

Westfield Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109422
Local Authority	BEDFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	309976
Inspection dates	30–31 January 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	Community
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Fiona Mitchell
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Simpkins
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Westfield Road Dunstable Bedfordshire LU6 1DL
Telephone number	01582 608650
Fax number	01582 608650

Age group	3–5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Westfield Nursery is much smaller than most primary schools. The 84 boys and girls who attend are aged between three and five years. They come from homes around the school and also from much further away. Some attend during the morning and some, mainly the younger children, in the afternoon. Children stay on roll for differing amounts of time depending on which school they move on to next. The school does not provide meals and the children who stay during the midday break bring their own packed lunch. Fewer children than nationally are known to be eligible for free school meals. A small number of children are identified as requiring extra support with their learning. Very few children speak English as an additional language. Attainment on entry varies because of the very small cohorts but generally, is slightly below that expected of three-year-olds. The Nursery has received a School Achievement Award. The headteacher joined the school as acting head in April 2006 and was formally appointed in February 2007.

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 school that provides good value for money. There are outstanding features, particularly in the quality of children's personal development and well-being. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and those who responded in questionnaires and letters were unanimous in their praise. Parents say: 'This is a wonderful school and my child is very happy!' and, 'This school really does listen and respond to parents' views.'

The leadership and management are good. There has been good progress since the previous inspection and there is a good capacity for further improvement. Children's achievement is good overall. It is good in most areas of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage. Achievement and standards in children's personal development are excellent. The school's assessment information shows that most children are on track to attain the early learning goals in most areas by the time they start in Year 1 and a significant proportion are likely to exceed them, particularly in their personal and social development. Procedures for the care and welfare of children are good and staff are vigilant where children's safety is concerned. There is good provision for children to learn about healthy lifestyles and to stay safe.

The headteacher leads the school effectively and has made significant changes to the procedures for assessment and monitoring. These are already having a clear impact in raising standards. Self-evaluation is generally accurate and the school has a good awareness of its strengths and what needs to be done to raise standards still further. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are strongly supportive of the school; they work hard and visit regularly. They are aware that they rely on the headteacher for much of the interpretation of data and see the way forward as developing confidence as critical friends to challenge the school with more rigour.

The curriculum is good and teachers take great care to provide an exciting and challenging range of activities, both indoors and out. The consistently high expectations that all staff have of children's behaviour, combined with the good curriculum, result in a calm and industrious atmosphere throughout the Nursery. Behaviour and attitudes are excellent and children work on their own or in small groups, maintaining concentration for extended periods, sometimes needing only minimal adult intervention. Teaching and learning are good. Sessions are planned effectively and relationships are good. All staff carefully monitor the activities children undertake. They respond sensitively to children's needs, modifying activities as required. They accurately record progress and achievement in all areas of learning. As a result, they have a clear picture of the gains each child makes in their learning. They provide good levels of encouragement and praise to the children. They frequently ask children at snack time to recall what activities they have joined in with during the session. However, the school has identified that staff are less consistent in involving children in the evaluation of their own work. This has been identified as an area for improvement in the school development plan.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more, regular opportunities for children to be involved in the evaluation of their work and in planning what skills they need to build on next.
- Refine and develop the skills of governors as critical friends to the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry varies year-on-year, but it is generally slightly below the standards expected. Children settle well and make good progress, due to the good quality of the provision. Achievement and progress are excellent in personal and social development because of the strong focus placed upon this aspect of learning. Progress is good in mathematical development, communication, language and literacy, where there is also a strong emphasis, and in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. Children who need extra support with their learning, and the few with English as an additional language achieve well and attain the appropriately challenging targets the school sets them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. They settle quickly into school, coming in happily and eagerly to see what activities are planned for the day. Children make choices confidently and learn to take on responsibility for things such as tidying up. They work and play together very well. Disputes and bad feelings are rare and are dealt with speedily and consistently by staff. Children who need more support for their learning and those with English as an additional language integrate fully in all aspects of school life. Children enjoy being in school and attendance is good, especially considering their young age. They develop an extremely 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 by choosing healthy food. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Planning for lessons is effective and takes good account of what children already know and can do. Teachers and support staff plan together to ensure that children in all groups have the same opportunities. Teaching for those who need extra support, for those with English as an additional language and for those who are potentially higher attaining, is also good. Resources, such as a wide range of artefacts and interactive devices, such as whiteboards and talking books, are used well to make learning interesting and exciting. Teachers make good use of both the indoor and outdoor environment. As a result, children are enthusiastic about their tasks and concentrate well. Assessment is good and detailed and accurate records are kept. Teachers regularly discuss with children what activities they have undertaken during the session. They offer praise and encouragement. However, they do not consistently give children clear information about how to make their work even better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and well balanced. There is an appropriately high emphasis on developing children's personal and social, communication and numeracy skills. This benefits all children. Good attention is also given to other aspects of the curriculum, such as creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical education and this has a positive

impact on children's enjoyment and self-esteem. One child exclaimed as he completed his work on the computer, 'This is magic!' Learning is made interesting and relevant by a number of well-planned visits and visitors. For example, visits to places, such as a local school and a puppet show are greatly enjoyed. The school has identified the need to develop outdoor aspects of the curriculum further. For example, there are plans to improve the opportunities children have to climb and to develop upper body strength and lung capacity.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a caring school. Pastoral care is excellent. Staff work together very effectively to ensure that children are well looked after and safe. All appropriate checks on adults who work with children are carried out and good records are kept. Safety is promoted well through detailed risk assessments and health and safety checks. First aid arrangements ensure children are well looked after if hurt. Parents say that their children are confident in approaching adults in the school with concerns or problems and know they will get a good response. Teachers assess children's work well on an individual basis, targeting and supporting those who need extra help. However, the school has identified the need to involve children more in the evaluations of their own work so that they start to develop an understanding of what they need to do to achieve even higher standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has put effective systems in place to manage the school and she has built good links with other schools and outside bodies. She has ensured that staff play an active part in school improvement planning. She guides teaching and learning initiatives well and systematically evaluates their impact. Challenging targets are set. Teaching is monitored effectively. The provision for children who need extra support with their learning is managed well and they make good progress as a result. Teachers and teaching assistants are deployed well and the school functions efficiently. Governors are very supportive of the school, but are aware that they sometimes rely too heavily on the headteacher.

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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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well 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	2
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

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	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

1 February 2008

Dear Children,

Inspection of Westfield Nursery School, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, LU6 1DL

Thank you for welcoming me to your school when I visited recently and for being so polite and friendly. I really enjoyed meeting you all and talking to you. The things that are really good about your school are:

- You like coming to school and enjoy working and playing together so that you learn to get on with each other very well.
- Your behaviour is extremely good.
- Your teachers teach you well so that you make good progress and standards are good.
- Your mums and dads are really proud of the school and of you. They know about how well you are getting on and what work you are doing.
- You are taught a lot of interesting and exciting things.
- You learn a lot about staying safe and staying healthy and how to make healthy 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 school to do next are:

- To help you learn even more about how you are getting on and what you can do next to do even better work.
- For school governors to find out even more about your school and how they can make it even better.

I really enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn in your classes and also in the outdoor area. I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Barnes

Lead inspector