



Parklands Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121788
LEA Northamptonshire
Inspection number 281100
Inspection dates 3 May 2006 to 3 May 2006
Reporting inspector Brian Holmes AI

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Spinney Hill Road
School category	Maintained		Northampton
Age range of pupils	3 to 4		Northamptonshire NN3 6DW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01604 642118
Number on roll	68	Fax number	01604 642118
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Sandie Bamford
Date of previous inspection	15 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Brooking

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small nursery school, situated in the Parklands area of Northampton. Most of the children come from the surrounding area and attend part-time, although a small number of children attend full-time. There are very few children from minority ethnic backgrounds and a few children with learning difficulties. Attainment on entry to the school is slightly above the level expected for children of this age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, with outstanding features, that provides good value for money. Inspectors agree with the nursery's own view that it provides a good standard of education and has outstanding features in personal development and well-being, the curriculum and other activities, and provision for children's care, support and guidance. The school's self-review procedures are good. The clear self-evaluation means that the school knows itself well.

Children enjoy coming to the nursery and make good progress in all the areas of learning because of the good provision. They achieve well and attain higher standards than normally expected by the time they leave the nursery. The core aim of the school is to focus on children's personal development and well-being, which it does very successfully. A good quality of teaching and learning contributes to children's achievements, although the school has recognised the need to further improve children's opportunities to investigate and solve problems through the development of the garden as an outdoor classroom.

The school is led and managed well and the headteacher has a very clear vision for the further improvement. The school works very well in partnership with parents and other groups in the community and recognises the potential to develop further links with other groups by effective use of its family room facility. All of the issues raised in the previous inspection have been effectively addressed and the school is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to develop children's skills in investigation and problem solving through the enhanced use of the garden.
- Develop further the use of the new family room to involve parents and the community even more in the work of the nursery.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The children enter school with levels that are slightly above average, particularly in personal and social development, speaking and listening, creative development and physical development. The good quality of teaching and learning and outstanding curriculum provision ensures that they make good progress and achieve well in all the areas of learning. In personal and social development they make very good progress. This is because of the strong emphasis staff place upon helping children to settle in happily and to develop their independence and confidence as learners. Consequently, their standards of attainment are above average in early reading and writing and knowledge and understanding of the world by the time they leave the nursery. In personal and social development, speaking and listening, creative development and physical development, children's standards of attainment are well above average. This is because of the effectiveness of staff in supporting these areas of learning, particularly

in developing children's vocabulary and encouraging them to speak in full sentences and phrases.

There is no evidence of significant variations in achievement between different groups of children. Children with learning difficulties are well supported and make good progress. Children from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as the others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their very good progress in this area is firmly based on the staff's commitment to providing for children's all-round development. Thus, children make outstanding strides in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is shown by their wide-eyed wonder at the behaviour of the new-born chicks and the visit of a passing ladybird. It is seen in the happy relationships and co-operation between friends, in children's awareness of right and wrong and in their appreciation of the art and culture of a wide range of traditions.

Children enjoy school and this is reflected in their regular attendance. They are keen to get involved in activities at the start of each session. They show great independence and confidence in their chosen tasks, traits that will help them in later life. Children respond positively to the respect shown to them by staff and behave well. They are aware of the need to stay safe and healthy and handle hammers and saws carefully, for example. They enjoy playing out in the fresh air of the garden and appreciate the healthy snacks provided for them. They are expected to make a positive contribution to the work of the nursery by tidying up at the end of sessions and they undertake this sensibly. The focus on children's independence and their achievement in early reading contribute well towards preparing children for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Staff plan sessions very thoroughly to include a lot of stimulating activities that enable children to make good progress. There is a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led work. The very good relationships with children and good use of learning support assistants enhance children's learning well. This was seen where children were learning to program floor robots to follow a route and playing card games to learn about mathematical shapes and their properties. A strength in some lessons is the way that staff engage the children well, using specific vocabulary to model language and develop children's understanding. They use a wide range of questioning to challenge and develop their thinking. A good example of this was when children were investigating chickens that had hatched in the nursery the week before.

Planning for a wide range of activities to meet children's needs, using both the indoor area and outdoor garden, is a key feature of the good teaching in the school. The school itself has recognised the need to plan further opportunities for children to develop their skills of investigation and problem-solving through enhanced use of the outdoor garden. Children's progress is assessed regularly and the outcomes of these observations and assessments are used to inform planning and children's learning on a daily basis, as well as contributing to on-going records of children's achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The range of activities and play opportunities that children experience is outstanding. Children are free to select their own starting points and, with the support of staff, engage in experiences that encompass all six areas of learning. Children learn about staying healthy and safe through preparing their own snacks and engaging in physical exercise, such as the popular weekly dance sessions. Children make full use of the inside space and the garden and are learning about the importance and significance of information and communication technology, through their use of the digital cameras, for example. Day-to-day activities are enhanced by visitors and visits, such as a recent trip to the train station. Recent curriculum developments have evolved from the staff's visit to the Reggio Emilia area of Italy, which led to the introduction of enhanced creative activities that challenge children's thinking.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This area of the school's work is outstanding. All staff hold the needs of the individual child in mind in their interactions with both children and parents. The guidance and support provided is based on the day-to-day needs of individual children. Children's progress in learning is carefully checked, with frequent meetings between staff to discuss their observations. Each child is assigned to a 'key worker,' who collates the information gathered about how well children are doing. Nursery nurses and teachers take an equal role in this responsibility, with the nursery nurses making an outstanding contribution. There are very good arrangements for helping new children to settle in. Last year the children helped to contribute to this by making an introductory booklet for new children with pictures and phrases about the nursery in their own words.

Due care is taken to make sure that children are safeguarded and healthy at nursery. All staff are familiar with child protection procedures. Regular checks are made of the building and garden for any hazards and due action is taken when necessary to maintain children's safety.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher has an extremely clear vision for the direction of the school based on core ideas of focusing on all children's personal

development and well-being, developing their independence and confidence as learners and providing a curriculum that meets their individual needs. Her inclusive approach to management has resulted in a school where children thrive through very effective contributions to school development by staff and governors, particularly from the two nursery nurses.

Morale is high and the nursery runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis, resulting in a very good climate for learning where every child is seen as important. Parents are very supportive of the nursery and the school has good links with them. At present, however, the family room is not used as well as it might be to enhance the partnership with parents and other groups in the community.

The school knows itself well. Inspectors find that the judgements the school makes about itself are accurate and based on good evidence. The monitoring and evaluation of school performance is an ongoing activity, ranging from the effective school development plan to the day-to-day evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching and learning and its impact on children's achievement. The governing body is supportive of the school. Governors are fully involved in the school and give good support. Through the committee structure and the monitoring they undertake, they effectively hold the school to account for its actions. The school has effectively addressed the key issues identified at the time of the previous inspection and has a good capacity for further improvement.

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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?	2	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	2	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	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	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?	1	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	1	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	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	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

Dear Children

We enjoyed our visit to your nursery a lot and especially liked meeting you and Desmond. We know your Mums and Dads think the nursery is really good and we agree. We think that your nursery is a good one, with some wonderful bits.

These are the things that we really liked:

- you have settled really well into nursery
- you learn to do a lot of things for yourselves
- you enjoy nursery and like all the interesting things there are for you to do
- you are friendly to each other and the grown-ups, and you behave well
- all the grown-ups work hard to help you learn as much as you can.

We think that you are very lucky to have so many interesting things to do. We loved looking at the chicks and the ladybird. The staff are working really hard with you all to make the nursery a better place.

We have asked Mrs. Brooking and the other grown-ups to do some things to make Parklands Nursery even better:

- plan some special investigations in the outdoor garden
- help your parents and other grown-ups to use the family room more.

Best wishes,

Brian Holmes Lead inspector