

Ludwick Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117079
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	312481
Inspection date	10 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Jackie Cousins

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	3-4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Margaret Birleson
Headteacher	Mrs Karen James
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2005
School address	Holwell Road Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire AL7 3RP
Telephone number	01707 323693
Fax number	01707 343091

Age group	3-4
Inspection date	10 July 2008
Inspection number	312481

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

One Additional Inspector carried out the inspection in one day. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and focused on the following issues.

- The monitoring of children's progress in communication, language and literacy, especially boys
- The quality of children's personal development
- staff sharing of information with parents on matters such as information and communication technology (ICT), oral feedback and individual pupil targets

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, senior leadership team, leaders for areas of learning, teachers, staff, children, the Children's Centre Coordinator, the Chair and Vice Chair of the governors, observations of teaching and learning, and through an analysis of school data on standards and progress and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as detailed in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized Nursery school. Most children are from White British backgrounds and a significant proportion is from minority ethnic groups. A well above average proportion of children are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of children who find learning more difficult or who have a statement of special educational need is above expected levels. A significant minority of children are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. In June this year, the school received an award for its travel plan. In July 2007, Ludwick Nursery was designated the lead agency for Oak Tree Children's Centre and works in partnership with Squirrels Day Care.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Ludwick Nursery is an outstanding school and gives excellent value for money. The children get a superb start to their education in Nursery classes. Children of all abilities settle quickly into school life. This is because a really good partnership is in place between the school staff and parents. One parent summed it up by saying, 'Ludwick Nursery is a fantastic place for children. Staff are child and family focused, friendly and welcoming.' Every single parent who responded to the questionnaire is very happy with the school and the progress that his or her child is making. Parents are encouraged to improve their own skills and take short courses run by the Centre. Each week a small group of parents and children can learn to cook together. The school works very thoughtfully to unite the community. For example, twice-weekly sessions allow parents to meet with health visitors and family workers. An excellent partnership is in place between the school and other agencies. Very good specialists support children whose speech development is significantly underdeveloped and this allows them to progress particularly effectively. Children, who find learning to read, write and use numbers difficult are supported effectively because staff successfully plan for their learning needs.

Children's personal development is a great strength of the school and is outstanding. This is because all staff are very committed and give children an excellent level of care, guidance and support. Children have excellent attitudes to learning and concentrate very well on tasks. Attendance is good. Children's behaviour is exemplary because staff guide them very thoughtfully. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children's understanding of our multicultural society is extremely good. They studied the Chinese festival of New Year in depth, learning about traditional Chinese food, dances and stories about dragons. They learn to reflect about their own and others' feelings extremely well. Children contribute to their school community successfully. They raise money for various charities. They adopt healthy lifestyles exceptionally well because the school encourages them to eat healthily and take regular exercise. For example, two-thirds of children walk or cycle to school. Children have half an hour of taught physical education per week and for a considerable amount of time each day they choose which skills they will develop in the outside area. Children learn extremely well about how to keep themselves safe inside and outside school. The school works carefully to safeguard children and procedures meet requirements fully.

Children's enjoyment in the many exciting activities planned for them is outstanding. This is because the centre provides an extremely rich curriculum and environment. They say they really like coming to nursery. One parent summed up by saying, 'My child has fun with many inside and outside activities such as going on bus rides and nature trails and making ice cream and models.' Children have good opportunities to use ICT because of the successful use of resources. Children's skills are further developed in the outside area; for example, children learn about what plants need in order to grow well because they look after their own garden area. Inside activities promote children's understanding of measurement when they measure their height using hands.

The school's leadership places great importance on adding value to children's levels of knowledge and understanding. This means that children make exceptionally good progress in all areas of learning. Over the last three years, consistently high levels of achievement have been maintained. Children's progress in personal, social and emotional development, language and communication and physical development are particularly strong. A considerable proportion of children start school with levels of knowledge that are very low compared to those expected for three year

olds. Boys and girls make rapid progress and so standards are in line with expectations for four year olds by the time they leave. Children that are more able receive good challenge and they attain successfully. Children are prepared well for the next stage of education.

Excellent teaching is a massive contributory factor for why children achieve so effectively in their learning. Teaching uses exceptionally good methods. For example, particularly good use of questioning develops children's understanding of language and key ideas. For example, a teacher used open-ended questioning particularly well and so children pretended to go on a bus ride, visited a beach, and had a picnic in just half an hour. This type of activity allows children to use a very wide variety of language. Children's basic skills develop effectively because staff have high expectations of them. Teachers use positive comments well and so children know how well they have done. One parent said, 'I am extremely impressed with the school's attitude. The teachers are always approachable, courteous and take the time to talk about my child.' Children who are learning to speak English as an additional language receive good support and so they achieve effectively. Individual learning plans structure their language development well.

One of the keys to the school's success is its use of a detailed system to track children's attainment and progress. Staff make very thorough assessments on children when they arrive and repeat them every term. Detailed discussions about children who seem to be under-achieving occur to determine what extra support would be valuable. Children's progress is tracked in 13 areas of learning including personal, language, reading, writing, calculation, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. The progress that children from minority ethnic groups make is carefully monitored and they progress successfully. Occasionally, individual targets are not recorded specifically and staff do not use developmental guidance effectively. This means that staff and parents are not always clear about how a child can successfully meet these targets.

Outstanding leadership and management have brought about very effective improvements since the last inspection. The school has enriched children's days with greater emphasis on the development of language and reading skills. This is because of the successful ways that staff have taken on board training sessions. One parent said, 'I have observed many improvements over the years and the school continues to strive to move forward and improve, involving parents in every step along the way.' Excellent leadership by the headteacher ensures that that the school's self-evaluation is very rigorous. Provision for gifted and talented children is good and yet, because the senior leadership team is always looking for ways to improve the school, they aim to make provision even stronger. Governance is excellent and they are working successfully to monitor the outcomes for children. The school is in an excellent position to continue to improve in the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

As a Nursery school, the Foundation Stage is addressed in the Overall Effectiveness section.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that staff and parents are clearer about the next steps children are going to make in their work so that they can assess children's successes against their targets in more detail.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------

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	3
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	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?	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

11 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Ludwick Nursery, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 3RP.

Thank you for helping me to find out about your school. I enjoyed watching sessions and talking to some of you. You are lucky to attend such a happy and friendly school. Excellent things about your school include the fact that:

- a super partnership is in place between the school and your parents
- you make very good progress in your work
- you concentrate and behave very well in sessions
- you really enjoy a wide range of activities
- staff work hard to make sessions interesting
- they care for you very well
- your headteacher has really good ideas about ways to improve the school.

I have asked your school to look at how they can make things even better. The most important thing is to:

- make sure that staff and parents are clearer about the next steps you are going to make in your work so that they can assess your successes in more detail.

Keep enjoying all the things you are learning at Ludwick Nursery School.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Cousins

Lead inspector