

Hungerford Nursery School Centre for Children and Families

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109755
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	337366
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2010
Reporting inspector	David Curtis

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vicki Steel
Headteacher	Suzanne Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The majority of the inspection looked at children's learning. All staff were observed working with children individually and in small group sessions, including those when children were with their key person. Meetings were held with the school staff and with four members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, data relating to children's progress and policies relating to the safeguarding of children and their welfare. The inspection team looked at the 45 questionnaires returned by parents, together with those returned by members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of strategies to move children's development from good to outstanding in their contribution to the community, economic well-being and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- the effectiveness of strategies to move governance and community cohesion from good to outstanding.

Information about the school

Children attend the Nursery usually for either the morning or afternoon session, although a few attend full time. All children have a hot school lunch. The majority of children are White British, with a few from minority ethnic families. Very few learn English as an additional language. A small minority have special educational needs and/or disabilities mainly with speech, language and communication difficulties. There is a Surestart Children's Centre integrated with the school.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This outstanding Nursery has made significant progress in sustaining and building on the considerable strengths identified at the time of its previous inspection. The key to success is the inspirational leadership of the headteacher who has built a staff team which is totally committed to providing exceptional provision for children. Most striking is the school's constant focus on evaluating its own performance and seeking to encompass the very best principles of early years provision. The Nursery has established many extremely positive links locally, nationally and internationally to support children's learning. Inspection findings support the school's view that more remains to be done, especially in sharing its own exceptional practice with others. Staff work tirelessly to improve areas of relatively weaker performance, with the result that children's contribution to the community, their economic well-being and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Taking into account the significant progress since the last inspection and the absolute commitment to children's learning, the Nursery has an outstanding capacity for future improvement.

Children make excellent progress in all six areas of learning and their attainment is high. As a result, their achievement is outstanding. Children thrive in the Nursery and enjoy each and every moment. Behaviour is exemplary because children are totally absorbed in learning. The learning environment indoors and outdoors is welcoming and stimulating. For these children, a sandpit is not good enough. Instead, they have a 'beach', including a water butt which allows children to have a 'tide flowing in'. Regular visits to the nearby Boxford Woods enhance children's learning considerably, especially in exploring a natural environment. Such visits have a significant impact on children's outstanding spiritual development.

Governors have improved their performance from good to outstanding. They have a very detailed understanding of the Nursery's performance, including the progress children make by gender, ability and ethnicity. Governors are rigorous in ensuring that children's welfare is a top priority. The school's promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. The Nursery is an integral part of the community it serves, and international links, especially with Norway, have a significant impact on improving provision for children. There is a detailed plan in place to establish links with a Nursery in Reading.

Parents and carers have very positive views of the Nursery. They value the high quality transition arrangements when their children start school. Equally they really appreciate the excellent information they receive on their children's progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen links to share outstanding practice while further developing the capacity to sustain high quality staffing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

Children make exceptional progress in their learning and there is no significant variation by gender, ability or ethnicity because performance is tracked rigorously so that any potential underachievement is addressed immediately. In communication, language and literacy, children have an excellent understanding of letters and sounds. In one session, all chose to use a marker pen and small whiteboard and not magnetic letters to write words, such as 'sat'. Children show impressive levels of concentration. For example, a group of children spent a large part of one session being 'firemen'. Boys and girls negotiated roles and took turns to 'man the phones', 'drive the fire engine' and 'put out the fires'. At one point, fully equipped with a map, they set off to 'put a fire out in Newbury'. Children show impressive skills in information and communication technology, including total confidence in using the interactive whiteboard. Many use a commercial program to access the internet to research things that interest them, such as volcanoes. Children enjoy working with adults, including 'teaching them' key skills, such as colour mixing and how to paint a flower.

Children love their healthy snack bar and signing their names on the board to show that they have had their snack, with many writing their names correctly. They are constantly active and a number one choice is to use the large building blocks to design and make their own adventure trails, including making a platform which gets higher and higher for them to jump off. Relations with each other are excellent and during the session, children at times work on their own, in pairs or as part of a larger group. At the end of sessions, they are helpful and co-operative in tidying up.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment ¹	1
The quality of children's learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate	
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children's behaviour	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Children's attendance ¹	1
	1
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

All staff have an excellent understanding of how young children learn. Most importantly, learning stems from children's own interests. For example, following discussions about a visit to the doctor's, a 'surgery' was set up within the Nursery area and computer programs provided to encourage children to both role play and research what it is like to be a doctor or nurse. There are significant strengths in the teaching of key skills in communication, language and literacy and in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. The teaching of letters and sounds is very effective, with all key persons showing high levels of confidence and knowledge in their teaching. Key persons keep detailed and thorough assessments of their groups of children, including the use of sticky labels, photographs and video. This information forms an integral part of the children's Learning Journeys. Children are very involved in contributing to their Learning Journeys and when an inspector discussed one with a child, a queue quickly formed of others wanting to share theirs!

Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is of very high quality. The school is very inclusive, with all children irrespective of gender, ability or ethnicity supported by staff in a very caring and nurturing environment. Parents and carers know that their children are safe and secure in the Nursery. Through its excellent links with the children's centre, the Nursery provides high quality support for children and their families, especially those that are vulnerable.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Self-evaluation is accurate and rooted in rigorous analysis of the school's performance by the headteacher, staff and governors. Complacency is not tolerated and the Nursery is constantly seeking ways to continue to be at the forefront of outstanding early years practice. The headteacher has built a staff team and governing body who, together, are effective in sharing the school's passion and drive to provide children with the best possible start to their school lives. The importance of effective partnerships with parents and other partners is central to the school's vision. The school is committed totally to providing equality of opportunity for all children and tackling any potential discrimination. All required policies for child protection, safeguarding and children's welfare are fully in place and they are reviewed and updated regularly. Critically, staff and governors ensure that they are implemented rigorously with the result that children are safe and secure at all times.

Governors have carried out a detailed and thorough review of community cohesion. There is a very strong emphasis on the importance of the Nursery and its links with the children's centre to the needs of families within the immediate and wider local community. At the same time, there is an absolute determination to build on established effective national and international links to support children's learning and, within the context of them being three and four years old, their knowledge and understanding of the wider world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

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

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school. Comments such as 'Delighted with Hungerford Nursery', 'Nursery is unique' and 'Couldn't be happier'..I feel it a fantastic environment and am extremely impressed by the caring and expert nature of the staff', sum up the views of many parents and carers.

A few parents and carers raised individual concerns which were shared confidentially with the school. Inspection evidence supports the many positive comments made by parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Hungerford Nursery School Centre for Children and Families to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 76 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	84	7	16	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	82	7	16	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	82	8	18	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	76	11	24	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	84	7	16	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	80	9	20	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	71	13	29	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	31	69	9	20	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	73	11	24	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	60	13	29	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	62	12	27	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	78	9	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	84	7	16	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
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

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
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.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



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26 March 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Hungerford Nursery School Centre for Children and Families, Hungerford RG17 0HY

I really enjoyed visiting your Nursery and meeting you. I liked looking at your Learning Journals and I am still full up with all those 'cakes' I had to eat! I am delighted to tell you that you go to an outstanding Nursery. There are so many things that I thought were absolutely amazing; in fact too many to mention in this short letter, but here are some of them:

- You love being at the Nursery and really enjoy all the wonderful things you can do which help you to make excellent progress in your learning.
- The outdoor area is brilliant and I like the way you used it to be firemen, play on your beach and to build those amazing adventure trails.
- Your key persons look after you very well and keep you safe.
- The way you use the interactive whiteboards is amazing because you are so confident and know exactly how to make them work ' better than I could I am sure!
- It is good to see that sometimes you teach your key person how to do things.
- Your behaviour is excellent and it is wonderful to see how you enjoy playing with each other.

Even though your Nursery is outstanding, I have asked your headteacher, key persons and governors to do one thing to make it even better which is to:

- make sure that all the wonderful things you do are shared with other nursery schools so that children there can be as successful as you.

I know you will carry on enjoying your time in the Nursery. Keep smiling and making those delicious 'cakes'.

Yours sincerely

David Curtis

Lead inspector

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