

Heath Lane Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117070
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	338941
Inspection dates	12–13 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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Norman
Headteacher	Mrs Rachel Heath
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2007
School address	Heath Lane Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire
Telephone number	01442 255418
Fax number	01442 255939
Email address	admin@heathlane.herts.sch.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited eight lessons, and saw all staff in the Nursery teach. They held meetings with the chair of governors, the senior leadership team, and talked to children. They observed the Nursery's work, and looked at assessments of the progress of individuals and different groups of children, and records of its own observations of lessons. They examined, in closer detail, documents and information related to observations and assessment, planning, provision for special educational needs, the school development plan, and other documentation, along with 47 questionnaires from parents and carers of children

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 is assessed and used to help move them on to the next steps in their learning, particularly for children who find themselves in vulnerable circumstances
- safeguarding procedures and checks to ensure the safety of the children
- the impact of the outdoor learning environment on learning and progress.

Information about the school

Heath Lane Nursery shares its building and grounds with the Pat Lewis Child Development Centre. It also rents part of another building close by, owned by South Hill Early Years Centre for the extended day care provision, known as the children's club. The South Hill Early Years Centre was not part of this inspection. Nearly all children are from White British backgrounds, and a very small number are from minority ethnic groups of which a few children are new to learning English. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is well below average and covers moderate learning difficulties. The majority of children only attend the Nursery for three terms. The children's club offers breakfast, lunch care, after school activities, full day care for three to five year olds and holiday sessions. This extended care was part of the inspection as it is managed by the governing body. The Nursery has gained healthy school status.

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

Heath Lane Nursery provides a good education for its children. Parents are overwhelmingly in agreement that their children really enjoy going to Heath Lane Nursery, 'Our son has enjoyed Heath Lane beyond our expectations. He has developed and learnt more than we could have asked for' is a typical comment from parents. The inspection findings support this view. Children feel safe, make good progress in their learning, are very happy and thoroughly enjoy trying out all the exciting activities that the Nursery has to offer.

The Nursery's own assessments, supported by the evidence seen during the inspection, show that the children start with skills and abilities that are broadly as expected for their age in all the areas of learning. Good teaching and an in-depth knowledge of individual children's interests and abilities enables the children to become confident independent learners which helps them to make good progress, so that they leave Nursery with attainment above that expected for their age.

There is a wide range of learning opportunities for children; the introduction of 'Forest School' is having a very positive impact on many aspects of their learning. Children are encouraged to make decisions for themselves, but at the same time, if they are not ready to do this, they are supported well by the adults until they have developed confidence in their own abilities. This encourages them to become independent learners. It also provides them with a strong foundation for the next stage of their education as children progress well towards the goals expected of them in both their academic and personal development.

Parents, carers and their families are actively encouraged to be part of the learning process. Library days, visits to schools children transfer to, and visits from those children who will be starting at the Nursery in September all enhance and encourage children and their families to feel welcomed and valued. Particularly good links with external agencies enhance the good support available for those children who are identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or whose families are in need of more support. This is aided further by the good links between the Nursery and the child development centre on site.

Good teaching is supported by good use of recently developed assessment procedures to track children's progress. Observations and assessments are undertaken by the majority of staff, and used to inform planning. Children's next steps for learning are also clearly identified. This ensures that the vast majority of them make more than expected progress in all aspects of their learning, including the development of new skills. Children's 'individual learning journeys' show the variety of activities which they do and

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

the good progress they make. The Nursery is aware that these need to be developed further into the extended care provision to ensure continuity of learning for the children. Although children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, there are some missed opportunities to learn more about other cultures and communities in the United Kingdom.

Good leadership and governance show a clear vision for the development of the Nursery. The newly appointed head teacher undertook a clear review of the strengths and areas for development when she took up the post. Along with good support from the governors and a newly instigated senior leadership team the Nursery has a more rigorous approach to improvement. This ensures that self- evaluation is accurate, and the school development plan clearly identifies areas for future improvement. This along with the good progress made since the previous inspection, good teaching and the good progress which children make in their learning shows that there is good capacity for continued improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Integrate the extended day care and its facilities more fully into the working practices and systems of the Nursery by:
 - pursuing regular meetings between all managers
 - closely monitoring and evaluating children's learning and progress whilst part of the extended care and sharing good practice
- Improve children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by:
 - developing children's understanding and awareness of different cultures and communities within the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children**2**

In the short amount of time children attend the Nursery, they make good progress in their learning and achieve well. By the time they leave, the attainment of the majority of children is above what is expected for their age. Children clearly become self-assured, happy, confident learners. For example, when a group of girls were imaginatively acting out that they were going on holiday, the conversations they were having over their imaginary mobiles as they arrived at the airport to catch their plane were great fun to hear.

Healthy life styles are encouraged; fruit milk and water are readily available throughout the day. Children spend the majority of their time outdoors, running, jumping, riding and generally thoroughly enjoying the outdoor learning environment. Behaviour is outstanding. Children are caring and really supportive of each other. This was seen when the new children due to start in September came to visit. Children greeted them with enthusiasm and were proud to show off their Nursery and all the things that their visitors could play with. Equally the visitors settled in straight away and participated fully in everything that was on offer. Attendance is broadly average and despite robust

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

procedures to encourage full attendance it has been affected by the illness of some children.

The good integration of all children, their good equal participation and free-flowing movement between all areas enable them to make good progress in their personal social and emotional development. They are very keen to learn and try out new experiences. The spiritual development of the children is excellent. One very lively boy, calmly lay down on a log to look up at the sky, an activity encouraged through Forest school. When asked by an adult what he was doing he replied, 'just looking at the sky, its lovely!' Moral and social development of children are good. Children are interested in the world around them. Many are eager to try out new experiences which broaden their knowledge and understanding. The Nursery recognises that it needs to further develop children's understanding and appreciation of different cultures and ways of life other than their own.

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	2
Taking into account: Children's attainment ¹	2
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	3
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

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

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

Teaching is good and supports children's learning and progress well. Teachers consistently ensure that children are motivated and engaged in their learning through planning interesting and creative learning opportunities. Children are encouraged to become independent learners. The Nursery is organised to allow children the freedom of choice as between indoor and outdoor activities. When necessary, teachers support and direct children in their learning to help them to move on. Information and communication technology (ICT) is independently accessed by the children and this supports both their independence and their knowledge and understanding of the world. An example of good imaginative and creative learning opportunities was seen in children's role play using the real rescue boat situated in the middle of the classroom. This evolved after the children had watched a film about life boats and how they rescue people at sea. Children were delighted to act out rescues, putting on appropriate life jackets and using walky-talkies to save people. Unfortunately most wanted to be the rescuers so there were actually a shortage of people to be rescued but this did not stop them fully participating and enjoying their learning.

The majority of staff are very good at talking with and listening to the children, so children who are new to learning English and others make rapid progress in developing new vocabulary. This year the Nursery has trialled a new way of gathering information for assessment on children to analyse what works successfully and to see how they can help children move on in their learning. It is proving to be successful and from next year there are plans to extend this into the extended day care provision to ensure a more rounded approach to assessing the children.

Well organised arrangements for the care of children and close links with the children's centre supporting families in more vulnerable circumstances ensures that children are well cared for. Adults know the children in their care, and the small key worker groups work well in ensuring that individual needs and interests are catered for. The extended day care is well thought of by parents, although it is not fully integrated into the life of the nursery to enable good practice to be shared.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The Nursery is well-led and managed. The newly formed senior leadership team

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

consisting of the Head of Centre, the senior teacher, the children's centre manager and the manager of the extended day care provision are determined to develop a more cohesive approach to the support, care and academic development of the children. Times for meetings are carefully structured and planned for, and communication between all staff is prioritised. The setting places the promotion of equality of opportunity and the full integration of all children as highly important so that there is no discrimination of any kind. Good links with external agencies support all aspects of children's learning and personal development and support for families. Community cohesion is good overall with well established links globally to a school in New Zealand and the numerous external agencies which work with and alongside the Nursery to support children. As a result of its own audit of community cohesion and evaluation of the impact of its action plan, the Nursery has identified the need to further develop children's appreciation and understanding of cultures and communities in Britain other than their own.

The governors are fully supportive and aware of the Nursery's strengths and areas for development. They act as a critical friend. Safeguarding procedures are adhered to and risk assessments for the safety of the children both on site and when they go out on visits and trips are regularly and efficiently carried out. There are very positive links with parents and carers and the Nursery offers a number of opportunities for families to come together.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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

Views of parents and carers

Over two thirds of parents returned the questionnaire. All are overwhelmingly supportive of the Nursery and its work. They identified in particular that their children feel safe and are happy positive learners. The inspectors agree. All praised the care and welfare which their children receive. Only one parent felt that the Nursery did not take into account their suggestions. Inspectors found no evidence to support this view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Heath Lane 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 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 66 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	91	4	9	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	94	3	6	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	79	10	21	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	89	5	11	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	81	8	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	77	11	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	79	10	21	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)	37	79	8	17	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	79	9	19	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	68	12	26	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	72	11	23	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	41	87	6	13	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	94	3	6	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.



Dear Children,

Inspection of Heath Lane Nursery School, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 1TT

It was lovely to meet you when I came to visit you. The Nursery provides a good start to your education. There are many things which it does well.

You are very happy and like coming to Nursery. You get straight down to the activities on offer and obviously enjoy learning.

There are many interesting things for you to do. It was lovely to see so many of you enjoying Forest school and having a great time playing outside.

I really enjoyed watching you rescue people in the boat and working with your teacher on the interactive white board

Those of you who stay for extended care either in the breakfast club or after school are cared for well

The Nursery is well led and managed

Even in good schools and Nurseries there are always things that can be improved. So I have asked the teachers to share what they do well in Nursery with the extended day care. I have also asked your headteacher to help you to learn more about other cultures and communities within Britain.

I hope you continue to enjoy Nursery and keep on doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Sue Vale

Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.