

# Ashgate Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112479
<b>Local Authority</b>	Derby City
<b>Inspection number</b>	337943
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lois Furness

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.  
The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	48
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Philip Lucas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Luisa Richardson (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 July 2007
<b>School address</b>	18 Stepping Lane Derby DE1 1GJ
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<b>Age group</b>	3–4
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 March 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	337943

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<b>Registered childcare provision</b>	Ashgate Nursery School
<b>Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision</b>	49
<b>Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision</b>	Not previously inspected

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The majority of time was spent observing learning. Inspectors visited 13 activity sessions and 18 adults were observed working with children. They visited the morning and afternoon sessions in the Nursery class, and the daycare provision for younger children. Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the daycare manager, the Children Centre teacher, staff, governors and children. The school improvement plan, safeguarding documentation, assessment records including a selection of children's 'Learning Journeys', and planning documentation were scrutinised, as was children's work in lessons and on display. Twelve staff questionnaires and 44 parental questionnaires were also analysed.

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

- the effectiveness of strategies to improve the achievement of boys, and those children at the early stage of learning English
- whether children's attainment is rising in linking sounds to letters, reading, writing and calculating
- how well assessment information is used to plan next steps of learning
- how the leadership including governors, have made an impact on improving any identified weaknesses.

## Information about the school

This school is part of the Mackworth and Morley Children's Centre. Although the vast majority of children are White British, there are an increasing number of children who are at the early stage of learning English. There are a small number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school is open for 51 weeks of the year, from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm during week days. Nursery education is provided in morning and afternoon sessions for children aged between three to four years. Children spend between three and five terms at the school, before transferring to Reception classes in local primary schools. Daycare which is managed by the governing body, is provided for children aged from three months to five years. The provision includes two rooms, one with facilities for children aged three months to two years, and the other for children aged two to three years. Older children join the latter group, before and after the school day starts and finishes.

Following a period of absence which has lasted for nearly eighteen months the former substantive headteacher resigned in December 2009. During this absence there have been two acting headteachers. At the present time there are two supply teachers working in the Nursery class, who are covering for the classteacher who has assumed the role of acting headteacher until the newly appointed headteacher takes up her post in June 2010. The school was awarded Healthy School status in July 2009.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Relationships are very good and because of this children come into the setting happy and eager to learn. All staff throughout are dedicated to ensuring children are well cared for and kept safe. Safeguarding arrangements are good and all necessary documents and procedures for ensuring children's safety and well-being are securely in place. Welfare procedures for the youngest children are followed rigorously. Parents and carers trust the school, whether it is in the daycare provision, or in the Nursery class.

Partnerships are good, and this comment made by one parent sums up the views of many: 'The team here are very caring and supportive. They are good at seeing the world through the eyes of a child, and we are very happy to bring our child here.'

This strong emphasis on care and well-being means children progress well in their personal, social and emotional development. In most areas of learning children are working at the levels expected for their age by the end of the Nursery year. However, attainment in children's knowledge of linking sounds to letters, reading, writing and calculating has not been as good. In the past, too few children have been working at the level expected in these areas of learning. The acting headteacher and governors have recognised this. They have implemented strategies to raise attainment, for example more regular sessions for children to link sounds to letters. However, the leadership knows there is still more to do. Assessment information is not recorded rigorously enough or used consistently well to ensure learning experiences meet the needs of all children, especially boys. Although carried out conscientiously, observations of children do not focus sharply enough on their learning. Reading and writing activities are not the activities most children choose, when making independent choices because they are not made exciting enough especially in the outdoor environment. The majority of children enjoy outdoor learning and eagerly rush outside when given the choice. The area is set out well for promoting physical social and creative development, but less well for promoting the other areas of learning particularly language and mathematical development. Resources are not always appropriate and are often the same resources as used in the classroom. Although the balance between teacher-led activities and those children choose for themselves is good in the indoor environment, this is not as strong during outdoor activities. Children do not have sufficient time allocated to learning in this environment.

Despite these development areas, the acting headteacher has moved the school forward since the previous inspection. Self-evaluation is accurate although the leadership knows the outcomes of monitoring need to be used more rigorously to adapt provision. However, the rectifying of the key issues from the previous inspection, alongside the improvements in children's attainment in aspects of communication language and

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literacy, and problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy, indicate that the school has sound capacity to improve further.

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

- Increase the number of children, especially boys, working at age-related expectations by the end of Nursery in linking sounds to letters, reading, writing and calculation by:
  - checking learning regularly through observations that are carefully and efficiently recorded, and using this information to adapt the children's learning experiences
  - providing exciting, purposeful writing and reading experiences that ensures the engagement of all children, especially boys
  - providing daily provision for children to learn and practise their skills in linking sounds to letters
  - maximising opportunities for children to develop their calculation skills
  - carefully monitoring each child's progress and adapting the curriculum to meet each child's needs.
- Ensuring the outdoor environment is used effectively to promote children's development in all six areas of learning by:
  - increasing the amount of time that children are able to choose to learn in the outdoor environment
  - ensuring the activities planned and the resources used are suitable for this learning environment
  - ensuring an appropriate balance between teacher-led and child-initiated learning experiences.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of children****3**

Children enter the Nursery class with skills and abilities that broadly match those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress overall, although progress in aspects of communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development is not fast enough. Children's lower attainment in linking sounds to letters, reading, writing and calculation stems mainly from a lack of rigour in ensuring that children are consistently provided with the right opportunities to move their skills on rapidly. Boys do not progress as well as girls in these areas of learning. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are at the early stage of learning English, make the same progress as their peers because of the extra support they receive.

Children behave well and are keen to learn, showing good enthusiasm for physically

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energetic and creative activities. Riding trikes, scooters and running and jumping, they particularly enjoy. Children work well together, often helping one another without reminders from adults. They grow in confidence and independence as they make choices for themselves across the different areas of learning. They have a good understanding of the importance of healthy snacks, and know that fruit and vegetables are good foods to eat. Children make a satisfactory contribution to the day-to-day life of the setting. They make friends eagerly and establish positive relationships with each other. Most help to tidy up resources well, though some do not help as much as they should. Children are beginning to learn the importance of contributing to the wider community, for example, by taking part in fundraising events such as Red Nose day, and Children in Need. Children feel safe and secure, and know adults are there for them if they need help. They know how to handle different resources safely. Children are keen to come to school and attend regularly. The skills they learn prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education, and for their future lives.

*These are the grades for children's outcomes*

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Children's attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of children's learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which children feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Children's behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Children's attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

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

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Staff work hard to provide activities that are practical and interesting. This was seen as children excitedly painted pictures of characters from the story of the 'Gingerbread Man.' The balance between the adult-led activities and the ones children choose for themselves however is not always appropriate in the outdoor environment. This leads to an emphasis on activities that promote social, creative and physical development, rather than those that develop literacy and numeracy skills. Staff constantly interact with children, and praise is used very well in both the Nursery class and the daycare facilities, to effectively develop children's self-esteem and to promote good behaviour.

Recent training and the introduction of a system for recording the progress of children, 'Learning Journeys', provides satisfactory information about achievement. Staff know the children well and are particularly sensitive and responsive to the needs of those who are most vulnerable. Induction is good, and now the school is working hard to improve transition arrangements to the primary school. Good attention to children's welfare contributes effectively to their development. Welcoming staff ensure a strong home-school link is firmly established. At the start of each session, adults greet children warmly, and quickly engage them in conversations about the things that interest them. The good quality day care is much appreciated by parents and carers.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The acting headteacher provides sound direction for the school's work. She has worked hard to overcome the instability in leadership of the past two years. Governors have been supportive, and have used their expertise well to help with management issues such as finance and safeguarding. The acting headteacher has given a high priority to safeguarding children, and with the good support of a governor, has ensured all safeguarding procedures and documentation are securely in place. Staff make sure children and parents and carers have equal access to all the school's activities, and that there is no discrimination of any kind. Staff throughout work well as a team, and there has been close liaison between the daycare manager and the acting headteacher. The 'Learning Journeys' are now completed in the day-care facilities as well as the Nursery class. This provides a continuous record of progress and helps with transition to funded education. Work on community cohesion has been extended from the good practice in the school community to the wider locality including other local schools.

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Self-evaluation is accurate and strengths and weaknesses are known. For example, the difference between boys' and girls' attainment and weaknesses in outdoor learning have been identified. Training and support to improve these are planned for in the near future. Governors recognise they have provided good support over the last two years, but with the appointment of the new headteacher they need to develop their role of challenge.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	2
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	3
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	3

## Views of parents and carers

An above average proportion of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. The vast majority of them are pleased with the work of the school. Almost all agree that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. Inspectors agree with both these evaluations. There are no areas where a significant number of parents and carers have concerns but a few did express anxiety about the unsettled leadership. Inspectors agree that this situation has not been helpful in accelerating school improvement.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Ashgate Nursery School 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 inspector received 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 97 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	68	13	30	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	33	75	10	23	0	0	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	55	16	36	1	2	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	61	14	32	0	0	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	29	66	13	30	0	0	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	57	16	36	2	5	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	52	19	41	2	4	1	2
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)	20	45	17	39	2	5	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	42	18	55	0	0	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	45	21	48	0	0	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	50	18	42	2	5	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	26	59	13	30	2	5	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	76	8	16	2	4	1	2

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



18 March 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Ashgate Nursery School, Derby, DE1 1GJ

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I and another inspector recently visited your Nursery. I really enjoyed talking to you, and looking at the work you were doing. Some of you told me how much you like being at school, and I can see why.

Your school has some good things about it. I was very pleased to see that you are friendly with each other and some of you try very hard to make sure that everyone has a friend to play with. You enjoy painting lovely pictures, using the computer, making models, singing and playing outside. I saw that you had great fun riding your trikes and scooters, and running around in the fresh air. Some of you showed me how fast you could run and how you could jump and hop - I was amazed! Thank you to the two girls who showed me the crocuses, which have just started to grow in the garden. I really liked the way you are kind and behave well. Everyone looks after you so you feel safe, and you know who to go to if you feel upset. You are also starting to learn about keeping healthy and you enjoy eating fruit especially apples, and drinking water.

As well as the good things there are some things I have asked the grown-ups to do to make your school better. I have asked them to help you to get better at learning the things you need to do to read, write and solve problems, particularly when you looking at numbers and patterns. I also asked them to let you have more time working in the outdoors, as I saw and you told me, you really enjoy it when you go outside.

Thank you again for helping me, and you can help the grown ups by trying always to do your very best as you play and learn at Ashgate Nursery school.

Best wishes

Lois Furness

Lead inspector

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