



Inspection Report

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 104985
LEA Wirral
Inspection number 277269
Inspection dates 6 February 2006 to 7 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Mark Madeley CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Twickenham Drive Moreton Wirral, Merseyside CH46 2QF
School category	Community	Telephone number	0151 6398923
Age range of pupils	3 to 5	Fax number	0151 6398923
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair of governors	Mrs B McLennan
Number on roll	84	Headteacher	Mrs Mary Mitchell
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous inspection	30 October 2000		

Age group 3 to 5	Inspection dates 6 February 2006 - 7 February 2006	Inspection number 277269
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Introduction

This inspection examined nursery provision for children aged between 3 and 5 years only. It was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school of its type that serves a very socially and economically deprived area. The nursery school is part of a Children's Centre, which also offers childcare from birth to three years and other services, such as healthcare and basic skills, and vocational courses for adults. Children usually join the school in the term after their third birthday. Children's standards on entry are very low. The school offers either morning or afternoon sessions for most children, though a small minority of vulnerable children stay all day. Around ten percent of the children have learning difficulties and /or disabilities. There are a growing number of pupils with speech and language difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspection judgements agree with the school's overall self-evaluation that it is a good school. Parents and children have every reason to be proud. Skilled management and teaching are effective in helping children make good progress in all six areas of learning. The provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding, because they are successfully integrated into every activity. Children of all abilities work happily alongside each other. Links with other agencies are outstanding. The school makes excellent use of health and education agencies and additional funding from a range of sources for the benefit of all the children. Children are confident, caring and active learners but occasionally spend too long just sitting on the carpet during adult led activities or when eating their snacks. They move from one activity to the next independently. They know simple rules to keep themselves and each other safe and know what foods are healthy. Attendance rates are satisfactory and the school works hard with parents to improve them. Children's standards on entry are very low but because teaching is skilled children make good progress. They reach expectations for their age in personal, social and emotional development and number skills; language skills improve well but do not quite reach expectations. Satisfactory assessment arrangements guide teachers' planning but could be more effectively linked with national expectations. Governance is experienced and effective. The headteacher and senior staff have managed recent changes most capably. They have worked hard on the key issues from the last inspection and two of these, children's independence and the teaching of language skills, are now strengths. The management team show good potential for improving the school further. They are clear about the school's strengths and what else needs to be done. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Review and revise routines so that children spend as much time as possible in effective learning activities.
- Ensure that pupils' progress is checked more fully against national expectations so that, where necessary, they can be challenged to achieve even more.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's standards on entry vary widely but for a high proportion of children they are well below expectations. Many children have particularly weak language skills; for instance, some do not speak at all, whilst others use single words to express their needs. Most children walk and run with good control but few have much previous experience of using paintbrushes and drawing materials. Children make good progress from these very low starting points because they have lots of first hand experiences in a very calm and well ordered environment. Most reach the expected level for their age in personal, social and emotional development, the number aspect of mathematics and physical development. In the other areas of learning, children have difficulty

expressing their thoughts and this limits the standards they reach, despite very positive efforts by staff to support their language development. Children learn to speak in sentences and they enjoy activities that develop very early reading and writing skills. They 'touch count' accurately and some recognise the numerals to five. Children are keen to look at and examine things but have limited vocabularies with which to describe what they see or feel. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make impressive progress. They are extremely well supported by staff and other children and achieve very well in relation to their individual targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Parents are absolutely delighted with their children's personal development. One parent wrote that her quiet child is now 'bubbly and full of confidence'.

Children love coming to school. They approach new activities with great interest and curiosity and generally play together harmoniously. Children listen and follow instructions well and their behaviour is consistently good because they do their best to follow the school rules. However, pupils' self control could be a little stronger; this is one reason why the inspection judges personal development and well-being to be good rather than excellent, which was the school's view. Also, although the school works very hard to achieve good attendance, it is currently satisfactory.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They learn the wonders of life when studying 'mini beasts' and are thrilled when the bulbs they plant grow. Children feel safe in the school and know who to turn to if they need help. They know simple ways of staying safe, like not running inside the school and being careful of the step when going outside. They understand which foods are good for them, like milk, apples and carrots at snack time, and wash their hands before meal times in order to avoid disease. Children take on little responsibilities very well. They are allowed to choose games and puzzles from the shelves and know that they have to be put away after playing. They have a very positive attitude towards school that helps them prepare well for the next stage of their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The way staff interact with children encourages them to be calm, orderly and independent. Language skills are promoted well. Children enjoy painting and drawing as a prelude to handwriting skills. Children see how staff use books and most copy this well. They also know print carries meaning because staff point this out when reading stories. Staff take every opportunity to improve children's speaking skills by explaining and using new words and encouraging lengthy responses. Children feel safe and enjoy learning because they have very positive relationships with staff. Staff have developed a wonderfully bright and well resourced environment in which children can

learn. The outdoor area is used particularly well and this leads to children developing their physical skills quickly. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive extensive support from all adults. Children are also very caring of these children and encourage them to join in their play. Assessment systems are satisfactory. Staff assess children frequently, often through specially planned activities, and use the results to decide on the next stage in a child's learning. However, they do not record this information consistently in a way that allows them to check fully on children's progress against what is expected of them on the national targets. Staff are not as clear as they might be, therefore, on whether they should be challenging some children to achieve even more.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is based on the 'Stepping Stones', which is the national guidance for this age group. It meets the needs of the children because it focuses closely on their personal, social and emotional development, language development and other early learning skills. Activities are built around seasonal topics which are of interest to the children, like Christmas and summer holidays. Daily routines are followed well by staff but time is not always used effectively to allow children to learn; for example, they sometimes stay far too long on activities, including sitting on the carpet or at the snack tables. This is why the curriculum is not as strong as judged by the school. Very good use is made of the high quality outside area, part of which is covered, as children go out whatever the weather. Enrichment activities are very good. Children enjoy seeing their parents in school, for example helping with bulb planting, playing a musical instrument or talking about their job. Special events are frequently spectacular successes, like art week or the visiting theatre group. Parental involvement in some of these activities is very useful for parents to see first hand how their children learn.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All parents are at ease with the knowledge that their children are safe and well cared for; they know that keeping children safe and well is the first priority of the school. Risk assessments are carried out and health, safety and child protection procedures are in place to safeguard children and staff. This has been particularly important during the current building work and parents are pleased that the school has kept them informed of its progress. Children have helped to shape the rules of the school; they follow them closely because they are well known to them. Staff are also very adept at intervening when minor squabbles arise. Parents receive ample information about their children's progress. Staff give freely of their time to talk to parents informally as well as at pre-arranged meetings. The school's induction procedures are very thorough and preparation for primary school is good. Parents of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities feel very well informed about their children's progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff during a period of extensive change have been good. The headteacher provides high quality leadership. She knows what sort of school she wants and how the school is going to achieve these aims. By sharing her initial thoughts with colleagues she has developed a very strong team ethic. Everyone believes in, and contributes to, the development of the school. One way this has been done is through the high quality planning for development. Staff, governors and parents were consulted before it was written. Data from management's effective monitoring of the school has been used to identify its priorities. These are manageable in number and linked to the Every Child Matters agenda. It is clearly outlined how each one will be achieved.

The school is very inclusive. It has a positive reputation for working effectively with children who have speech and language difficulties and so welcomes more of these children than other nurseries. The provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is exceptionally well managed. These children are fully integrated into school life and their parents are absolutely delighted with the school. Arrangements of the highest quality help these children settle easily into their next school. The governing body are fully supportive of the school and its management. It has members who are very experienced and thus very well placed both to support the school and challenge it to improve. Governors have been instrumental in shaping the future of the school and in supporting its inclusion policies. They keep a very close oversight on financial matters.

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Inspection judgements

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	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?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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	2	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	1	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	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
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

I really enjoyed my short visit to your school. It was great fun working with you making the jigsaws and eating a meal in the 'restaurant'. You really love your school and it showed in your happy faces. You were very kind to me and nice to each other. You have a good idea of how to share and you play alongside each other very sensibly. Your parents think your school is really good and so do I. Adults work hard planning exciting things for you to do and this helps you learn. They encourage you to talk and this helps improve your skills. I understand why you like your headteacher so much. She, like all the adults, is very kind and understanding towards you all.

You are doing well in everything you learn. You can count accurately and you also know how to ride tricycles, walk and run well. Some of you made some really good Chinese characters on the electronic whiteboard and everyone had a try at tasting Chinese food. You all try hard when talking to friends or adults but some find this difficult. It was great to see how interested you were in everything around you.

Your school wants to be even better so I have asked your headteacher to look at two things. I want the adults to keep the amount of time you sit on the carpet or at the snack table as short as possible, so that you can spend more time learning. Also, I want adults to find out what you know in an easier way.

It is really good that you feel safe in school. You like running outside and understand that fruit and vegetables will keep you healthy. You are very good at tidying away and other jobs teachers ask you to do. I was really happy to see that you treat everyone in the same way.

I had a terrific time in your school. Thank you to all the children who played with me or talked to me at lunchtime and a very big thank you to the staff for making me so welcome.