

Wallace Road Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121786
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	327567
Inspection date	5 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Alison Cartlidge

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laurice Percival
Headteacher	Kim Baxter
Date of previous school inspection	13 July 2006
School address	Wallace Road Northampton NN2 7EE
Telephone number	01604 713422
Fax number	01604 718814

Age group	3-5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Children come to this small nursery school from Northampton and the surrounding area. The school has identified very few children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most of these children have speech or moderate learning difficulties. Most children are from White British backgrounds, although the proportion of children with English as an additional language has started to increase and is now slightly above average. New children join the school each term and can stay for a maximum of five terms. The governors run a breakfast club on the premises for children between the ages of three and eleven years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Children are very pleased to come to this good school. A wide range of exciting activities helps them to learn quickly, achieve well and enjoy school exceptionally well. All children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress in all areas of learning. They do particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world (including information and communication technology) and physical development. These aspects of the good curriculum are covered especially thoroughly and the children's delight in finding out about the world around them is especially noteworthy. For example, on the day of the inspection many parents and their children enjoyed bringing a plant to school. The children went on to learn much about the way plants grow and the importance of caring for living things.

By the end of their time in the nursery, most children are working securely within the levels expected for their age. Standards in the calculating aspect of problem solving, reasoning and number are comparatively less well developed. This is because there are too few planned and incidental opportunities for children to compare quantities and to solve problems. The school is working well with local schools to help children learn letter sounds more quickly through the use of poetry and rhymes. Children's independence and good progress in learning basic skills prepare them well for the next stage of education and later life.

Children's personal development is good because all members of staff promote their welfare effectively, enabling them to become confident and exceptionally happy individuals. Thorough induction arrangements help children to settle into the nursery quickly and clear expectations enable them to behave well. Members of staff are good at helping children to learn and develop. They use assessment information to provide challenging activities for the children that build on what they have already learnt. However, this information is not yet being used fully to identify all minor weaknesses within areas of learning or variations in progress between different groups of children. Good additional individual support is provided as needed, such as supporting the growing number of children who are at the early stages of learning to speak English. During activities children have chosen for themselves and in group activities, members of staff ask probing questions to encourage children to think carefully. Consequently, children learn new skills and knowledge quickly.

Children are very friendly and keen to show others what they are doing. They understand why the nursery has rules and most children can work sensibly and share resources. Children's cultural development and knowledge and understanding of the wider community are satisfactory. The school is aware that its plans for promoting community cohesion are not yet sufficiently robust to support children fully in appreciating cultural and religious differences. Children make a positive contribution towards the school community by making sensible choices, joining in with a wealth of activities and helping each other.

Children feel safe at school and understand that there are dangers in life. At the time of the inspection, procedures for safeguarding children were fully in place. Members of staff work well with external agencies, parents and other schools to support the well-being of all of the children. For example, this helps children to lead healthy lifestyles by eating healthier snacks and packed lunches.

Good leadership and management have ensured that the school has improved since the last inspection. For example, children's choice of activity and their individual progress is monitored

closely. Ongoing developments and children's good progress demonstrate that the school has a good capacity to go on improving. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire are delighted with the work of the school. Several parents summed up the positive views of others by writing comments such as, 'We love it here,' and, 'I am very happy with all aspects at Wallace Road Nursery School.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide greater focus on mathematical activities, especially comparing quantities and the use of number to solve problems.
- Improve plans for promoting community cohesion so that children's knowledge of cultural and religious differences is strengthened.
- Analyse assessment information in more detail so that comparative weaknesses in provision and differences in the progress of groups of children are identified and tackled swiftly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Whilst the majority of children are working within the levels expected for their age when they start in the nursery, some are not as well-advanced. However, children, including those with English as an additional language, make good progress in all areas of learning. By the time they leave the nursery for the next stage of their education most children are working securely at the expected levels, and standards are firmly average. Children make especially good progress in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in physical development. These areas of learning are promoted especially well by all adults. The school has correctly identified that children's knowledge of letter sounds is comparatively underdeveloped and is working with neighbouring schools to increase children's progress in this aspect of communication, language and literacy. In problem solving, reasoning and number, children are comparatively weak at comparing quantities and using numbers in simple problem solving. The school provides well for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These children are supported well by members of staff and this enables them to make the same good progress as others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most children behave well and work together sensibly. The occasional minor upsets between children are dealt with sensitively by members of staff. Children's thorough enjoyment of school is evident in their smiling faces and enthusiasm for trying out new activities. Rates of attendance are broadly average as a result of some parents choosing to take their children on term-time holidays.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, although children's awareness of cultural diversity is limited. Children contribute to the community well by developing very good independence, although there are few planned opportunities for them to help others. Children show that they understand the need for rules, respect each other and demonstrate appropriate responses to the feelings of others.

Children know how to stay safe and healthy. They lead healthy lifestyles by growing, buying, preparing and eating fruit and vegetables, and know that physical activity is good and should make them tired. They enjoy taking part in the many physical activities available in school and

in visits to the local park. They handle tools such as vegetable knives and scissors carefully and are aware of the importance of washing their hands before handling food.

Quality of provision

Effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development

Grade: 2

Members of staff are good role models who enable the children to settle into school life quickly and learn how to become independent and hard working. The curriculum includes a good range of relevant, fun activities that capture the children's interest and make them keen to learn. Opportunities for children to learn about the world around them, to improve their physical development and increase their independence are particularly well catered for. There are some missed opportunities to extend children's problem solving, reasoning and number awareness through planned activities and incidental learning. Teachers and assistants are skilled in using questioning to help the children move forward in their learning. However, groups have recently grown in size and there are occasions when some adults are not used fully to increase the children's participation in discussions.

Effectiveness in promoting children's welfare

Grade: 2

All members of staff are caring and supportive, and children's progress is monitored well through detailed observations. Adults use 'let's have a go' suggestions to challenge the children and to move their learning forward. Children are set long-term individual targets, but these are not discussed with them so that they can start to take greater responsibility for their own learning. Close links with parents and outside agencies ensure that the children's welfare is supported effectively in the school and breakfast club. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding arrangements met requirements in full. Adults carry out careful risk assessments of all activities and are very mindful of the health and safety of all members of the school community.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, governors and other leaders are committed to increasing children's progress further and know what they should do next to make the school even better. The school's systems for self-evaluation are good. All leaders are fully involved in monitoring and improving provision in the areas they lead. The school has recently refined systems for checking up on how well children are learning and is starting to use this information to help identify areas for development. However, leaders are aware that this information is not analysed swiftly enough to be able to respond immediately to minor weaknesses in provision, or to monitor the progress of different groups of children. Nevertheless, all children are given equal opportunities to learn because leaders use the information well to identify individual children needing additional support and to provide intervention as needed. The school's contribution towards community cohesion is satisfactory. There are satisfactory opportunities to increase children's awareness of various cultures and leaders are working on carrying out a more detailed audit so that current provision can be enhanced.

Governance is good. Governors are supportive, enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the school. They are becoming more proactive in the evaluation process and in holding the school to account for its actions. The school has a wealth of interesting resources and these are used well to making children's learning meaningful.

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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?	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

How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
The standards[1] reached by learners	3
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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
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 effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

6 May 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Wallace Road Nursery School, Northampton, NN2 7EE

Thank you for letting us come and see what you do in your nursery. We are pleased that you really enjoy coming to this good school.

Here are some good points about your school.

- You learn quickly because you thoroughly enjoy doing lots of interesting things.
- You especially like finding out new things for yourselves and you behave well.
- Teachers help you to enjoy school by making activities fun. We thought you did a good job when you were putting your plants in the ground.
- Teachers are kind and caring and look after you well.
- The people who are in charge of your school are doing a good job.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.

We have asked your school to:

- help you to learn more about using numbers and solving problems
- do more to help you learn about how other people live
- check that you are all learning as quickly as you can in all the things you do in the nursery.

You can help your teachers by carrying on being friendly and behaving well.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your lovely school.

Yours faithfully

Alison Cartlidge

Lead inspector