

Whitnash Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125487
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	340778
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Best

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	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Fell
Headteacher	Karen Howell
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They made 11 observations of children's learning involving seven members of staff and met with children, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation report, records of visits by the local authority, development plans, assessment information, curriculum plans and a range of policy documents. Inspectors also analysed 43 parental questionnaires.

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

- how the school uses the information it gathers about what children know and can do to plan their future steps in learning
- how effectively children make choices and learn to work independently
- how well the school develops children's understanding of the wider world.

Information about the school

Children start in the school in the September or January following their third birthday, attending either morning or afternoon sessions. Most children come from White British families but about 20% come from other ethnic groups, mainly of Indian heritage. Most of these children are learning English as an additional language, and speak Punjabi as their first language. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that found in other settings, with a higher-than-expected proportion of children in need of support with speech and language.

The school is a key partner of a dedicated Children's Centre on the school site which provides the community with further support from a multi-disciplinary team of workers. During the current year the school has taken part in a pilot project that has increased children's entitlement to 15 hours per week. In addition, the governing body runs a daily lunch club, to whose additional staffing costs parents contribute.

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

Whitnash Nursery continues to provide an outstanding quality of education for its children. One parent's comment reflects those of many others in saying, 'This is a fabulous school where my son has thrived and been very happy.' Outstanding teaching is based on highly accurate information about what children know and can do, and activities are very well matched to children's interests and needs, underpinning their excellent progress and enjoyment. Children thoroughly enjoy attending the school; they listen carefully and are diligent in carrying out the tasks they are asked to do because staff promote a calm, friendly and supportive learning environment from the very outset. When children start in the school, their skills and experiences are broadly similar to those expected for their age; however, the range is very wide, particularly in speech and language development, where a number of children need specialist help. Children make excellent progress because, from the moment they set foot in the school, staff ensure that they engage in learning that meets their needs and engages their interests and enthusiasm. Children achieve exceedingly well and are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. Their personal, social and emotional development is especially strong and, by the time they leave to go to primary school, most children's skills are above the expected levels for their age in this and each of the other areas of learning.

As the result of excellent care, guidance and support, children develop into confident and independent learners who get on very well with each other and apply themselves diligently to all aspects of school life. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Children develop a strong sense of right and wrong, and willingly share with and help each other. They demonstrate a high degree of trust in the staff and move around with the confidence that comes from feeling thoroughly safe and secure. Children develop an excellent understanding of their school community and the local area, and through stories and celebrations of religious and other festivals they develop a good awareness of the customs and culture of other faiths and countries. However, the school rightly recognises that, in order to enhance its work in promoting community cohesion, this is an area for further development.

The staff team work exceptionally well together under the inspired and dedicated leadership of the headteacher. Routines are very well established and the strength of the team's drive and ambition is most evident in the highly creative learning environment they have created. The experienced staff team are constantly looking at different ways of stimulating and developing children's learning, and systems for monitoring and evaluating provision and outcomes are robust. Staff make exceptionally good use of the space available and are ingenious in their plans for further

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developments. The way in which the staff promote children's outdoor learning throughout the year typifies their approach in saying that: 'There's no such thing as bad weather - only inappropriate clothing.' The school's stock of all-weather gear is very well used and children delight in the range of activities on offer.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is excellent. Development planning builds very well on the priorities identified in the school's highly accurate self-evaluation report. The school's successful implementation of the previous report's recommendation to strengthen opportunities for children to link sounds and letters is evident in children's outcomes. The governing body is well informed and highly supportive of the school. They challenge the school through their monitoring of children's progress and ensure that management systems are robust. The school's partnership with parents is outstanding, as illustrated by the high level of satisfaction expressed in their responses to the inspection questionnaire and in the written comments made to inspectors.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase children's knowledge and understanding of the wider world by further developing their learning about the customs, cultures and festivals of other countries.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children**1**

The school is successfully maintaining the above-average outcomes established over many years. The information staff gather about children before they start school is expertly used in planning activities and excellent day-to-day assessments systems rigorously inform the next steps in children's learning. In this way, those with learning difficulties and the most able are equally well served and make excellent progress because activities are carefully adapted to provide the right level of challenge for each and every child. Similarly, children for whom English is an additional language are given the additional help they need to gain understanding quickly and develop confidence in their new language. There is little difference in either attainment or progress between boys and girls: trends are carefully monitored and staff point to the success of planning and providing boy-friendly activities across the areas of learning and particularly in promoting early reading and writing skills. Staff work closely with experts, such as speech therapists, to ensure that children gain the maximum benefit.

Children succeed and thrive on the gains they make. This is particularly evident in their personal and social education where children rapidly rise to the high expectations that are consistently modelled by all adults working in the school. Parents, in their responses to the questionnaire, are particularly pleased with how well children settle into the daily routines, make new friends and apply themselves to their work. In response to the questionnaire, one parent wrote: 'I was concerned about my daughter's ability to cope with going to school but applying for a place was the most important decision I have made for her. She is now a happy, chatty and sociable child and I am very grateful to the staff team for their excellent care and nurturing.'

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Children have an excellent understanding of eating healthily and keeping fit. They enjoy breakfast or tea, which the school provides at the start and end of the day, and help themselves to drinks and fruit or vegetable snacks during the course of each session. They run, climb and move around with enthusiasm and, on the eve of the opening match of the World Cup, were keenly practising their large ball skills in the garden. Children's attendance is good. The school works closely with parents and carers to ensure that children attend as regularly as possible.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

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

The emphasis staff place on developing children's confidence and independence is well reflected in the high quality range of learning experiences on offer each session. Excellent planning takes a thematic approach, incorporating each of the areas of learning systematically in providing a well-balanced range of activities chosen by the children and led or initiated by adults. The outdoor area is particularly well used with the substantial sand and water play equipment alongside a thriving vegetable garden and a

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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drumming area. Inside, staff actively promote children's creativity through activities that superbly promote their awareness of sight, light, sound and touch, contributing significantly to their excellent spiritual development.

The expertise with which staff lead and guide children's learning is an outstanding feature. Expectations are consistently high and children rise to this challenge extremely well. Learning is very well managed because staff maintain children's interest and concentration in well-paced and carefully adapted activities, and through the skilful use of questions. More able children's learning is well extended and those who need extra support to address specific needs or to prevent them falling behind benefit from the individual attention they receive. Staff handle the rare occasions where children's behaviour falters very well, applying previously agreed strategies consistently and fairly. The school's arrangements for identifying and supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are excellent. Close liaison with parents, carers and outside agencies is a strength, particularly the links with the on-site children's centre which provides a wide range of additional support.

Induction arrangements are excellent, enabling children quickly to settle into daily routines. There are good links with receiving primary schools that help children's transition to the next stage of their education. The school is successfully managing the extended provision being piloted this year. The provision of breakfast and tea are popular with parents and children, and the organisation is very well thought through so that children are actively involved in choosing and spreading the topping to their hot toast. The lunchtime provision, managed by the governing body, is very well run and staff consistently apply the expectations evident in the teaching sessions.

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?

Children's enjoyment and achievement are at the heart of the leadership's drive to maintain and further improve the already high quality provision in order to raise further children's attainment and progress. Teaching and learning are rigorously monitored and every opportunity is taken to enhance day-to-day practice, as in developing the additional group work this year to support children identified as at risk of falling behind. The school make excellent use of its resources and provides outstanding value for

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money.

The school promotes and develops very strong and lasting links with parents. Staff are extremely approachable and parents and carers have opportunities to speak informally with them at the start and end of each session, or more formally at parents' meetings or by appointment at a mutually convenient time. The school's links with other providers and experts in order to promote children's learning and well being are also high developed, as demonstrated by the school's excellent support for vulnerable children and their families. The school's arrangements for safeguarding children are rigorous and, as a result of regular training, all staff are thoroughly aware of child protection procedures.

The school's promotion of equal opportunities is outstanding. From the outset, staff make excellent use of the information they gather about what children know and can do. Excellent monitoring and planning ensures that all children have every opportunity to take a full and active part in all that the school offers so that any discrimination is tackled. The school is highly valued within the community and there are close links involving the children with a wide range of groups. It has undertaken a thorough audit of its context and evaluates its work rigorously; as a result, it has identified where its provision can be further developed in the curriculum and through links with other countries.

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	2
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

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Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are very satisfied with the school. They are particularly pleased that their children are safe and happy, that the teaching is good and that the provision is well led and managed. Many parents and carers added highly positive written comments to the questionnaires. The inspection team endorses the strengths parents and carers identified. Where respondents felt that there could be improvement, this was linked to their first-hand knowledge of how well their children were making progress. Inspectors found that staff shared information with parents and carers very well and are willing to talk to parents who are unable to bring and collect their children at school or by telephone at a mutually convenient time.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Whitnash 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 82 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	95	2	5	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	98	1	2	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	79	6	14	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	86	5	12	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	93	3	7	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	84	5	12	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	91	4	9	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	86	6	14	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	86	4	9	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	88	3	7	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	91	4	9	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	41	95	2	5	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	98	1	2	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.



14 June 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Whitnash Nursery School, Leamington Spa, CV31 2PW

Thank you very much for making us welcome when we visited you last week. You soon got used to having two inspectors called Mike in the school and we both enjoyed hearing all about what you were doing.

We think your school is fantastic. All the staff look after you extremely well and you are exceedingly happy and hardworking. They make sure that you have really interesting activities to choose from and they keep a careful check to see that you have a go at everything that is on offer. They help you with your learning and ask you some very good questions, and we heard you give them some excellent answers that show how well you understand what you are doing.

We were very impressed by how well you get on with each other and the adults who help you. They take great care to be sure that each one of you makes the best possible progress. Those of you who need it get extra help and there is always someone for you to talk to when you want to.

You learn about the Chinese New Year and other celebrations but we agree with the staff that they could do even more to help you understand about people in different places around the world.

Please carry on being cheerful, friendly and working hard. For those of you starting at your new schools in September, we wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Best

Lead inspector

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