trained in child protection. The Nursery has a wealth of data to show how well children are doing. The system currently being trialled is based on the new Early Years Foundation Stage tracking and does not yet give a clear view of how each child is progressing. As part of the development of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the Nursery is developing common record keeping systems with the Tadpoles Unit to improve transfer arrangements. Parents praise the children's personal profiles, which are accessible to them to help them understand how well their child is doing. Links with other schools, colleges and agencies are excellent with many students undertaking training at the Nursery.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher is very approachable and cares for each individual child. Everything she does is for the benefit of the children and their families. She is well supported in this by key staff who fulfil their responsibilities effectively. She is leading the Nursery forward as the Children's Centre status becomes established, ensuring that the facilities provided for the community are of high quality and improving liaison with the Tadpoles unit. The governors are well informed through their thorough monitoring and they have welcomed the appointment of a family worker to further improve provision for families. The headteacher and governors have made sure that each staff team includes a good balance of individual strengths and talents and that these are used well for the benefit of all children. They are working hard to develop and embed new national guidance about the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum to ensure better continuity and good provision for all children on the site.

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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?	1
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 <sup>1</sup> 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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	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?	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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

5 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Grasmere Nursery School and Children's Centre, Luton, LU3 2BT

I have asked Mrs Thompson to read this to you. I expect you saw me in your Nursery recently. I really enjoyed visiting you. Thank you for talking to me and showing me what you were doing. I would like to tell you what I found out.

I thought that you were all really good children and that you played nicely together. You really enjoy coming to Nursery and all the exciting things to do. I liked seeing you having fun with the torches in the dark and joining in with stories and songs. You are lucky to have such lovely pets to look after. All the grown-ups take care of you very well and help you learn new things. If you find something hard there are lots of grown-ups to help you. Mrs Thompson and all the staff work hard to make your Nursery even better. Your families know that you go to a good Nursery school.

I have asked Mrs Thompson to make sure that you can play and learn outside more often. I have also asked her to keep some records and take more photographs to show how much you learn between starting at Tadpoles and going to primary school.

I hope you carry on enjoying your time at Grasmere Nursery School and do well in your next school.

Best wishes

Alison Pangbourne

Lead inspector