



Lane Head Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104139
LEA Walsall
Inspection number 277082
Inspection dates 6 June 2006 to 6 June 2006
Reporting inspector Barbara Crane AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Type of school | Nursery | School address | High Road |
| School category | Maintained | | Willenhall |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 4 | | West Midlands WV12 4JQ |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01902 368940 |
| Number on roll | 104 | Fax number | 01902 368940 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | |
| Date of previous inspection | 12 June 2000 | Headteacher | Mrs Andrea Slade |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Lane Head Nursery serves an area just outside Walsall in which many families face challenging circumstances. Children's attainment when they start in the Nursery is below average and is particularly low in speech and language. About one third of the children are kept under review by the school because of varying difficulties in learning. A very small number of children are learning English as an additional language. There has been an acting headteacher for the last two years. The school has very recently become part of a Federation of schools with the local infant and junior schools.

Key for inspection grades

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Lane Head Nursery is a good school. It rightly feels that it gives children a good start to their education. Understandably, parents are delighted with the school and have an excellent partnership with the staff. Interesting activities and the warm relationships mean that school is a happy place where children enjoy learning. As one parent put it, 'My child skips to school'. Children's personal development and their well-being are outstanding because the staff provide high quality care for children and clear guidance on how to make the right choices.

Good teaching means that children make good progress and achieve well. They are on course to meet most of the goals for their age by the time they leave the school. Children make very fast progress in their personal, social and emotional development and physical development. This is because teaching in these areas is very clear-cut about what will be learned. The school has identified that children should be doing better in speech and language and staff have had extra training to improve teaching. There are times where teaching reflects very accurately the strategies agreed but this is not yet consistent. Some opportunities are still missed to fully extend children's language. The school is not yet in a sufficiently strong position to help staff understand how they can do even better because there are too few checks on the effectiveness of what is happening.

Leadership and management are good. The school knows where its strengths and weaknesses lie. Vigorous leadership by the acting headteacher has kept morale high and sustained the school very well through a time of uncertainty. She has moved the school on so that it has made good progress since the last inspection. There is good capacity to improve. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Check that teaching is more consistently supporting children's good progress in speech and language.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's achievement is good. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education and their overall attainment matches that expected for their age by the time they leave the school. Children with learning difficulties make good progress because their needs are well identified and catered for. The few children who are learning English as an additional language do well because of effective teaching. Children who can learn at a faster rate get a good level of challenge so that they can go that bit further. From a lower than average starting point, children make good progress in mathematical development, creative development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. They meet the age-related goals in these areas. Children make very speedy progress in their personal, social and emotional development

and physical development. By the time they leave the Nursery, the children exceed the expectations for their age in these areas. Children's skills in communication, language and literacy develop well from a much lower starting point than other areas. Even though they do not get as far as in other areas, their achievement is good. The school has rightly identified that children's progress in speech and language should sometimes be better. It does not quite match that in other aspects of learning because teaching sometimes misses timely interventions to boost skills or knowledge.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Children thrive because the school is a happy community in which they feel secure and valued. Their behaviour is excellent and they have very positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is good and children are eager to come into school at the start of each session. Children like and respect the adults and it is clear that these feelings are reciprocated. Those who are designated as 'special' helpers for the day take their responsibilities very seriously. Children work together amicably and are very safety conscious. The school has listened carefully to their concerns about the problems they encountered when sharing the same playground space for ball games and riding bikes. As a result, sensible changes have been made which the children really appreciate. Children eat and drink healthily, reflecting the school's designation as a Healthy School, and relish the frequent opportunities for physical activities outdoors. Children are regularly involved in community activities, such as raising money for charity. They are making good progress in developing skills of independence and working together that will serve them well in later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Warm relationships lead to a happy atmosphere in which children want to please adults by doing their best. Children happily ask for help if they need it but also try out their own ideas before doing so. Good quality assessments are well used to group children so that teaching can be pitched at the right level for them. This is very successful in physical activities and in promoting children's independence. Adults are particularly good at supporting children's language in outdoor activities and when they are exploring the world around them. At other times, for example when children gather to talk about what they have learned over the previous session, adults are sometimes unsure about how best to intervene to model and extend language. Children are not always sure when to be quiet or talkative at these times and so opportunities are missed to extend children's vocabulary or complexity of speech.

Teaching engages children successfully through praise for effort and celebration of initiative. Teaching for children with learning difficulties is firmly based on the assessment of individual needs. Learning by children who are at an early stage of speaking English is effective and so these children make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Plenty of practical activities interest boys and harness children's curiosity about the world. Much time is spent outdoors for exciting play activities such as preparing for a camping expedition. There is a good rhythm to the day, with lively sessions interspersed with quieter, more reflective times. An excellent range of visits, such as to the local nature reserve where children built shelters, enhances learning and widens children's horizons. In the school, there is much for children to see, feel and explore. The giant African land snails, for example, are a source of wonder for children. Children found working with a local artist during the inspection rewarding and were amazed at the effects of screen printing. Support for children's awareness of healthy lifestyle is very good and they take heed of what they learn. The school knows that its planning for developing speaking across the curriculum is not always as robust as it should be.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The staff's uncompromising commitment to children's welfare means that they know children very well as individuals. As one parent said, 'The staff will always go the extra mile to make sure that your child is really well looked after'. Arrangements for child protection and safeguarding children are rigorous. Children say that they feel safe and find it easy to talk to adults if they have problems. The school works very effectively with parents in promoting an understanding of how to stay healthy and has provided sessions on healthy eating and snacks, led by a dietician from the local health service. The staff quickly identify and respond to specific difficulties in children's speech and language development. Assessment is accurate both for children's work and the way in which they are maturing as individuals. These ensure that all are given well-judged guidance and support in order to make effective progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management result in an environment where children flourish and make good progress. The staff are happy to work as a team. The school's priorities are right because of good self-evaluation. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good in assessment and in monitoring the school's work and the school has the capacity to improve further. The resolute leadership of the acting headteacher has ensured that important aspects of the school's work have been tackled, in spite of

uncertainties over its future. Good systems for checking on children's progress have been established so that staff can more readily see where improvement is needed. Initiatives have been put in place over this year to improve children's progress in speech and language. The school has yet to check closely on the effectiveness of teaching in this area and give staff a clear idea of what needs to be done to ensure more consistency in children's progress. Governors have given the school good support and are preparing well for the school's future as part of a Federation.

Parents feel welcome as partners in their children's education because of the lengths staff go to in keeping them informed. The 'Keeping in Touch Groups' ensure that parents' views are sought well and followed up. Following parents' requests, behaviour management sessions for parents have been held.

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Inspection judgements

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| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall | 16-19 |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 | NA |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 | NA |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage | 2 | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 | NA |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | Yes | NA |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes | NA |

Achievement and standards

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 | NA |

Personal development and well-being

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 | NA |
| The attendance of learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 | NA |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 | NA |

The quality of provision

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 | NA |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 | NA |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 | NA |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 2 | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 | NA |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected | Yes | NA |

| | |
|---|-----|
| The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy | |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise | Yes |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse | NA |
| Learners are educated about sexual health | NA |
| The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe | |
| Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements | Yes |
| Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place | Yes |
| Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism | Yes |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them | Yes |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution | |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships | Yes |
| Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community | Yes |
| The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being | |
| There is provision to promote learners' basic skills | Yes |
| Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams | Yes |
| Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form | NA |
| Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy | NA |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for helping us to find out what makes your Nursery so special. Your parents think that your Nursery is a lovely place and we agree with them.

We were pleased to see you smiling when you came in to the Nursery, ready to enjoy being with your friends and the grown-ups. You behave very well and are doing well at working and playing. Everyone is right to be proud of you! The grown-ups are very kind and look after you very well. We are glad that you get a bit of extra help when you need it.

You know all about keeping safe and how important it is to eat the healthy snacks and drink plenty of water. It was brilliant to see you all having fun in the outdoor area. You are very good at climbing and riding and playing at camping!

The grown-ups in the Nursery work hard to give you the best start in life. We have asked them to make sure that you get even more chances to talk about all the exciting things that you do. Thank you again for helping us to do our work. Your Nursery is giving you a good start. Keep on enjoying learning and you will have bright futures.