

# Henry Allen Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110195
<b>Local Authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	325105
<b>Inspection date</b>	2 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Sadler

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>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	84
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Martin Phillips
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Jamie Shaw
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 May 2006
<b>School address</b>	Mitchell Walk Amersham HP6 6NW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01494 726257
<b>Fax number</b>	01494 727845

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<b>Age group</b>	3-4
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- How well do more able children achieve and how well are their needs met?
- What are the key characteristics that make the curriculum effective?
- What is the quality of monitoring and evaluation?

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with staff, children, a group of governors and parents. In addition, there were observations of children learning, both indoors and outdoors, and of displays and photographs. The responses of 55 parents' questionnaires were analysed and their comments taken into account.

## Description of the school

This is an average-sized Nursery that provides for children on a part-time basis. About two thirds of the children are from White British backgrounds and the others are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of children with learning difficulties, all of whom have speech, language and communication difficulties, is about half the national average. There is an afternoon pre-school that is not managed by the governors. In addition, children may stay for lunch club. This provision is managed by the governors.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The inspection confirms the school's evaluation that it provides a good standard of education. As a result of good teaching, children learn and develop well. The Nursery has some considerable strengths. Children's personal development is outstanding. This is an area in which the Nursery excels. In this respect, the children get a good start to their education. Whether they start at the beginning or part-way through the school year, children of all abilities settle well. This is because the staff provide high-quality care, support and welfare. This is aided by the strong partnership between the parents and the school. Parents' unanimous support for the Nursery is typified by the parent who wrote, 'My son has had a wonderful introduction to learning, listening and playing. He always comes out of class with a smile on his face.' Staff are very accessible at the beginning and end of the day, which enables parents to discuss any concerns and to gain guidance. Children's care is further enhanced by the opportunity for them to take part in the good-quality lunch club.

Children reach above the expected standards in many areas of learning by the time they leave the Nursery. This represents good progress from their starting points. They achieve well overall, and outstandingly well in their personal, social and emotional development. In this area, many of the children leave the Nursery having already achieved the goals expected for children at the end of the Reception Year. The children's progress is carefully recorded, based on a wide range of assessments. Central to these is the school's strategy of developing 'narratives' for each child. These are extended and detailed observations are taken on a regular basis which help to provide the spine of the individual profiles that are developed for each child.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Practices are consistent throughout the Nursery and adults develop very good relationships with the children. All children form a strong attachment with their key person. As a result, they feel safe and secure in whatever they are doing. Skills are developed well because staff explain clearly to children what they can achieve from different activities. Planning is good and thorough, and activities are matched well to children's learning needs. This enables all groups of children, including those who find learning easy, to achieve well. In addition, staff manage children well, and they generally prompt and question well. The staff work well as a whole team and they support one another for the children's benefit in each of the three classrooms. It is obvious from the children's responses that they really enjoy all that is on offer, especially when they are moving around, taking part in activities of their own choice or involved in adult-led practical activities. On occasion, staff do not sufficiently extend the children's language when engaged in small-group activities that are led by adults.

Children gain excellent enjoyment from the wide range of rich and varied activities that are provided for them. They delight in playing both indoors and outdoors and are very responsive to the suggestions and prompts of the staff. Staff develop children's skills thoughtfully and well in topics that cover many areas of learning at one time. These are carefully planned and are always based on children's interests and first-hand experiences. Children undertake exciting experiences which are linked to the seasons of the year, such as going to pick strawberries and making meringues. Others were amazed as they picked, washed and ate carrots that they had grown. Staff are particularly adept at ensuring that children achieve well in the area of personal, social and emotional development. This is because the staff rightly believe that this area is fundamental to young children's learning and development. In consequence, they ensure that children are helped to understand the difference between right and wrong, to work with others

and to take turns. Because the atmosphere is so inclusive, this in turn enables the children to grow in confidence and self-esteem. In consequence, the children are well prepared for their move to primary school.

Children learn and play happily in the exceptionally rich outdoor environment. This provides a wealth and maze of exciting and engaging activities, backed by an extraordinary range of resources. The school's fundamental belief in children learning through play is well complemented by the good opportunities that staff make to work directly with small groups of children. There are specific learning opportunities for children who have speech, language and communication difficulties, as well as for those who are more shy or withdrawn, which enable these children to make as good progress as their classmates. The sessions for shy children are skilfully led by a nursery nurse who uses puppets and stories well to develop themes such as 'asking for help' and 'sharing with others'. More able children achieve well as they, too, are well provided with demanding activities across all areas of learning.

Developing children's healthy lifestyles is a high priority for the leadership. Children are encouraged to eat a balanced diet and take regular exercise. 'We like to run, it helps us be healthy', announced a proud four-year-old. Children say that they feel very safe in the Nursery, and they are also helped to understand how to keep themselves safe. 'I have got to wear my hat today so the sun doesn't hurt me', commented a child on the very hot day of the inspection. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They learn to reflect on their own and others' feelings with exceptional sensitivity and staff are responsive to how important children's well-being is to their learning. Behaviour is excellent and children's moral development is promoted exceptionally well through discussions with staff, and so they learn the importance of sharing with others and respecting others' views. Levels of attendance have improved since the previous inspection because the staff are diligent in ensuring that any absences are followed up and regular attendance is promoted well. However, the start of sessions, both in the mornings and afternoons, is adversely affected because a number of children arrive late. Consequently, the staff have to start with open play because other starts would be interrupted by a flow of children coming in after the session begins.

The Nursery is led and managed well. The care, welfare and personal development of children, so that they become independent, confident learners, is central to how the Nursery is led and managed. Self-evaluation is accurate and there is good and close monitoring of provision. The Nursery's development plan, 'Polishing the Diamond', is well-conceived and organised and provides a useful tool for further improvement. Equality of opportunity for the children is promoted well. Each child is treated as a unique individual and any barriers to learning are quickly identified and staff work effectively to break them down. Although there is a rich range of data about individual children, these are not brought together so that staff can check how well groups of children across the Nursery are doing in any areas of learning. Hence, while staff are in a strong position to provide information about individual children's progress, they are not in a position to check the impact of improvement projects across the whole Nursery. In consequence, targets are not used sufficiently well to promote learning. Governance is good. Governors are knowledgeable and very supportive of all that the Nursery does. They have been a positive influence in improvements in the Nursery as they question and support the headteacher well. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and this demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement.

The school promotes community cohesion well. The local community is used to promote pupils' awareness of belonging and many opportunities are taken to celebrate pupils' ethnic backgrounds through the study of different religious festivals. This is supported by a wide

range of visitors who comprehensively develop children's understanding of British and other cultures. For example, visits by a fire engine, ambulances and also by the police help the children to understand how they keep them safe.

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

- Draw together the extensive range of data about each child's progress to develop a clearer picture of achievement across groups of children.
- Work with parents to improve punctuality for both morning and afternoon sessions.

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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>	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do children in the EYFS achieve?</b>	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/or disabilities make progress	2

**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	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

**The quality of provision**

<b>How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?</b>	2
<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>	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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

14 July 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Henry Allen Nursery School, Amersham, HP6 6NW

Thank you for making me feel so much at home when I came to visit your Nursery. I particularly enjoyed watching you pick the carrots and washing them! I know you really enjoy school and your parents think yours is a good school. I agree. Here are some of the things that make your school special.

- You really enjoy learning and being together and you behave really well.
- You learn well because there are many exciting things for you to do.
- The adults all work really hard and well together to make sure that there are new things for you to do both indoors and outside.
- The adults look after you really well and make sure that you are kept safe.
- Your headteacher, governors and the staff make sure that your Nursery runs well.

There are two things which would make your school even better, so I have asked the adults to work on the following.

- The school should make sure that your headteacher and staff gather together all the information they have about your progress to see how well all groups are doing in the areas of learning.
- Your parents should make sure that they get you to Nursery on time to start promptly at the beginning of the session.

You can help by making sure your parents get you to Nursery on time! I know that you will have fun learning in the Nursery. It was lovely to meet such happy, kind and friendly children.

Yours faithfully

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector