

# Alfreton Nursery School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	112485
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325614
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Usha Devi HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	101
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to under 3 years	30
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Gill O'Hagan
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Stanton
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 July 2006
Date of previous childcare inspection	16 November 2006
School address	Grange Street Alfreton Derbyshire DE55 7JA
Telephone number	01773 520031
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector visited seven lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, the school's local authority adviser and the school's information and communications technology (ICT) consultant. Children shared their views of the school through a meeting and through informal discussions. The inspector observed the school's work, spoke with parents, looked at a range of documents, including the school's monitoring of its performance, the school development plan, minutes of governors' meetings, children's work, records of children's assessments and target setting information. The inspector also took account of 60 questionnaires from parents.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- children's spiritual and cultural development
- how well senior staff and governors monitor and evaluate the work of the school
- the school's capacity to improve.

## Information about the school

Alfreton Nursery School is situated in mid-Derbyshire. Children start school in the term after they reach three years of age. They attend part-time for either morning or afternoon sessions. The majority of children are White British. The school works closely with the children's centre and the privately run out-of-school care facilities that are on the school premises. Together they provide additional services to parents, carers and the local community. Services include a toy library, a parent and toddler group, child and family health services, childcare and family support. In recognition of its work the school has received the National Healthy Schools Award, NACE Challenge Award for Able Gifted and Talented Children, the Derbyshire's Emotional Wellbeing Advanced Award, The Eco School Green Flag Award, the ICT Mark, Forest School Status and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

The children's centre and out-of-school care facilities were inspected by a childcare inspector at the same time as this inspection, and are reported on separately.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school where children thrive because of the strong emphasis staff place on meeting the individual needs of all children. The school has successfully built on the excellent performance identified at the last inspection and has outstanding capacity to improve further. Since the last inspection, the school has very effectively:

- improved provision for gifted and talented children by reviewing the curriculum and the experiences offered to these children
- had a positive impact on children's emotional development and well-being through closer working with parents to support individual children
- extended the opportunities children have to learn outdoors with the introduction of the 'Forest Schools,' initiative.

The school has a number of significant strengths, including:

- the inspirational leadership of the headteacher and the extremely dedicated team of teachers and nursery nurses who ensure all children make exceptional progress
- a creative curriculum that captures the imagination of children and enables them to learn successfully through practical first-hand experiences
- an exciting and stimulating indoor and outdoor environment where children feel totally safe. In the words of one child: 'Our nursery is like home.'

The school has an accurate view of its performance because staff and governors regularly review children's performance in all areas of learning to identify strengths and where improvements are needed. Since the last inspection governors have established a teaching and learning committee. Members of this committee keep a watchful eye on the work of the school and report their findings to other members. Nevertheless, there is more scope for all governors to increase their involvement in evaluating the school improvement plan and setting priorities for improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain the high quality outcomes for children by improving further the

contribution the governing body makes to school improvement planning by:

- strengthening systems for governors to evaluate the impact of actions in the school development plan
- ensuring governors are involved more actively in using their knowledge of the school to set priorities for improvement.

## How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of children?

1
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Children have extremely positive attitudes toward learning and make outstanding progress. When they leave the school, their knowledge and skills are better than expected for their age in all areas of learning. They are significantly better than expected in ICT. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress because of the excellent additional support that they receive and because teachers and nursery nurses provide them with activities that offer an appropriate level of challenge.

Following an analysis of children's progress in the different areas of learning, the school management team identified variations between the performance of boys and girls, particularly in writing. In response to this, the staff began to take into account children's different learning styles when planning activities. They also placed a greater emphasis on introducing first-hand experiences prior to starting writing. The latest school assessment information shows that variations in performance are reducing rapidly. This finding was confirmed in the lessons observed as there was no marked difference between the performance of boys and girls.

Children are enthusiastic and inquisitive learners. They respond particularly positively to challenges and concentrate for long periods of time. An example of this was observed in a creative development session where children worked patiently and with impressive attention to detail to design and make rainmakers and telescopes using a glittering range of materials.

Children behave very well and are learning to work with and support each other during lessons. Their knowledge of healthy lifestyles is exceptional. They know why it is important to keep fit and enjoy using the excellent range of outdoor equipment such as the bike track. Children learn to grow, harvest and cook produce from the school's garden. They raise money extremely effectively for national charities and global issues. The school makes effective use of visitors to the school and stories from around the world to develop children's spiritual and cultural understanding.

*These are the grades for children's outcomes*

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
Children's attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of children's learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	1

<sup>1</sup> Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

How well do children achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
To what extent do children feel safe?	1
How well do children behave?	2
To what extent do children adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do children contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Children's attendance	2
How well do children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1
What is the extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

## The quality of the school's work

Children achieve high outcomes because teachers and nursery nurses work together extremely well to ensure that children settle quickly into school life and receive planned experiences that sparkle and capture their imagination. For example, they:

- have high expectations of the children's capabilities
- use information gathered from observations of children very effectively to ask questions that provide a suitable level of challenge
- plan activities which promote links between different areas of learning, and particularly support mathematical, literacy and language development
- provide children with targeted support during small group sessions so that they are able to achieve their challenging targets.

The majority of lessons observed during the inspection were outstanding and the rest were good. In one wonderful example, children worked with determination and made excellent progress when the teacher asked them to help Wizard Crunch solve a mathematical problem. The children described a range of shapes and worked together to add and subtract numbers. However, on a few occasions, staff did not give children sufficient opportunities to ask questions or enough time to talk to each other about their work.

The outstanding curriculum has many distinctive features. It includes excellent provision and use of ICT, activities that challenge, motivate and inspire the children and an emphasis on learning through practical first-hand experiences. Through regular baking sessions, for instance, children learn to follow recipes, cook and safely use a range of equipment. The curriculum is enhanced and extended by the school's own art gallery and museum, which includes a range of historical artefacts displayed alongside children's work, a sensory garden and a room with multi-sensory resources. These resources make a highly successful contribution to children's learning and emotional well-being.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
High quality teaching and purposeful learning	1

Effective assessment	1
An appropriate curriculum which meets children’s needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	1
Support, guidance and care	1

## How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership of the headteacher is pivotal to the success of the school. Teachers, nursery nurses and governors share her vision and high expectations. Together they ensure equality of opportunity for all children is at the heart of everything they do. Senior leaders effectively track the progress of individual children. They use this information exceptionally well to refine practice within the school.

The school works outstandingly well with many agencies, including the children’s centre and the childcare provision to enhance children’s learning and personal development. Parents who attended the weekly ‘drop in’ session, told the inspector how much they valued these opportunities. They commented positively on the information provided by the school and people from other agencies who work with the school, such as the health visitor.

Governors are fully supportive of the school and frequently help with the implementation of specific projects. At the time of the inspection all safeguarding procedures were in place. Senior leaders have evaluated the contribution the school makes to the local community and have effective plans in place to further strengthen children’s already good understanding and awareness of cultural diversity. Teachers and governors have made initial contact with a primary school in England and a school in Kenya. They are in the process of making arrangements for the children to begin communicating with both schools.

### *These are the grades for leadership and management*

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
Communicating ambition and driving improvement	1
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	1
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	1
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school’s relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	1
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	1
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	1

## Views of parents and carers

The large majority of the parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive in their support for the school. Many acknowledged the care and commitment of staff. One parent commented, 'the team go far beyond usual expectations to ensure all children in their care are recognised as individuals and encouraged to remain just that.' During the inspection, parents told the inspector how pleased they were with their child's progress. Although the vast majority of parents felt that the school kept them well informed about their child's progress, senior leaders are looking at extending the ways the school can share information about children's progress with newly arrived families.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its children's needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment:** the standard of the children's work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress:** the rate at which children are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the children's attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement:** an overall measure of the children's success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Children might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
- Capacity to improve:** the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management:** the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



27 February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Alfreton Nursery School, Derbyshire, DE55 7JA

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed talking with you and seeing all the interesting things that you do. It was great to see you enjoying learning inside and outside the classrooms.

Many of your parents told me that Alfreton School is a very special place. I agree! I am very pleased to tell you that you go to an outstanding school. This is what I found:

- You are polite and kind and very good at taking turns.
- Angela and all the adults that work with you take excellent care of you and help you to make outstanding progress.
- You have fun learning new things. I saw how much you enjoyed helping 'Wizard Crunch' solve a problem and baking the 'Melting Moments'. The 'Melting Moments' were delicious!
- The adults that work with you make learning fun and give you lots of practical activities, such as making musical instruments and mud pies!
- You are learning how to stay safe and make healthy choices. You told me how important it was to eat lots of fruit.

I have asked all the governors to continue working with the school and checking that everything is as good as it can be and to share their ideas for improving the school.

It was a pleasure to visit your school and I will take away lots of good memories. I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Usha Devi  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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