

Tenterfield Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117078
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	312480
Inspection dates	5–6 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Florence Olajide

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	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Charles Eggington
Headteacher	Mrs Susan England
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2005
School address	London Road Welwyn Hertfordshire AL6 9JF
Telephone number	01438 714564
Fax number	01438 716347

Age group	3–5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves the village of Welwyn and the surrounding towns and villages. The majority of children have had pre-school experience before attending the nursery. About a tenth are entitled to free school meals and very few children have learning difficulties. The vast majority of children are from White British backgrounds. Very few children speak a first language other than English.

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 with several outstanding features. The headteacher's leadership is inspirational. This, combined with a very strong focus on monitoring and evaluation, has led to significant improvements in provision, including teaching and learning, which are good. The improvement is reflected in the personalised learning programme for children, which builds on their interests, prior knowledge and ability. The quality of daily planning is very good, ensuring a good balance between teacher-directed activities and child-initiated play. Consequently, children are highly motivated; they enjoy school, make good progress and achieve good standards. While teacher-directed activities are of a consistently good quality, the school recognises the need to improve the use of skilful questioning to extend children's learning when they are engaged in self-initiated activities.

Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Together with the outstanding care, guidance and support provided, they foster a very happy and nurturing atmosphere in which children flourish. As a result, children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. Many parents attest to how their children develop very quickly into extremely confident, independent young people upon starting school. Children have excellent attitudes to learning and their behaviour is impeccable most of the time. Academic guidance and support is particularly strong, enabling children, with the support of their families, to build on what they already know, and to achieve the challenging individual targets set for them.

The curriculum is outstanding. It excites children, particularly the outdoor learning provision, which is exceptional. It allows children to develop in all aspects of their learning. For example, daily activities ensure that specific skills, including eye– hand coordination, are well developed. This was aptly expressed by a parent who stated, 'The early development opportunities are helping to mould my son's young mind into becoming a well-balanced child'. The extended services provided by the school, which include day care facilities, breakfast and after school provision, are very successful. They are used well and much appreciated by parents. They are managed extremely well, providing a positive learning experience for children and a seamless transition from school to day-care provision.

Other managers and governors support the headteacher effectively and provide good leadership overall. Of particular note is the very strong clarity of vision, in relation to school improvement priorities, that all leaders share. This is a product of the school's robust systems for monitoring the quality of its provision and for using the information gathered to direct the focus of school improvement. Actions taken have had a significant impact on some aspects of the school's work such as the curriculum. Nonetheless, school improvement activities are not yet leading to outstanding achievement for children. In addition, although the school identifies the intended impact of school improvement activities, these are not defined sharply enough in ways that the school can easily measure to determine how successfully it has achieved them.

Despite a significant turnover of staff and governors in the last few years, the school has worked hard to ensure that the quality of provision remains consistently good. Staffing is now stable and the strong team spirit combined with the successful improvements over the last few years, which have led to some aspects of provision becoming outstanding, indicate excellent capacity for further improvement.

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

- Improve the use of questioning to extend children's learning, particularly those of higher ability, when they are engaged in self-initiated activities.
- Enhance school improvement planning by identifying ways by which the school will know that it has successfully achieved its objectives.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the school with attainment that is usually higher than might typically be expected for their age. The school's assessment data indicates that all children, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress. There are no significant differences in the attainment and progress of groups across the school. Most of the children leave the school with standards that are above age-related expectations and some of them achieve exceptional standards. The school has successfully improved standards in writing since the last inspection and children make good progress in this aspect of their learning. While there are some variations in children's progress across different aspects of learning, the differences are not significant.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Children are self-assured and comfortable with each other, adults and their environment. They say they enjoy learning at school. Parents confirm this and as one explained, 'My daughter enjoys all elements of school and is disappointed when the weekend is near'. Children are active and independent learners. For example, they use their own initiative to record the work they have done by using cameras. They play amicably and their excellent behaviour helps to keep them safe. They also eat the healthy dinners and snacks provided by the school. Children develop a good knowledge of other cultures such as China, by learning about their food, music, writing and other practices. The school works hard to promote good attendance and most children attend regularly. Children's basic skills, including the ability to use information and communication technology, are good, and this prepares them well for the infant school. Recently introduced interviews by staff are beginning to provide the children with a real opportunity to share their views about what they like or dislike about school so that they can influence decisions that are made.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is consistently good and some of it is outstanding. Focused, teacher-directed activities, ensure maximum participation by all children, and are well-structured so that children make good progress towards the learning objective. Activities are selected carefully to ensure a good

match to children's abilities. They are practical, engaging and maintain children's interest. Nonetheless, the quality of the dialogue and focused questioning during child-initiated activities does not fully extend learning, particularly for those children who are more able. The school is seeking to improve this aspect of its provision. Ample resources support teaching and learning very well. Children particularly enjoy using computerised learning programmes, which they manage independently with high levels of dexterity.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is planned around themes and topics, which carefully link most of the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. Children are also taught French. The curriculum makes a very good contribution to children's personal, social and emotional development. It promotes high levels of independence, for example by encouraging children to plan and make decisions about their day. The school's resources to support outdoor learning are exceptional. The carefully planned outdoor learning environment provides children with high quality experiences, which challenge them physically and intellectually. Another notable strength is the provision of the extended day-care, breakfast and after school services, which enable children to access a longer learning day than might otherwise be expected. This has a positive impact on children's achievement, and the school's data shows that children who access these services make slightly better progress than the others.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Children are provided with exceptional care, guidance and support. Well-established routines provide children with a strong sense of security. The daily swap over between nursery education and day-care provision is managed so effectively that children hardly notice the change. The school works extremely effectively with a range of external agencies to ensure that children and their families are supported very well. For example, informative packs are provided for parents of children with learning difficulties or disabilities to guide them when dealing with various agencies. Academic guidance is excellent. Children each have a 'learning plan', which details what they can do and the next steps in the learning. These child-friendly documents are reviewed with parents termly. Children who are more able and those with learning difficulties have individual educational plans which detail very specific additional targets. Children's progress towards meeting the individual educational plan targets are monitored and recorded weekly, and used to inform teaching and planning. The school uses the extended day-care provision very effectively to support the welfare of its most vulnerable children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is managed well and all leaders are influential in setting a clear direction for the school. Recent, but robust, systems for monitoring and evaluating performance, and for assessing and tracking children's progress, are effectively enabling leaders to maintain good standards and improve provision. All members of the school community, including governors, are involved in monitoring, so that they are clear about the school's strengths and what needs to be improved. However, when the school plans for improvement, although it identifies outcomes for children, these are not defined in terms that would enable the school to measure its progress easily. The

school's work with other partners to promote children's well-being is outstanding. For example, it has led the production of a directory of educational and related services in the local area for parents' use. Links with feeder and receiving schools are very good, ensuring a smooth transition for children into and out of the nursery. Governance is good. Governors are well informed and use their personal expertise to support the school. Their involvement in evaluating the impact of the school's work is satisfactory. Financial management is sound and there are planned savings for a new building extension.

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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	1

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?	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?	2
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	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

07 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Tenterfield Nursery School, Welwyn, AL6 9JF

Thank you for looking after me when I visited your school. I really enjoyed talking to you about your work and your school. This letter is to tell you what I found out.

- Your school is good and some of the things it does are excellent.
- The teaching is good and you all enjoy the different activities, especially outdoors where you have very exciting things to work and play with.
- You are all very confident and independent. For example, I noticed how good you are at using cameras to record your work all by yourselves.
- You work and play very well together, you listen to the adults and your behaviour is brilliant.
- The adults take excellent care of you and work hard to make sure that you are safe and happy.
- They are also very good at letting you know how well you are doing and what you need to learn next.
- You all do well at school and your parents are very pleased about this.

To make your school even better, I have asked the adults to think about two things:

- to ask you the right questions to help you learn better and faster when you choose your own activities;
- to improve how they measure how good they are at making your school better.

I hope you all continue to do well and that your parents will support the staff by making sure that you attend school as much as possible. I wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Florence Olajide

Lead inspector