

Pastures Way Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109423
Local Authority	LUTON LA
Inspection number	309977
Inspection dates	6–7 March 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	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Heredia
Headteacher	Mrs J Allen
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2004
School address	Pastures Way Luton Bedfordshire LU4 0PE
Telephone number	01582 600691
Fax number	01582 600691

Age group	3–5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average size Nursery school, which has recently changed designation to become a Children's Centre. Day care is provided for children from birth upwards. The children who attend the school come from a wide area, some from homes close by and others from much further afield. There is significant mobility in the local population and, in addition, children move on to one of 20 local schools, sometimes at times other than at the end of the academic year. Some of the children attend full-time and others part-time. A much larger proportion of children than average come from minority ethnic backgrounds and many speak languages other than English at home.

There are eight designated full-time equivalent placements for children with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion of children with a statement of special educational need is far higher than average. The proportion of children who need extra help or support with their learning is also higher than average. Children's attainment on entry to the school varies, but overall is generally below the standards expected for children's ages. The headteacher was appointed in July 2007 and there is currently an acting deputy headteacher. A significant proportion of subject coordinators are relatively new to their posts following school reorganisation.

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 and effective school. The leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear, accurate knowledge of what the school does well and of what needs to be improved. School self-evaluation matches inspection findings closely. The governing body provides a good level of support and challenge. As a result, children's progress and achievement are good. By the time they move on to their next schools, standards are broadly in line with those expected nationally overall and a small minority of children are already exceeding the standards expected for their age. This is particularly the case in personal development. There is a whole-school focus on this aspect of learning and the result is evident in the progress children make.

Pupils' personal development is good. Behaviour is good, due to the consistent approach of all staff and the high expectations they have for children. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is good for children's young ages. Children make good progress in learning how to keep themselves healthy and safe and they make a good contribution to the community through such activities as collecting for charities and composting fruit and vegetable parings. Their good progress with basic skills means that they are being well prepared for their future lives. However, opportunities for children to talk about and evaluate their progress or to take responsibility for the choices they make, such as recording what activities they have chosen to undertake or explain to their peers how they got on, are more limited.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. The planning of lessons benefits from a good curriculum, which encourages many exciting and worthwhile activities. There is a good range of visitors to the school. Teachers have good relationships with children and sessions proceed calmly. The activities that form the focus of learning are interesting and exciting. Good use is made of resources such as puppets and computers to interest children still further. As a consequence, their enjoyment of their learning is extremely good, and they concentrate well. However, there is inconsistency in the quality of planning for the explicit links between assessment and evaluation of previous sessions and what activities are currently provided. As a result, monitoring by leaders is not as easy as it should be. The school development plan identifies this as an area for focus and this is planned for the forthcoming year.

This is a very caring school, which looks after children well and in which they feel safe and happy. They are positive about the school and clearly enjoy their lessons. The good improvements made since the last inspection show that the school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

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 discussing choices, evaluating their work and in planning what skills they need to build on.
- Make explicit the links between evaluation, assessment and daily planned activities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children settle well into the Nursery and make good gains in their learning, due to the good quality of the provision. Achievement and progress are particularly good in personal and social development because of the strong focus placed upon this aspect of learning. Achievement is good in mathematical development, communication, language and literacy, where there is also a strong emphasis, as well as in knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development. A small minority of children this year are likely to exceed the standards expected for their age by the time they leave school. Children who need extra support with their learning, those with statements of special educational need and those with English as an additional language achieve well and attain the appropriately challenging targets the school sets them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are good systems for induction and children quickly settle into school, coming in happily. Their enjoyment of their learning is excellent. Parents say children are often reluctant to leave at the end of their sessions. The school encourages children to make choices and to learn to take responsibility for things such as tidying up. However, it does not consistently ask children to talk to their peers about what choices they are going to make or to record or recall what they have chosen. Children 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 are integrated fully in all aspects of school life. Children enjoy being in school and attendance is good. They 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 well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. As a result, children make good progress in their learning. This is particularly the case in children's personal and social development. Planning for lessons is good and teachers frequently plan together to ensure that children have the same opportunities and that activities match children's interests well. Teachers know children well and make special efforts to involve them fully in the activities they have chosen. All children consequently have equal access, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language. Resources, such as computers and puppets, are used well to make learning interesting and exciting. There are too few planned review sessions with children to involve them in the evaluation of what they have done or how well they feel they have succeeded.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Good emphasis is placed upon teaching pupils to know about staying safe and leading healthy lifestyles. There is a particular emphasis on making good use of opportunities to learn outdoors. Learning is made interesting and relevant by a good number of visitors. Visits to places of interest in the locality happen less often. Provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good and they are fully integrated into all activities. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and has a significant impact on pupils' personal development. While the provision is rich and varied, the school has identified that the links between assessment and planned activities are not always sufficiently explicit in documentation.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Adults intervene to resolve differences swiftly if children have a disagreement. As a result, children are confident and approach adults happily. Child protection procedures are fully in place. Young children settle quickly into school because of the good support and encouragement they receive. Progress of pupils is effectively tracked from the time they start school. The individual needs of potentially higher attaining pupils, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language are identified quickly. The school meets these needs effectively through carefully planned interventions. There are good procedures for monitoring academic progress. Children do not have as clear knowledge as they might about what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management is good. This has resulted in a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. The recently appointed headteacher has a good knowledge of her school. This results in accurate school self-evaluation. She has high expectations of where she wants the school to be and a clear plan of how to achieve this. Subject coordinators, many of whom are new to their post, are effectively developing their roles in monitoring and development planning for their aspects. As yet they have not all completed a development plan for their aspect of learning. Governors are supportive, take their responsibilities seriously and provide good leadership. They are motivated and well-informed and are effectively developing their role as a 'critical friend' of the school.

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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	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	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

10 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Pastures Way Nursery School, Luton, LU4 0PE

I did enjoy seeing your school when I visited recently and would like to thank you for being so polite and friendly. I really enjoyed meeting you all and talking to you. Here are the things that particularly impressed me.

- You really like coming to school.
- You behave well and work hard.
- You have great fun working and playing, especially in the garden area.
- Your teachers teach you well so that you make good progress.
- You are taught a lot of interesting and exciting things.
- You learn about staying safe and are taught well about staying healthy and making healthy choices.
- Your headteacher works very hard and knows a lot about just how well each one of you is getting on.

The things I have asked your school to do next are:

- to help you learn even more about how to choose your activities, so that you regularly talk about how well you are getting on and what you can improve next
- for teachers to write down in their planning which of you they want to take part in each activity, and why.

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

Sheelagh Barnes

Lead inspector