

Headington Quarry Foundation Stage School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122968
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	327822
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Susan Thomas-Pounce

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)	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Caroline Mattingley
Headteacher	Mrs Lesley Carrington
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2006
School address	Quarry School Place Headington Oxford OX3 8LH
Telephone number	01865 762345
Fax number	01865 762345

Age group	3–5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a nursery school and day care centre managed by the school's governing body, offering Early Years Foundation Stage education on a full- and part-time basis, with extended provision of day care for children aged three to five years. Children spend between one and five terms in the school. The nursery school is part of the Headington and Slade Children's Centre. Together they offer a range of extended services for families, providing sessions for parents and toddlers, as well as parenting classes, Jobcentre Plus services and advice on smoking cessation. Other partnerships include close links with health visitors, speech and language therapists.

Children in the Foundation Stage of the partner school, St. Andrew's Church of England Primary School, are taught on the nursery school site by the primary school staff. These teachers are led and managed by the headteacher of Headington Quarry Foundation School. This provision was not inspected. Children who attend are from a diverse range of backgrounds, with about a third at an early stage of speaking English as their second language. The proportion of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is small. The school has recently opened a dedicated community room on the premises.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. There are some outstanding features. These include very high standards of welfare, excellent partnerships to promote children's well-being and very successful personal development. The school is highly inclusive and strong partnerships between staff, children and families are at the heart of its success. Parents rightly report that the school has the individual child at the centre of its practice. It is immensely popular with the overwhelming majority of parents and carers, who hold the work of staff in very high regard. One parent writes, 'Outstanding school where children forge good relationships, can't praise school highly enough'. Parents appreciate the school's links with the community, the care taken to keep them informed and the well-balanced education on offer. 'Not just an educational establishment but a community one; links with parents actively encouraged', writes another parent.

When children begin Nursery, their skills are typical for this age group. They leave with skills that are above expectations in most areas, helped by the majority of them having made good progress in their language development. Because of the care and support they receive, those who are learning to speak English as an additional language also make good progress. Children make outstanding progress in their social and emotional development because staff know children very well and they provide positive role models. This ensures that children learn to play well together and become confident, independent and motivated learners. The key worker system of each member of staff supporting specific children has resulted in better understanding of individual needs and, therefore, support that is better targeted. Children who require additional learning support, including those who have complex needs, make very good progress because of the patience, sensitivity and skills shown by staff.

Good achievement is the result of good learning and development, and outstanding standards of care, guidance and support. The school provides good teaching in an attractive and stimulating environment. Staff work well as a team to ensure every child develops personally and academically. They successfully encourage full participation in a wide range of stimulating activities and develop language and learning effectively by working alongside children. Staff observe children carefully and use their knowledge of children's interests to extend play. This contributes well to the good progress that children make. Staff praise positive examples of behaviour, and relationships between children and staff are a real strength in helping children to learn.

The extensive, well-designed outdoor area provides children with many exciting and stimulating opportunities. Children love the exercise they get when they can run up and down the slopes as well as climb and explore the many exciting areas and activities. They love the vegetable garden and take great care to make sure the crops are harvested regularly. As a result of this provision, children know the importance of nutritious food, keeping safe and regular exercise; they enjoy school and grow in confidence and imagination from their experiences. The school recognises that the quality and range of resources for information and communication technology (ICT) need to be improved. Although ICT is starting to be used effectively to support children's learning, more remains to be done to make sure it is part of everyday practice.

The headteacher is a very experienced practitioner and highly respected by children, parents and staff. She sets a clear direction and communicates a strong commitment to the school's children and their families. Staff and governors all share this commitment and use their expertise successfully to raise achievement and secure improvements. As a result, teamwork is very strong

and morale is very high. Using their very good knowledge and understanding of local needs, the leadership team provide high-quality before and after school care, effective wraparound provision and parent and family education, placing the Nursery at the heart of the community. These services offer the same warm, stimulating ethos as the Nursery, where children are helped to grow socially and to develop their learning. Governors are knowledgeable and supportive. A strong team ethos, with staff and governors working well together, means that the school is moving very successfully forward and has good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure ICT is used to the full to add further enrichment to activities provided for the children across all the areas of learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When children start Nursery assessment shows that they have skills and knowledge that are in line with expectations for their age. Staff plan an exciting range of activities, which encourage children to settle quickly and help them to develop confidence. Children are able to use both the indoor and outside areas where they are able to explore, investigate and learn with their friends. By the time they leave the Nursery, children have made good progress, so that many are above the level expected for their age. They make the best progress in personal and social development. This progress has been achieved by successfully targeting specific areas for development and ensuring the curriculum is well matched to children's interests. Children who have complex needs make exceptionally good progress because the care and support they receive is very effective.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children are busy, active learners from the time they come eagerly into school at the start of the day to the time they leave. In this welcoming and inviting environment, children work and play collaboratively, learn to show respect for each other and make outstanding progress in developing their personal skills. The school's well-resourced and highly stimulating outdoor environment ensures that children are encouraged to be constantly active and they make excellent progress in their physical skills. They understand and adopt healthy habits. Behaviour around the school is excellent and children know how to stay safe, without being fearful. Relationships with each other and with adults are very strong. Children have very positive attitudes to their learning; both morning and afternoon groups of children on daily entry to the Nursery are totally absorbed in the wide range of activities provided. Through the well-planned adult-led activities, children have a well-developed sense of community, within their Nursery and locality and in the wider world. Children's spiritual, social, emotional and cultural development is very strong.

Quality of provision

Effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development

Grade: 2

The quality of provision effectively promotes children's learning and development through an exciting range of opportunities for play both indoors and out. Staff use their observations of

children to plan interesting opportunities for play. Together with the sensitive support and enthusiasm of staff, this ensures that children engage for extended periods in the activities they choose for themselves. Activities planned by adults ensure that children are taught new skills which they can apply independently. In the care provision, children learn to pour their own drinks. At break times and lunchtimes, children are encouraged to serve themselves, taking part in the social occasion of sharing a meal time with friends. Many parents commented on the growing independence of their children as they progressed through the Nursery. They also appreciate the many opportunities they have for sharing information with staff and say that this enables them to make an active contribution to their children's learning. The well-established daily routines contribute very well to children's personal and social development.

Effectiveness in promoting children's welfare

Grade: 1

Outstanding welfare and care arrangements contribute appreciably to the children's excellent development and are a strength of this very inclusive school. The setting, both inside and out, is outstandingly well-equipped, safe and secure and provides a very supportive environment which enables children to thrive. Arrangements for safeguarding children are all in place and there are rigorous risk assessments for school visits as well as procedures for monitoring children's health and safety. The outstanding partnership with parents reassures the children and so they quickly develop trusting relationships with staff and with each other. Behaviour is managed extremely well. The school has excellent links with a wide range of organisations and agencies, which support the all-round development of the children. Parents comment that their children are very well cared for by, 'highly committed and dedicated staff'. Parents feel valued and active partners because staff spend time with them to gather information about their children. The school has excellent transition systems to welcome children to the school and to ease their transfer to the Reception class taught on the same site.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides very effective leadership for this highly inclusive school. She is a good role model for staff and is central to driving continuous improvement. She is well supported by a team of experienced staff who are committed to ensuring that all children participate fully in every available activity. Self-evaluation is extremely good and takes into account the views of parents, carers and children. It is very effective in identifying strengths and weaknesses, which help to lead to school improvements. The outside area is already used very successfully but, because the school's leadership is always looking for ways to improve, there are plans to enhance it further with the introduction of a wild garden area. Staff work very effectively with other agencies to ensure that services develop and evolve in response to local needs. This ensures that the school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Governors share the headteacher's sense of purpose and they work successfully to monitor the work of the school. They observe children learning and check records, which enables them to raise questions, challenge decisions and provide good support. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection.

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?	1
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	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

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	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?	1

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	2
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**

01 September 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Headington Quarry Foundation Stage School, Oxford, OX3 8LH

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed my two days with you and also enjoyed reading your parents' questionnaires. They were full of praise for your Nursery and I understand why. Your Nursery is a good one. In some ways it is outstanding. You told me a lot about your school and why you liked it so much. I am writing to tell you what I found out during my visit. I discovered that:

- the grown-ups look after you extremely well and they help you to learn to do things for yourselves
- you are very good at remembering to be kind to each other and to play very well together
- you show that you can work by yourselves and with other children really well
- your Nursery works with your families and many other schools and groups to help you get the best start to your education
- you have so much fun out of doors; I was especially pleased to see how much you enjoyed picking and shelling the peas, digging up the potatoes and then preparing them to be cooked - I know you enjoyed eating them and your delicious school lunches, some of you had several helpings!
- you make good progress and thoroughly enjoy being at school.

Your teachers find interesting things for you to do and this is helping you to learn lots of important skills. I have asked your headteacher and the staff to carry on finding more opportunities for you to use computers, cameras and other ICT equipment, to make your activities even more interesting and fun. I know your headteacher, staff and governors want you to have the best opportunities. They care about you and your families and want you to do well.

Thank you once more for helping me to find out about your Nursery.

Yours faithfully

Susan Thomas-Pounce

Lead Inspector