

Weston Way Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117065
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	338936
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Sue Vale

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 of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Tilbury
Headteacher	Jane Millett
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2007
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Age group	3–5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited 6 lessons, and saw all teaching staff in both the Nursery and the extended childcare provision. They held meetings with the chair of governors, the headteacher and the senior leadership team. They looked at assessments of the progress of individuals and different groups of children, and children's learning journeys. They examined planning and other documentation, along with 58 questionnaires from parents and carers of children aged 3-4 and 17 staff questionnaires.

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

- how effectively children's progress and development are assessed and used to help move them on to the next steps in their learning
- the safeguarding procedures and checks to ensure the safety of the children
- the use of the outdoor learning environment and its impact on children's learning and progress.

Information about the school

Weston Way Nursery is an average sized Nursery school. Most of the children come from White British families and the others come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Two children are new to learning English. About a fifth of the children are identified with learning difficulties or disabilities, which include physical difficulties and behaviour management. Silver Circles extended care is where children can stay at Nursery for early morning drop off, 'lunch club' or an afternoon session as well as the morning, and it also runs a summer holiday play scheme. The Nursery is situated in an acre and a half of woodland that is designated as an educational nature reserve.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Weston Way Nursery continues to provide an outstanding start to children's education. Children's achievement is excellent. The majority of children make outstanding progress from their starting points.

There are excellent links with children's families. Parents are very positive in their comments about both the Nursery and the childcare provision. The key person system allows staff to know the ten children in their specific care very well.

Children are very well prepared for the next steps in their learning through outstanding teaching, high expectations of what children can achieve and a stimulating curriculum, which involves and encourages parents, carers and extended families to be involved in their children's learning.

The Nursery is fortunate to have such impressive grounds for the children to access and to support their learning and development. These are used on a daily basis but the use of them is restricted to timed sessions. 'Forest School' is available as an after school club which precludes all children being able to participate in this. The Nursery and governors are looking at ways to involve 'Forest School' in the daily curriculum. A more 'open free flow' of movement between the inside and the outside, allowing children to make the decision for themselves whether they would like to be inside or outside would allow this wonderful resource to be fully utilised and would support children in becoming even more independent learners.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is outstanding. The wide and varied selection of after school clubs for these Nursery aged children enhances this development. The provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good. Children are very well behaved, and play together extremely well. Healthy lifestyles are adopted and reflected in the lunch boxes of those children who stay for 'lunch club.'

The teaching is supported by assessment procedures which, although only recently instigated in light of the changes to the Early Years Framework, are proving to be an excellent way of tracking children's progress. This shows that the vast majority of children make more than expected progress in all aspects of their learning, including the development of new skills. Children receive excellent care, guidance and support. The Nursery is very inclusive.

Leadership and management are excellent and have a clear vision for the further development of the Nursery. The governing body supports the school extremely well and acts very positively as a critical friend. Regular communication between all is a strength. Community cohesion is good overall. There are outstanding links within the

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Nursery itself, and excellent links with other local schools in the forum of which the Nursery is a part. There are developing communications with other schools in Britain and abroad.

The many strengths of the Nursery and the high standards it has maintained over a number of years clearly demonstrate that it has outstanding capacity to sustain the excellent rate of improvement evident since its last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Review the organisation and management of the 'free-flow' time available to children by:
 - ensuring that the large grassed area and woodland are utilised as much as possible
 - developing 'Forest School' activities further for the benefit of all children, so that these can be accessed during the school day
 - enabling all children to make individual and independent decisions for themselves as to whether they wish to go outside or play inside or participate in both.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

All children make at least good progress, and the majority make outstanding progress in all aspects of their learning, so that attainment is above average by the time they leave. Problem solving is encouraged and this was seen outside when the bikes and wheeled toys were out. Road works instigated by a group of boys were causing huge traffic jams! Together they worked out a solution to the problem, communicating their ideas clearly to each other and to adults in order to get the traffic moving. This independence of thought and problem solving is a major reason why children make such outstanding progress in their learning and why they achieve as well as they do.

Behaviour is excellent and all children are really keen to learn. In any part of the Nursery at any time children are thoroughly engaged and highly motivated active participants who are genuinely enthralled by some of their activities. For example, when three girls were hunting for bugs in the forest, they were really confident in what they were doing, and worked very well together as a team. Consequently, the spiritual, moral and social aspects of the children's development are outstanding. They are actively encouraged to make decisions for themselves about what they want to play with, which enhances the progress that they make. However they are limited in their decision making as to the choice about whether they play inside or out. Children identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the very few who are new to learning English, make the same outstanding progress as their peers. Children feel safe and are learning how to take risks, for example, in the forest climbing trees, whilst remaining within a safe environment. Staff are vigilant at all times. Children understand about healthy lifestyles and water and milk are readily available throughout the day. The Nursery plans

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to re-instigate a healthy snack during the morning and afternoon sessions.

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	2
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
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children's behaviour	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance ¹	2
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Short, sharp, focused activities led by the teachers really enhance children's learning and are one of the reasons why they make such rapid progress. This was seen, for example, when a teacher was discussing with a small group of children which animals were the heaviest and which the lightest on the balancing scales. Children grasped the concept quickly because of the very good role modelling, use of mathematical language and the clear explanations that were given to them. One parent commented (a view reflected by many), 'I feel that Weston Way is 'one of a kind', the teaching is fantastic and all of the staff are child focused and friendly.' On rare occasions, staff do not make the best use of their questioning skills, for example, asking questions that require only a 'yes' or 'no' answer. This does not enhance the children's learning as rapidly as when questions are more open-ended. The Nursery has introduced a new system of assessment and recording of observations based on what the children know, understand

¹ 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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and can do in the last six months. This is working well and is a clear indicator of the outstanding progress the children make.

The curriculum is varied and creates a stimulating learning environment. It is magnificently enhanced by the wonderful one and a half acres of forest to which the children have access. However this facility is not used to its full advantage or as much as it could be, as times are limited to 45 minutes in the morning and the afternoon. Children do not have the freedom of choice to access this at other times.

Continued excellent care, guidance and support since the last inspection are summed up by a parental comment: 'My child was quite shy when he first started at Weston Way but the nurturing staff have brought him out of his shell. He loves attending every day.' There is excellent extended day care as well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	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?

The leadership and management of the Nursery inspire a united team. All work together very well for the best for the children. The Nursery is held in high regard within the local community and has been on the site since 1942. The headteacher's continued high expectations of what children can achieve is reflected in the outstanding progress they make. The governing body are fully supportive and fulfil their statutory duties well. They are not complacent and ensure that the Nursery continues to develop and support the families that it serves. Governors visit regularly and the Nursery is fortunate to have had support from one governor for over 40 years. Safeguarding procedures are fully adhered to and are robust, and staff are very vigilant to ensure children's safety. There are excellent links with parents, carers and the children's extended families. Pudding-making day in November and grandparents' day ensure and enhance the way that families are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning.

Community cohesion is good. There are very effective links within the Nursery community; particular strengths are the relationship between home and school. There are equally effective links within the wider local community. A start has been made in forging links with other schools across Britain and internationally in America. The Nursery has a strong and effective commitment to ensuring that all children have equal opportunity to thrive and that there is no discrimination. It uses its considerable

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knowledge of each child's individual needs and interests extremely well to secure this. The extended day care, known as Silver Circles is an appreciated resource and parents and children are happy to use it.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents are very happy with what the Nursery provides and the education their children receive. Many positive comments were written praising every aspect of the Nursery. One typical comment from a parent was: 'We feel fortunate that our child has a place here.' The views of parents reflect the high regard in which the Nursery is held by the local community.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Weston Way 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 inspection team received 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 105 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	88	7	12	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	88	7	12	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	41	71	15	26	1	2	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	72	16	28	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	46	79	12	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	72	14	24	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	64	21	36	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)	39	67	19	33	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	78	12	21	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	66	19	33	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	67	18	31	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	49	84	9	16	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	88	7	12	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



2 July 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Weston Way Nursery School, Baldock, SG7 6HD

I really enjoyed coming to visit your Nursery the other day. It is a lovely place to be. I loved the wonderful grounds and forest that you have and that you can play in. You are very fortunate. I really liked some of the paintings you were doing about the animals that you had seen at the zoo after your visit.

Your Nursery is excellent. These are some of the things that are very good about it:

You all make at least good progress and over half of you make outstanding progress from when you first start.

You learn such a lot and are very well prepared for the next steps in your learning.

Teaching is excellent and really supports you in helping you to develop your skills, knowledge and understanding of the world around you.

The activities that are on offer for you to play with are very good and really help you to make such good progress in your learning.

All of you behave extremely well, especially those of you who stay for lunch club.

You are looked after and cared for very well.

There are always some things that can be made better. I have asked your headteacher to see if you can have more time in the forest, and to see if 'Forest School' can take place during the day. I have also asked her to allow you to choose for yourselves whether you would like to play inside or outside.

I hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Nursery and that many future generations can continue to as well.

Yours sincerely

Sue Vale

Lead inspector

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