

# Royal Spa Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114351
<b>Local Authority</b>	Brighton and Hove
<b>Inspection number</b>	311571
<b>Inspection date</b>	1 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Diane Wilkinson

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>	Nursery
<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 (total)	63
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jean Tothill
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sybilla True
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 June 2005
<b>School address</b>	Park Hill Brighton BN2 0BT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 607480
<b>Fax number</b>	01273 694335

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the development of children's early reading and writing skills, the provision for more able children, and how well leaders and managers are supporting school improvement. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, analysis of school tracking and assessment data, together with evidence from monitoring and from discussions with the headteacher, other senior leaders, members of the governing body and children. The views of parents and carers were gathered from the returns of the Ofsted and the school's own questionnaires, and discussion with a number of parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Royal Spa is a very popular and oversubscribed nursery school which provides education for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Children attend for either the morning or afternoon session from across the Brighton and Hove area. Around 6% of the children come from minority ethnic groups, the majority of whom are at the early stages of learning English. Attainment on entry is around that usually found. A small number of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Royal Spa is an outstanding nursery school. As one parent wrote, 'This is the best start in life a child can have.' A major reason for the nursery's success is the excellent learning ethos provided, especially the attention given to the needs and interests of each child. For example, an exceptionally good range of dressing up clothes is provided that reflects both boys' and girls' interests and the different cultures of nursery children. This ethos results in a buzzing learning environment where staff and parent helpers work especially well together to support children's learning and achievements. Children's progress is excellent and by the time they move on to primary school, standards are well above those expected. The excellent support for children who have specific learning, language or behavioural needs means they achieve as well as their classmates.

The highly skilled teachers and nursery nurses have an excellent understanding of how young children learn. The activities provided enthuse and motivate children and are exceptionally well planned to move them on from the level at which they have been working. Adults are especially good at explaining new things or questioning and prompting children to help them understand easily. These strengths help children to make excellent progress across all areas of learning. As one parent commented, 'The teachers and staff are outstanding. They are always striving to find interesting tasks for children and it is truly amazing how much they learn.' There is an excellent balance between those activities where children work with an adult and those where they select their own resources and discover things for themselves. The outstanding outdoor environment is used to especially good effect. For example, during the inspection children were very excited about using the magnifiers to find out about the minibeasts they discovered when digging in the mud patch.

Over the past few months, excellent strategies have been put in place to further encourage children's acquisition of early reading and writing skills. High quality planning ensures that activities are especially relevant to children's interests and are fun. Children are enthralled by the quality of story telling and love looking at books. They enjoy the wide range of activities where they are encouraged to use pencils or crayons carefully and to make marks in imitation of 'real writing', especially in role-play activities. The more able children, who are beginning to recognise the sounds in words and to form letters accurately, are provided with many opportunities to extend their skills. In the first few weeks of term they have already made very good progress, although the full effect on the standards they achieve in the longer term has yet to be seen.

Staff and governors pay excellent attention to children's welfare and the nursery is a very safe and happy place to be. One parent put the views of many when writing, 'It is a warm and caring environment and I totally trust the staff and teachers and know my child is getting the best possible care here.' Rigorous attention is given to ensuring the health, safety, welfare and protection of all children, including through outstanding links with many different agencies and other schools. Children develop an excellent awareness of the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise, and the need to ensure their safety, for example, by handling resources carefully. Everything about the nursery says to children and their parents, 'We are delighted to have you here' and the nursery's partnership with parents is outstanding. Parents' responses in both the nursery's and Ofsted's questionnaires provide high levels of praise for its work, its strong nurturing ethos and the way parents are encouraged to participate in their child's

development. Parents are very supportive of the nursery's work with, for example, many supervising the children's snack times.

The inclusion of children who have special learning, behavioural, language or cultural needs is excellent. The nursery's caring ethos extends to the children themselves. For example, a child with special educational needs was observed comforting a child who found leaving his parents difficult. Sensitive induction arrangements help children settle in very quickly and they greatly enjoy their time in the nursery, enthusiastically joining in all the activities and working and playing very happily together. During the inspection, one child was overheard calling out, 'Come and play here. This is real fun.' Behaviour is excellent and children get on exceptionally well with each other. They develop confidence and self-esteem, willingly trying out new things, not being afraid to 'fail' the first time, but trying again and again until they succeed in a task. Children develop a sense of responsibility, helping each other in different tasks and getting out or tidying away resources. These strengths provide an exceptionally good platform for children's understanding of how they can contribute to society and for their future life. Excellent arrangements for assessing children's progress, including through regular observations of each child, provide staff with very good information to help support learning further and to report to parents. Rigorous procedures are in place to check when children are in the nursery and that they are safely collected by a named adult. Attendance and punctuality are good and the nursery recognises that using information gained from monitoring patterns and trends over time could help to raise levels further.

The reason for the school's success is the outstanding leadership provided by the headteacher and the very good support she is given by both staff and governors in improving provision. The nursery has a very clear idea of how well it is doing, although it is modest about its success as it is determined to do even better. The whole-school community, including parents and children, is regularly consulted to help identify and address weaker aspects and to monitor the success of strategies put in place to address them. Staff are very reflective, continually adjusting their practice to meet the needs of children and to help them do their best. Together with governors, they fully share the headteacher's vision for the school, although considerable changes in personnel have limited the extent to which they contribute to determining its future direction. Recent improvement to the accommodation and grounds are further enhancing the nursery environment. The school's strategies to improve the quality of learning in early literacy skills, especially for the more able children, are already showing a very good impact on progress. These strengths give confidence that the school is exceptionally well placed to maintain its high quality education and improve even further.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Build on and extend the contribution made by staff and governors to determining the future direction of the school.

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## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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**Overall effectiveness**

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do children in the EYFS achieve?</b>	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/or disabilities make progress	1

**Personal development and well-being**

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?</b>	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
The extent to which 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**

<b>How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?</b>	1
<b>How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?</b>	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?</b>	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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



**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Children

Inspection of Royal Spa Nursery School, Brighton BN2 0BT

Thank you for welcoming us to your nursery school and being so friendly and helpful. We very much enjoyed our time with you. You and your parents think your nursery is a very special place to be. We agree with you and think your nursery is excellent.

- Here are some of the things we found out were good about the nursery:
- You enjoy your time in the nursery very much and your progress is very good. By the time children leave for primary school, standards are well above those normally seen.
- You have an excellent headteacher, and staff and governors help her to make sure you have the very best education possible.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you all get on very well together. We were especially impressed by the way you help each other.
- Your teachers and nursery nurses provide lots of very interesting things for you to do and are especially good at helping you to do your best.
- Staff keep a very careful check on your progress and use this information really well to help plan new things for you to learn.
- Adults take excellent care of you and your parents are very pleased that you are safe and well looked after.
- Staff work very well with other people, especially your parents, to help you learn and develop.

Your headteacher is very good at looking for ways in which to help make the nursery even better and we have asked staff and governors to try and suggest ways in which they can help her to do this.

We are very pleased that you enjoy nursery and are doing so well, and hope that you keep on trying to do your best.

Yours sincerely

D Wilkinson Lead Inspector