

Rosemary Lane Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113989
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	311440
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Rodger

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	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Kevin Thornhill
Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Parker
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2004
School address	Rosemary Lane Easington Village Peterlee County Durham SR8 3BQ
Telephone number	0191 527 1168
Fax number	0191 527 1168

Age group	3–5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The Nursery school is situated on one site and a Children’s Centre on another. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the educational provision on both sites. The inspection focused on the quality of education in the maintained Nursery school and the impact on this of the provision in the Children’s Centre. Most children in the school attend part-time. All children have part-time nursery education and some have care paid for by parents on both sites. Most children are of White British heritage. There is a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and some vulnerable pupils who have additional support. The area served by the school has higher than average levels of disadvantage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Rosemary Lane Nursery is excellent in all respects. At the heart of its success are excellent leadership and management. The headteacher, together with a highly qualified and talented team, celebrate and develop every child in close partnership with parents and carers. Parental comments such as, 'Nursery staff are like an extended family' and, 'Rosemary Lane gives our children the best possible start to their education, laying firm foundations for them to build on', were typical of most. The extended services, such as language support and encouraging parental involvement, are pivotal to the excellence because of the close liaison fostered with vulnerable families. An excellent spin-off is the additional staffing that enables adults to work closely with small groups of children to extend their learning. The inspiration and vision of the headteacher and the attention given to maintaining excellent teaching are central to maintaining the excellence identified at the last inspection.

Children start in the Nursery at different ages and from a wide range of previous provision or straight from home. Some may have attended the child-care sessions on both sites. Their skills on entry is below the level typically expected and below the local authority averages. Children make exceptionally good progress and achieve very well in all areas of learning by the time they transfer to school. High quality teaching, excellent care and the high priority given to developing personal, social and emotional skills are outstanding features. The balance between indoor and outdoor learning contributes excellently to developing children's independence and confidence. Children enjoy being in the Nursery. Their behaviour is impressive because they are always so involved in high quality learning. Children develop an insatiable level of curiosity as they explore and investigate their surroundings, for example, hunting outside for mini-beasts or examining real sea creatures and learning where their food comes from. The organisation and management is second to none because of the excellent range of superbly well-resourced provision. Small groups, called story groups, provide a necessary security for children at the start and end of the day in vibrant and calming areas dotted around the Nursery. The imagination and attention to detail that is ascribed to each area of learning is quite breathtaking. X-rays, visiting chinchillas and other animals populate the 'veterinary surgery' and extend children's learning to a high level as a result. Skilled practitioners cajole and model as they work alongside the children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the wider world. Their skilled questioning of children strongly encourages the development of their imagination.

Excellent leadership and management are based on a shared vision that children can be extended to learn to their highest potential when they are skilfully supported and encouraged to develop their interests in whatever activity they engage through challenging questioning. For example, mathematical learning blossomed in a bullseye game as children added numbers together when they scored. Monitoring has a high profile alongside the expectation that staff teams will critically reflect and evaluate their practice. Team work is excellent. All staff give of their best at all times and reap the rewards of their efforts in the praise of parents and in their children's enjoyment of learning. Development planning is a shared venture and is always seeking to improve the environment or bid for additional funding for different projects. The Nursery provides excellent value for money and has an outstanding capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

As a Nursery school the Foundation Stage is completely covered by the 'Overall Effectiveness' section.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no areas for improvement that the Nursery is not already tackling.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is excellent. Children meet the standards that are typical for their age by the time they leave the Nursery. All children achieve equally well. Their excellent achievement, given their low starting points, reflects the consistently excellent teaching children receive in a secure and happy environment. Children are carefully nurtured and feel safe and secure in the small groups in which they spend part of their time. Detailed records of achievement keep everyone informed of the children's progress. Targeted support and encouragement for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities means they are involved in everything that takes place in the nursery. Children's progress is rigorously checked in weekly meetings with all staff to ensure that the needs of the wide range of abilities are being met, all of which contributes to excellent progress, particularly in language development. Children are chatty and talk confidently to each other in their play.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The caring environment ensures that children are respected and valued. Children eat healthy snacks, including vegetables and fruit and all have the opportunity to have a cooked meal at lunchtimes. They have the freedom to run around in safety and play with a lot of innovative outdoor equipment on both sites. Children learn that their food can be grown and it is important to eat healthily. The high priority to developing a healthy lifestyle is beginning to have an impact on what the children eat at home. Fitness is encouraged all year round, whatever the weather. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very effectively developed. Children show their excellent sense of self-worth and confidence in all the day-to-day events and especially when there are visitors to the nursery. Children are very well equipped and prepared for their next stage of schooling. This was particularly reflected in the community fancy dress parade through the village to the neighbouring primary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

There is a consistently high level of quality in teaching. The impact of training and rigorous monitoring by the headteacher is evident in the common features of excellence. Practitioners know how to extend learning and build on children's interests. Well timed intervention and carefully framed questions extend learning brilliantly and encourage children to develop their imagination. Resources are first rate. The outdoor area successfully develops children's knowledge and understanding and their physical development and features of the environment.

There is a very smooth transition from 'free flow' play to well focused group activities with all children effortlessly moving to their 'story' group rooms. The excitement generated in the discussion about a forthcoming fancy dress walk through the village demonstrated very well how the youngest children were able to copy older children and contribute to the discussion. The outstanding involvement of parents is fundamental to their children's learning and development. Currently, a group is working in school as part of a 'Parents as Partners in Early Learning' project. This aims to help their understanding of how children's learning is extended in the local environment. Already, part way through the course, parents have taken their children to rock pools and produced books of photographs and drawings with their children. An extensive collection of home bags, story sacks and library books is provided for children on a weekly basis to support their learning at home.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The innovation in the curriculum comes from the talented staff's ability to extend children's interests and prior knowledge through a range of practical activities. For example, investigating the properties of clay and other natural materials to develop early language skills and curiosity are very successful. First attempts to write are nearly always the result of the stimuli provided by, for example, a trip to a local pizza restaurant or a visit by fire fighters around bonfire night. Visiting musicians promote excellent listening skills with a range of unusual instruments. All children relish the chance to practice beating out their own rhythm in the outdoor musical area. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are admirably included in all activities. Excellence in the curriculum is evident in all the education provision equally well because of strong teamwork and shared training for staff. The high priority given to providing high quality outdoor learning is recognised by the local authority. An authority-wide publication on outdoor play means that the Nursery has regular visits from staff in other schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

There is a common thread that the children will have the highest quality care, guidance and support. Partnership with external agencies, especially to support vulnerable children, is very well established. Parents have every confidence in the Nursery and praise the liaison they have with them and external agencies. Their children settle very well when they start the Nursery. Links with the Children's Centre are very strong. As a result, the transition for children to the Nursery is very smooth and appreciated by parents. Children have the opportunity to attend breakfast, lunch or after-school clubs. All of these opportunities, alongside the excellent provision in the Nursery, contribute to the outstanding climate for learning. The school's healthy eating policy is widely disseminated to help parents be aware of healthy diets. A colourful record of children's achievements containing photographs and examples of children's learning provides parents with a lasting memory of their time in the Nursery. Staff always carry out assessments as they work alongside the children because of the high priority given to adult and child interaction.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The vision, leadership and direction provided by the headteacher, with the capable support of the assistant headteacher, are excellent. High standards are set for everyone and leadership is inspirational because of high expectations and commitment to excellence for everyone. Exemplary teamwork is a feature of the headteacher's excellent leadership. There is no sense of complacency and the headteacher is always seeking to make improvements. The links between professional development and outstanding practice for everyone are well established. The Nursery continues to go from strength to strength. Accurate self-evaluation is based on rigorous checks on teaching and learning that include all staff. This gives staff very clear points for development. This was a improvement point at the last inspection that has been remedied and is now excellent. This talent and commitment is well reflected in the large number of staff who work towards further professional qualifications. Governors are very supportive and work very successfully in partnership with the headteacher to encourage parental involvement.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

26 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Rosemary Lane Nursery School, Durham, SR8 3BQ

Thank you for the welcome given to me when I visited your Nursery recently. You all helped me to have such fun outside as you searched for mini-beasts in the grass with your magnifying glasses. Your Nursery is excellent in every way. It was fantastic to see you all dressed up ready for the fancy dress parade through the village. Did you enjoy the picnic at the end of the long walk?

You all work and play very hard. This means that you are very well prepared for your move to the nearby school. You know how to take turns, to write your name and to count when playing games. Some of you can even add numbers together.

The adults who work with you and your parents are very talented and make learning great fun for you all. You enjoy everything you do so much and your behaviour is great. Your parents should be very proud of you all. Because all the staff in the Nursery work so hard and are always making everything better for you I have not asked them to make any improvements.

Good luck to you all and enjoy all the games and exciting activities you have every day.

Best wishes

Rosemary Rodger

Lead inspector