

Lea Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109763
Local Authority	Slough
Inspection number	325023
Inspection date	12 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Keith Williams

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 (total)	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Wal Chahal
Headteacher	Mrs Kusum Trikha
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2006
School address	Wexham Road Slough SL2 5JW
Telephone number	01753 536492
Fax number	01753 821798

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. They investigated the school's evidence suggesting that children make outstanding progress; how staff use assessment to ensure that tasks match children's differing needs; and the extent to which governance has improved. Evidence was gathered from the analysis of children's progress, observation of lessons, parents' questionnaires, and discussions with the headteacher, staff, a governor and children.

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, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Children are admitted at the beginning of each term. They come from a wide range of backgrounds, with the largest group being those of Pakistani heritage. The proportion of children who are at an early stage of learning English is much higher than usual. Urdu and Panjabi are the most common home languages. Around 12% have been identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, relating mainly to speech, language and communication. The school has the Healthy School and the Basic Skills awards. A new building for the Nursery is currently under construction.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'I am very grateful and happy that my child attends such a wonderful Nursery and that she gets all the support she needs from her teachers and all the other staff.' This view sums up the appreciation most parents have for the outstanding education and care their children are given. A combination of excellent leadership, teaching and support enables children to make exceptional progress in their all-round development. The school places a very high priority on enabling staff to develop their skills and expertise. The result is a highly qualified and capable staff. The children benefit enormously because, under the calm, knowledgeable and authoritative guidance of the headteacher, staff are united in their dedication to provide the very best for them.

When children first join the school their skills are well below those typical of three-year-olds, particularly in their communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. In addition, many speak little or no English. One of the school's many strengths is that the staff know each child individually and meet their often widely differing needs exceptionally well. This process begins with information gleaned from home visits, and is supplemented by a very careful assessment of each child's capabilities soon after they start school. This means that staff can provide the right activities and support from a very early stage. The many children who are at an early stage of learning English are supported exceptionally well, and are fully included in all of the Nursery's activities. Bilingual teaching assistants make a very strong contribution to building on the skills and experiences children bring from home. As a result, children soon gain confidence in speaking English and make rapid gains in their learning. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with language and communication difficulties, are also very well supported. Staff create a well thought-out individual programme, often supplemented by excellent links with outside agencies, that ensures that these children, too, make rapid progress. Staff are highly skilled at nurturing each child and, because they meet children's varying needs so well, children of all backgrounds and abilities achieve excellently in all areas of learning. A measure of their success is that, even though their starting points are low, by the time they leave the Nursery, most children reach the goals expected of them, and some exceed those goals.

Relationships among children and with the adults are very positive and children settle very quickly into the Nursery's warm, welcoming and supportive atmosphere. Staff provide a very interesting and exciting range of activities and they ensure there are plenty of opportunities for children to choose what to do for themselves. Children learn to work independently and cooperate with others. They concentrate for impressively long periods and their behaviour is excellent. They listen attentively to the adults, even though they are itching to join in, and take great delight in exploring new ideas. They enjoy weighing out ingredients to make biscuits and produce beautiful bouquets in the 'flower shop'. Staff lead their groups very well. They provide the right amount of help, and question carefully, so that children are encouraged to say what they are thinking. Computers and interactive whiteboards are used well to add to children's enjoyment and the outdoor area is used imaginatively to promote their physical and social development. Staff are rightly very proud of the broad range of visits and visitors that enrich children's learning. Their successful pursuit of the Healthy Schools gold award is recognition of the school's commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles and, as a result, children have a mature understanding of why the choices they make about food and exercise are important. Similarly, the Basic Skills award is a reflection of the high-quality teaching that helps prepare children so well for their future lives.

Staff keep a very close eye on children's development and welfare. Parents report that their children feel safe and the Nursery places a high premium on ensuring that the site is secure. Very robust checks are made on the suitability of adults to work with children and potential risks are identified and eliminated. Levels of supervision are good and this adds to children's enjoyment. This is reflected in the good rate of attendance, which is rising steadily. Because staff know the children well, they keep a very close check on their well-being and any sign of unhappiness or unease is identified quickly and remedied. A similarly close check is kept on children's learning, and staff make excellent use of their assessments to pinpoint their next steps. Over time, these assessments build up excellent 'records of achievement' that show how well children are progressing. Assessment information is used very thoughtfully by leaders and staff to plug any gaps in children's learning. In addition, this information is also used to hold individual staff to account for the progress of children in their care, and to set challenging targets. A new, computerised system of recording assessments presents a clear picture of the progress made by individual children from their starting points and this information is used very well. It is not so easy for staff to check on the levels reached by particular groups, for example those of different backgrounds or gender.

Nevertheless, senior staff evaluate the school's work rigorously and have a very clear and accurate understanding of its effectiveness. Governors have improved their role since the last inspection and make a good contribution to identifying what is working well and what might be improved. Information from monitoring activities and the tracking of children's progress is used very systematically to identify priorities and help staff gain qualifications and improve their practice. This is central to the school's success. Staff have created a very inclusive and cohesive Nursery that, as well as reflecting and evaluating itself, looks outwards for inspiration locally and further afield, for example to similar settings in Poland. The leaders' performance in maintaining its outstanding effectiveness, and tackling issues identified in the last report, shows they are exceptionally well placed to sustain further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine the recording of assessments so that it is easier to see the levels reached by particular groups of children.

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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 is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	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

How well do children in the EYFS 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/or disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?	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

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

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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 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**

03 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Lea Nursery School, Slough, SL2 5JW

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited your Nursery. We really enjoyed watching you in your classrooms and outside. We could tell how much you enjoy learning and it is easy to see why. Your Nursery is excellent and here are some of the reasons.

- All of the adults are excellent at helping you to learn.
- They care very much about you and look after you very well.
- There are lots of interesting and fun things to do inside and outside.
- Your headteacher leads the school really well and is given good help by the governors.
- Those of you who are new to learning English get all the help you need.
- The adults keep a very close check on you to make sure that you are safe and learning well.

Even though your Nursery is excellent, your headteacher and the other adults want it to be even better. They use their computer well to check that you are learning as well as you can. We have asked them to make it easier to show the levels that you reach in your work. I am sure they will explain to you what they are going to do. You can help by making sure that you carry on trying your best and we wish you good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Keith Williams

Lead Inspector