

Arlesdene Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117066
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	338937
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Jackie Cousins

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.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Mayes
Headteacher	Jacqui Williams
Date of previous school inspection	7 January 2007
School address	Blindman's Lane Cheshunt Waltham Cross
Telephone number	01992 626879
Fax number	01992 901930
Email address	head@arlesdene.herts.sch.uk

Registered childcare provision	Rocking Horse Day Care
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	76
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, governors, senior teachers and staff, and talked to groups of children. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at some documentation, children's work and displays and scrutinised 26 parent questionnaires.

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

- how consistently children with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress in language and literacy
- how effectively leaders monitor the progress of boys
- how the school is using feedback to children to increase the rate of progress
- how the school's leadership is working to develop children's understanding of the United Kingdom's multi-cultural community.
- whether the attendance rate of children who speak English as an additional language has a significant impact on their learning and progress.

Information about the school

Arlesdene Nursery School is situated near Waltham Cross. It is an average sized nursery school. It has been a children's centre since 2007. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The large majority of children are from White British backgrounds. One-quarter of the children are from minority ethnic groups and a few have English as an additional language. The school makes provision for 80 three- and four-year-olds to attend school for 12 and a half hours a week.

Childcare is offered on site through the Rocking Horse Day Care provision. It is open 49 weeks of the year from 08.00 to 18.00 for two- to eight-year-olds. The childcare setting can take a maximum of 40 children at any one time. Currently, 76 children are registered at the setting and they attend a variety of sessions. The centre can provide funded day care for 24 two year olds. A holiday club is offered in half terms and during Easter and school summer holidays. Nearly all the day care staff have suitable qualifications.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Arlesdene Nursery School and Rocking Horse Day Care are good places to learn. Together, these settings form the main part of the children's centre. They have outstanding features. Children's personal, social and emotional development is a significant strength of the centre. Behaviour is outstanding and so children are polite and very thoughtful to others. This is because care and support from all staff at the centre are outstandingly good. Children take on safe ways of working together extremely well. This is due to very astute guidance from staff. Parents strongly agree that their child is kept safe at the centre. All children said they felt safe in the centre and had someone they could talk to if they had a problem or a worry. Children and parents made many positive comments about the centre. One parent summed up others' thoughts when they wrote, 'I feel that all staff do their job because ... they all care about the children and so they give them 100%'. A very good partnership is in place with parents and so children settle quickly into centre life. Staff in the school and childcare setting are readily available to discuss parents' concerns at the start and end of sessions. Parents of children who attend the Rocking Horse Day Care would value more detailed information about the progress their child is making. Inspectors agree this would enable parents to support their child's learning even more effectively.

Attainment is high as a result of children's achievement and enjoyment being outstanding. Children progress well at the centre because they receive good quality teaching from staff. They use practical activities successfully and so children learn through a wide variety of methods. Occasionally, oral feedback to children is not telling them what they have done well specifically and so they are not fully aware of how they have succeeded and what they could do to improve their work. Staff plan sessions carefully but they do not always monitor children's involvement in their learning effectively and so occasionally they do not record those children who have not been successful in developing the key skills planned for that day.

Good leadership from the senior team and very astute leadership from the headteacher are effectively driving improvements. Successful management has ensured good developments since the last inspection. For example, provision for learning outside is well established because resources are used effectively. As a result, children adopt healthy lifestyles outstandingly well. A high proportion of children take part in physical exercise activities in outside and inside areas. They are knowledgeable about foods which are better for them and those which should not be eaten too often. Breakfast club is attended by a significant number of children and so they get a healthy breakfast before they start school. Nutritious fresh meals are prepared every day at the centre by the school's chef. Self-evaluation is used successfully by senior leaders and governors

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and so the centre is in a good position to improve in the future. Middle leaders are starting to monitor provision more thoroughly but they do not always methodically evaluate children's progress in their area of learning. The leader of mathematics has yet to fully develop the role.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the role of the middle leaders, especially in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring they all monitor and evaluate children's progress in detail.
- Develop the quality of teaching by ensuring all lessons contain these features:
 - highly specific feedback for children
 - rigorous monitoring of children's involvement in key activities.
- Enhance the ways childcare staff give parents information about their child's progress so that they understand what targets their child is working towards.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

Children's achievement and enjoyment are outstanding. From their slightly above expected starting points, children progress well. As a result, standards are high by the time children leave. In 2009, over half the children reached above expected levels of knowledge and understanding in key areas of learning. More able children progress successfully because staff have high expectations of them. Summer term assessments show that in 2009 one-quarter of children leaving the Nursery were working at exceptionally high levels of skill. Children's attainment by the end of the Nursery year has been well above average for the past three years. Boys and girls progress at a similar rate. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well and so they achieve effectively. Children who speak English as an additional language are provided for successfully and so they make good progress whether they are in the Nursery class or attend childcare sessions.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The centre plans many projects which encourage children to develop self-confidence. Children contribute to the community well. For example, children perform their Christmas production in a church so that many local people can hear them singing. Children learn effectively to value everyone. They develop their knowledge of our multi-cultural society successfully because festivals such as Diwali are celebrated imaginatively in the centre. Children form very effective relationships with adults because staff nurture them thoughtfully. They learn to take turns successfully and share apparatus productively. For example, they learn how to handle cooking equipment effectively, which was evident when they made chocolate crispy snacks. Children's moral development is outstanding and they have an excellent understanding of what is fair. They have really positive attitudes to learning, concentrate efficiently and attendance is above average. Children develop basic skills well and their very effective personal qualities mean they are successfully prepared for the next stage of education.

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

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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	2
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
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	2

How effective is the provision?

A key reason why children make effective progress in all aspects of their learning is the good teaching they receive. Observations during the inspection show successful teaching uses practical teaching methods to ensure that children develop basic skills well. In one good session seen, children were encouraged methodically to compare and contrast animal skin types because questions were used so well. Information and communication technology is used successfully to extend children's learning and so, for example, they learn accurately to link sounds and letters together. Staff raise children's self-esteem by offering them encouraging comments. Occasionally, staff do not give children full oral feedback and so they do not always receive clear explanations of how they have excelled in their work or an outline of how they could improve next time. Assessment effectively informs lesson planning and extra support for children. Staff make careful observations of children. 'Learning journals' are used rigorously and so everyone is clear about when each stage of development is met. Staff do not always

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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consistently collect information about children's involvement in key learning activities and so occasionally they are not aware of a child who has missed out on a piece of learning.

A high emphasis is placed on the regular development of language, literacy and communication skills. Provision for mathematical development is satisfactory. Occasionally, planning for the week does not include a strong focus on developing children's calculation skills. This means that opportunities may be missed to enhance these skills effectively. The children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world efficiently through investigative activities. For example, they are fascinated by a project on spiders and make careful observations of live and model spiders due to good levels of expertise from staff. The children thoroughly enjoy all the wonderful projects planned for them. They take great pleasure in developing their imagination in drama activities because resources are used creatively. For instance, they use their knowledge of fairy tales effectively when they develop their own ideas while playing in a model castle. Children celebrate festivals such as Christmas, learning about the Christian beliefs linked to this time of year because religious education is integrated consistently into centre planning. The children's personal, social and emotional development is supported well through group discussion sessions. Provision for the gifted and talented children is satisfactory and improving.

Children receive an extremely high level of care from staff. All the children spoken to said staff were kind to them. Transition into centre life is very well organised. From the time that children start at the centre, their personal needs are met exceptionally well. Those from minority ethnic groups are supported effectively and so they are fully integrated into the centre. Children with medical problems are cared for very considerately. Vulnerable children are identified rigorously. The centre works extremely carefully with agencies to support children's well-being. Its work with families is deeply embedded. For example, regular sessions are held to support parents with babies and toddlers and a toy library is available every week. Training sessions or information about courses for the parents are highlighted to them because staff diligently explain what is available.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

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

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The senior leadership team is committed to improving the centre and they inspire others successfully. This is because the headteacher leads the centre with a great deal of dedication and skill. Children from all backgrounds and abilities are involved very effectively in centre life, as the leadership aims to treat all children as individuals. Children have equal opportunities to learn due to the fact that the centre works diligently to remove any barriers to learning. This is because staff have high expectations and work methodically to meet children's individual needs. Children's achievement is monitored on a termly basis by senior leaders and so individual targets for their attainment are reviewed regularly. The centre is developing a monitoring system so that middle leaders can track children's progress consistently, especially in mathematics, and so identify different groups of children who do not seem to be progressing effectively.

Governance is good and supports the centre well. Governors work effectively with staff and challenge the centre consistently. They are involved successfully in planning for the future. Centre development planning sets clear direction for future improvements in the quality of education. Governors make sure child protection and health and safety matters are dealt with carefully. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements well. For example, all staff receive regular training in child protection and thorough records are kept of the checks completed on staff.

The centre works successfully to unite the school, childcare and wider community. For example, children successfully raise money for people in the local and UK community. The centre has evaluated all aspects of community cohesion rigorously and is developing further links to enhance children's understanding of global issues and the challenges faced by people in other countries.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2
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Views of parents and carers

A good partnership is in place between parents and carers and the children's centre. The majority of parents who returned a questionnaire were positive about the centre and the progress their child is making. One parent summed up their thoughts by saying, 'I am very happy with the school which is why I send my two children to Arlesdene.' A few parents whose children go to the Rocking Horse Day Care setting did not feel they received enough information about how their child is developing.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Alesdene 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 26 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 72 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	62	10	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	65	8	31	1	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	38	12	46	2	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	38	14	54	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	10	38	13	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	38	12	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	58	10	38	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)	9	35	8	31	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	50	12	46	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	35	13	50	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	35	11	42	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	50	12	46	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	69	6	23	2	8	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.



8 October 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Arlesdene Nursery School, Cheshunt, EN8 9DW

Thank you for helping us to find out about your centre. We enjoyed watching lessons and talking to some of you. You attend a happy and friendly centre. Here are some of the best things about your centre:

- you make good progress in your work
- you behave very well
- your headteacher and senior staff have very good ideas about ways to improve the centre
- teaching is good and the staff work hard to make sessions interesting
- a good partnership is in place between the centre, your parents, carers and agencies
- staff care and support you very well and listen to you thoughtfully so that you feel really safe in school.

We have asked your centre to look at how they can make things even better. The most important matters are to make sure that:

- teachers check up on how much progress you are making in all areas of learning, especially in mathematics
- staff give you detailed comments about your work and find out which activities you have completed each day
- parents of children who go to the Rocking Horse Day Care are given more information on their child's progress.

Continue to listen carefully to staff comments, come to the centre everyday and enjoy all the wonderful things you are learning at Arlesdene Nursery School and Rocking Horse Day Care.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Cousins

Lead inspector

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