

Wheatley Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122983
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314445
Inspection date	24 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Aileen King

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	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sarah Simmonds
Headteacher	Ms Sally Withey
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2004
School address	Littleworth Road Wheatley Oxford OX33 1NN
Telephone number	01865 452725
Fax number	01865 452724

Age group	3-5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Wheatley Nursery School is 'attached' to the nearby special school, sharing the same site and headteacher, but with its own governing body. It currently provides part-time places for 38 children from the age of three to four years old. Most children come from a mixed range of socio-economic circumstances and there is currently more diversity of backgrounds within the school population than previously. No children are learning English as an additional language. Four children identified with learning difficulties and disabilities are on the roll of both the Nursery and the special school. These difficulties and disabilities range from autism, to severe learning difficulties and profound, multiple difficulties. Only a small number of children tend to stay in the Nursery until they have completed the Foundation Stage. The Nursery judges children's attainment on entry as expected for their age, although there is a wide spectrum of abilities within this.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Wheatley Nursery is a good school in which children achieve well. Leadership is good and the headteacher, ably assisted by the assistant headteacher provide a strong focus for the staff to ensure that children's learning flourishes. Parents' and carers' views of the school are positive, and this was well illustrated by one parent's comment, 'The Nursery school is a joy of a place, full of light, smiles and laughter'. Children come into the Nursery with skills which are at about the expected level for their age and because of the good teaching and learning they make good progress. By the time they leave the Nursery they have developed good skills in personal and social development, communication and mathematical understanding. Staff interact well with the children in their play, use questioning effectively and provide a good range of meaningful and relevant learning experiences. There is a good balance of activities and children are well-prepared for the next steps in their learning and education. The curriculum is good and enhanced with a range of interesting activities which are presented in a way which makes learning fun. The outdoor space is well resourced and put to good use to support learning.

Personal development is good, children behave well, make a positive contribution to the life of the Nursery and their awareness of being healthy and keeping safe is good. However records of achievement show that not all children are secure in their developing understanding about the diversity of cultures in modern society. Care, guidance and support are good, children, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities are looked after exceptionally well. Guidance and support from staff are good and help the children achieve their potential. Staff observe children's learning and use this information well to inform what they should learn next. Leadership and management are good, with clear direction provided to ensure children's learning thrives. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory, but lacks rigour. The self-evaluation is largely carried out by senior management, and staff and governors are not always involved in it. The capacity to improve is satisfactory. After a period of instability, the governing body now has a full complement of governors to ensure that development continues. The school has an inclusive ethos and promotes social harmony well. There are good links with a wide range of agencies to support learning.

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 children's cultural development.
- Ensure the process of self-evaluation of the Nursery provision has sufficient rigour and involves all staff and governors.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Staff plan a good range of activities for the children which help them to settle quickly and make a good start to their school life. Their knowledge and understanding of the world feature as strengths of their achievement and progress, because of the good range of life experiences that are offered. The range of activities builds on their previous knowledge and meets the

needs of all children. Standards are above average because children are interested and their learning blossoms. Their confidence is increasing and they are quite articulate in explaining their ideas and developing their skills in communication. Standards in mathematical development are well-promoted which means even the youngest children are able to recognise numerals correctly and begin to put these in ascending order. Their choices are valued, they are challenged to consider possibilities and their contributions are encouraged and respected. This approach means that they are increasingly independent and benefits their personal, social and emotional development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children are confident, self-possessed and keen to share their ideas and ask questions. As learners, they are inquisitive, curious and eager to investigate. They contribute willingly in the life of the Nursery, behave well and their attitudes are positive. Children show a real interest in learning and approach the activities offered enthusiastically. These combine to give them valuable skills that are likely to benefit them well in later life. Parents and carers are supportive of the work of the Nursery and children's awareness of safety and being healthy are evident. For example the older children enjoy a healthy option from their lunch boxes at the end of the morning. Attendance is about at the expected level for this age group. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. However, records of achievement indicate that not all children are secure in this aspect of their learning, especially in their cultural development when finding out about how people from other cultural traditions live their lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Children genuinely enjoy their learning, because of the way in which staff interact and participate with them in their activities and play. Staff encourage the children to develop their own ideas and make choices, which means the children feel empowered to try out activities. They approach their learning with enthusiasm because staff have planned activities to be purposeful and interesting. The deployment of staff is good with a good ratio of adults to children, which means their needs can be met well. The staff use their expertise to support learning, for example in asking children questions to make them think. For example, on a visit to a nearby pond children were posed a question about how happy the snail they had found might be feeling. Behaviour is good because expectations of the staff are high and relationships are positive. Sessions are well-organised and thoughtfully planned. This means that all children are involved in the learning experiences provided, especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Sometimes, opportunities are missed to reinforce sound recognition and letter formation. Nevertheless, features of teaching and learning include a good emphasis on developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world and the use of the outdoors to support this area of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is balanced and presents a good degree challenge to extend the children's learning, including challenges for those who learn quickly. The activities provided are interesting

and meaningful for children and they make learning enjoyable and fun. The curriculum is enhanced well, for instance staff take advantage of the swimming pool on site and children have regular access to this in the summer months. Topics on occupations in the community give these young children good insights into what people do in their working lives. Children take responsibility for their own learning as they are encouraged to make their own choices and decisions about how to organise themselves and the materials they will use, for example when designing models from recycled materials. Children who have learning difficulties and disabilities are fully integrated in the Nursery, and the provision to meet their needs is good. Priority has been given in the curriculum to the development of technology, but there are times when opportunities are missed to promote learning, for example for the children to use cameras to record observations.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

One parent commented that the Nursery 'has a warm, friendly feel and children are cared for in a nurturing environment'. This is particularly the case for those children who have specific needs. Safety and security are taken seriously and the necessary measures are in place to keep children free from harm. Parents and carers are welcomed in the Nursery and several indicated that they felt their children were helped to settle and had a good start to their education. The systems for assessing and recording attainment and progress are good, including observations of what children know and can do, and these are used to inform planning the next challenging steps in their learning. Staff briefly review and evaluate the previous day's session as part of their preparation each morning, but there is no formal procedure for reviewing learning in greater depth at the end of each session. The Nursery strives to encourage parents to ensure their children attend as regularly as possible to provide good continuity for their learning. There are good links with a wide range of outside agencies, which are used well to support the children's achievement and progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and assistant headteacher give clear direction to the work of the Nursery ensuring expectations are high for what children can achieve. Monitoring and analysis are in place and self-evaluation is established, but there is a lack of rigour. Systems for checking on children's progress although understood by the headteacher are not easy to follow. Governors are supportive of the work of the Nursery, and now with a full complement of members, are better placed to be involved in the self-evaluation process and ensure improvement. Parents are included in their children's education and most feel they are well-informed about their children's learning. Their opinions are generally very positive. The links with a wide range and variety of other professionals and schools in the local community have helped the staff build a good level of expertise to promote learning. There is good quality care in the Nursery and the good teamwork means that daily routines are established and shared. This teamwork is a feature of the Nursery, which promotes its inclusive ethos and enables all children to be fully integrated in the range of activities and experiences offered.

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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	3

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?	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	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	3
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	3
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 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Wheatley Nursery School, Oxford, OX33 1NN

Thank you so much for being so friendly and keen to talk to me when I visited your Nursery. I think Wheatley Nursery is a good school, where everyone can join in. You were very enthusiastic and interested in all you had to do, especially when we visited the wild life area near the school for pond dipping. You seem to enjoy the outdoor area and garden very much and can explore these during the morning. You are hard workers, share fairly and look after the Nursery and you do lots of things which help your learning and are enjoyable and fun.

I have asked your headteacher and the other staff to think about:

- helping you to understand how children from different cultural traditions live their lives
- making sure all the grown-ups know how good the Nursery is, and what to do to make it even better.

Yours sincerely

Aileen King

Lead Inspector