

# Whitecross Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112480
<b>Local Authority</b>	City of Derby
<b>Inspection number</b>	325611
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jackie Cousins

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	80
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Simon Birkett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Fran Harvey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 November 2005
<b>School address</b>	Watson Street Derby Derbyshire DE1 3PJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01332 371 876
<b>Fax number</b>	

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<b>Age group</b>	3–4
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- How well do school leaders monitor children's progress and are standards significantly above average in recent years, especially in creative development?
- Are care, guidance and support, and children's personal development, including the use of feedback, outstanding?
- How effectively is the outside learning area used?

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, senior teachers, staff, children, the Chair of the governors and other governors; observations of teaching and displays; 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 given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized nursery school. Most children are from White British backgrounds and a small proportion are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of children who have additional needs in language, literacy and numeracy or who have a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. Very few children are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are taught in one main area with three smaller rooms for group work and a large outside area with a conservatory which can be opened up in good weather. At present 80 children attend the maintained Nursery school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Whitecross Nursery is a good school. It has some outstanding features. Children's personal development is a superb strength of the school and is outstanding. This is because all staff provide a dedicated and excellent level of support and welfare. Children adopt healthy lifestyles extremely effectively because the school encourages them to eat well and take regular exercise. For example, each week children enjoy movement, action rhymes, dance and music sessions, as well as using outside areas to extend their learning. Every day for the first half of the autumn term staff record on a slip what and how much lunch children have eaten so that parents and carers are clear about the quality of nutrition that their child has received at the Nursery. Discussion times enable children to learn exceptionally well about how to keep themselves safe inside and outside school. The school works carefully to safeguard children and procedures meet requirements. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They learn to reflect about their own and others' feelings well. Very good systems are in place to develop children's understanding of fairness. For example, the good use of a timer helps children learn to take turns at the computer. Behaviour is outstanding. This is because staff manage the children very thoughtfully but firmly. Attendance is above expectations and children have very positive attitudes to learning.

Children's enjoyment in the many rich and exciting activities planned for them is outstanding. They talked very enthusiastically about many things that they do at the Nursery. Staff expertise means topics develop children's skills effectively in many areas of learning at one time. Exciting projects are undertaken and recently part of the Nursery was turned into a castle so that children could extend their ideas in drama activities. Displays celebrate children's high quality creative and artistic skills. Children who speak English as an additional language achieve well because they are supported successfully. For example, books read in school are sent home the night before so that a child who is in the early stages of learning to speak English can look at the book before it is shared with a group of children.

The children learn about all areas of learning successfully due to careful planning by staff. However, occasionally, weekly planning does not record the learning objectives in detail. This means that visitors to the Nursery may not be clear about the focus for key areas of learning, particularly in the outside areas. The quality of the equipment is good and it is used well by staff. A considerable amount of small group work assists children to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. A wide range of visitors develops children's understanding in many ways, including other cultures, for example in Peru. Children are well prepared for the next stage of education because of their very successfully developed social skills and effective literacy and numeracy skills. Staff ensure that children transfer very smoothly to the next stage of education because they attend a few of the sessions at the primary school with them, including their first days in the autumn term.

The children get a fabulous start to their education in the Nursery. Children of all abilities and backgrounds settle quickly into school life. This is because an extremely good partnership is in place between the school staff and parents. One parent summed it up when they said, 'Whitecross is a fantastic nursery school. I cannot praise it enough. The staff are lovely, very caring, patient and approachable.' All parents who responded to the questionnaire are really pleased with the care their child receives and their achievements.

The school's leadership places considerable importance on maintaining high standards. This means that in 2008, assessments show that children's attainment was above that expected by the end of the Nursery year in language, literacy, mathematics, social and creative development. Children make good progress from an expected starting point. The key to the school's success is the careful way staff use assessment. Children from minority ethnic groups achieve well because staff assess all children successfully. Effective support for those children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities allows them to make good progress. The good use of individual education plans mean that these children work towards specific and measurable targets. Regular meetings are held between senior leaders and staff to determine how to extend more able children. Thorough discussions about children who seem to be underachieving take place to determine what extra support would be useful. However, senior leaders do not always record an overview of children's attainment at the beginning, middle and end of the taught year. This means that leaders and governors do not always rigorously analyse standards and progress made by different groups of children.

Effective teaching is a major reason why children make good progress in their learning. Staff expect a great deal from children and they explain complex ideas successfully. Children's basic skills develop effectively because staff explain knowledgably how to organise activities. Very strong aspects of teaching include the thoughtful use of questioning so that children learn to think deeply about what they are learning. In a very good lesson seen, open-ended questioning allowed children to devise a wide variety of ways to create music using a drum. Staff interact with children effectively and so their language skills are developing well. On a day-to-day basis teaching uses assessment activities well. Staff spend a considerable amount of time getting to know children and assessments are carried out regularly. A very detailed report is created at the end of the year for parents and the next school which children will attend. Staff raise children's self-esteem successfully by using positive comments to encourage them, such as 'Well done that was lovely.' Occasionally, at the end of a session, staff do not give children detailed feedback on what they have achieved. This means that children do not have a deep understanding of their successes in sessions and ways to improve in the future.

Good leadership and management have brought about effective improvements. A significant development since the last inspection is that children have good opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT). Very good leadership by the headteacher and senior leaders means that the school's self-evaluation is very rigorous and accurate. The outside area is used successfully but because the school's leadership is always looking for ways to improve, it plans to further develop the use of this area in the future. Areas of learning are managed well. The school's leadership works effectively to unite the community. For example, many people from the local community attended events such as the Spring Fair in the church hall, the fun day and the summer production. The school also collects goods for homeless people in the local community. Governance is good and governors are working successfully to challenge the school's leadership. The school is in a good position to continue to improve in the future.

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

- Create detailed summaries that give an overview of children's attainment at various points in the year so that school leaders analyse standards and children's progress more thoroughly.
- Enhance the planning for sessions so that everyone is clearer about the key learning objectives, especially in the outside areas.
- Develop the use of feedback for children so that they are clearer about their successes by the end of sessions and how they could improve in the future.

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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?	1
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	2
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	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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
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**

12 November 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Whitecross Nursery School, Derby, DE1 3PJ.

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

- you make good progress in your work and you concentrate very well in sessions
- your behaviour is excellent
- you know a great deal about eating healthy food and taking exercise
- you really enjoy all the things you do at school
- your headteacher and teachers have very good ideas about ways to improve the school
- teaching is good and the staff work hard to make sessions interesting
- a very good partnership is in place between the school and your parents
- staff care for you really well and listen to you thoughtfully.

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

- develop the way staff record standards and the progress you make
- improve planning for sessions so that everyone is clearer about what you are learning, especially in the outside area
- develop the ways staff talk to you at the ends of sessions and tell you what you have done well and could do to improve in the future.

Keep listening carefully to staff comments and enjoy all the wonderful things you are learning at Whitecross Nursery School.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Cousins

Lead inspector