

Rye Park Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117072
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE
Inspection number	290712
Inspection date	18 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Neil Harvey
Headteacher	Mrs Kim Frazer
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001
School address	Walton Road Hoddesdon Hertfordshire EN11 0LN
Telephone number	01992462820
Fax number	01992 303707

Age group	3-4
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Rye Park is an above average sized nursery school. All of the children attend part-time. They spend between three and five terms at the Nursery depending on when they were born. A majority of parents take advantage of the care facilities that enable children to have lunch and care for the part of the school day when they are not attending nursery. The daycare is currently for 46 weeks of the year. The school offers a number of other children's services. In association with a wide range of education, health, social care and community providers, many parenting courses and networks are facilitated and co-ordinated by the school. In addition and in partnership with a local secondary school, the school provides a Diploma in Childcare and Education for local sixth form students. There are also 5 carer and toddler groups.

Children come from all areas of the borough of Broxbourne and beyond. Almost all the children are from White British backgrounds. There are two children who are at an early stage of learning English. The socio-economic background of families is diverse. The number with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average. Attainment on entry is wide ranging and, although at expected levels overall, there is a particularly high proportion of children with delay in communication and language skills.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Rye Park is an outstanding school that provides an excellent education for the children and outstanding value for money. The excellent staff team has been developed under the exemplary and dynamic leadership of the headteacher. Children achieve outstandingly well and attain standards that are well above expected levels because of the highly effective provision that they receive. The carefully planned and rich curriculum provides a wide range of stimulating activities that excites and enthuse the children. The school is rightly keen to develop the space for outdoor learning and, in particular, provide additional shade and cover during hot or wet weather.

Personal development is outstanding due to the exceptional level of care, guidance and support provided for each child. They acquire excellent attitudes to learning and to each other. They are given a plethora of opportunities to become independent learners by making choices and selecting materials and activities. Children show a remarkable understanding of being healthy and they thrive in the safe and secure environment. Parents are unanimously supportive of every aspect of the school. Many parents wrote fulsome comments about how the school has transformed their children's lives. Typical of the comments was one parent who wrote: 'It is a wonderful Nursery! So much on offer for children and their carers; the staff are all brilliant. Its obvious everyone is happy in their work, are a great team and it filters all the way through.' Above all, the school engenders in the children great respect for themselves and others. Children enjoy taking responsibility such as helping with biscuits and distributing drinks at snack time. The school prepares children for primary school exceptionally well, particularly for those that have learning difficulties or disabilities. All these children have transition plans and Reception teachers join the children in the Nursery to prepare them for transfer.

Lessons are planned exceptionally well. The needs of all children are taken into account. The many children that have delays in their communication skills are particularly well catered for because staff provide a myriad of opportunities for children to listen and talk with them. They question children particularly well, demanding extended responses and this too helps to engage the children's interest. In addition, the children's responses provide a rich source for staff to assess the children's future needs. The high quality teaching and learning is under-pinned by a thorough knowledge of how children learn.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. As one parent suggested, 'The head is an inspirational leader who promotes positive relationships with families and staff.' There are excellent systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of the school's work and the school is at the forefront of a Hertfordshire initiative to make more use of data to check children's progress. Children's progress is tracked exceptionally well. Governors are fully involved and monitor the work of the school thoroughly and regularly. There have been significant improvements in provision and children's achievements since the previous inspection. Taken together with the many successful opportunities and the provision for families that have been introduced since that time demonstrate the outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Expand provision for outdoor learning and provide cover and shade in line with current plans.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children achieve outstandingly well and attain well above expected standards. The full range of skills and abilities is represented in the intake and although overall attainment on entry is at expected levels, children's communication and language skills are below those normally expected. Their progress is excellent because the curriculum is exceptionally well tailored to their particular needs and because teaching is of outstanding quality. This means that they learn rapidly and make great strides towards the expected goals for children aged five. By the time that they leave the Nursery, a small minority reach the early learning goals expected at the end of Reception year. Children who have learning difficulties or disabilities make particularly good progress towards their targets because the learning arrangements for them are very thorough and carefully planned. The rich curriculum for supporting the development of all children's language and speaking and listening enables the few children that are at an early stage of learning English also to make rapid progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development is outstanding and one of the key strengths of the school. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is nurtured very well by the many opportunities throughout the day to wonder at the world around them. They make rapid progress. In an excellent role-play session, for example, children were performing at the 'Rye Park Talent Show'; even the youngest children wanted to stand and perform on the raised stage. Children delighted in each others' performances. They applauded spontaneously and showed exceptional personal and social skills. Behaviour is exemplary: children are confident and secure and have a good appreciation of the routines of the Nursery. During snack time, children were able to identify the benefits of drinking milk, 'It makes my bones healthy' said one child, and water 'Its food for my brain,' said another. Children's love of the school is reflected in their good attendance. One parent said 'My child wants to go to Nursery on Saturdays and during holidays.' She went on to explain that the children are fully ready for their move to primary school, even though parents regret them leaving!

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Lessons are of high quality. The children benefit from the skills of experienced staff, complemented by newly qualified practitioners. The one common feature is the quality of their teaching. Learning is exceptionally well organised and there is clarity about what is expected of the children in each session. The outside area is used well, though the limited amount of cover means that during extended periods of inclement weather, opportunities for learning outside are limited. Nonetheless, the space is used well to promote the children's physical development in particular although other areas of learning are also included effectively. For example, children were playing in sand and the teacher used questioning well to extend children's counting and thinking skills. Assessments of children's learning are excellent and used particularly well to both note children's progress and to plan future sessions. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities and those that are at an early stage of learning

English are taught very effectively. They have carefully planned programmes that help them to achieve their targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is of high quality. Children are provided with a wide range of excellent activities that capture their interest and they are particularly well-matched to their needs. Much use is made of music and visual aids to support learning. For example, children delighted in painting to the rhythms and sounds of 'The flight of the bumble bee.' They thoroughly enjoy using the interactive whiteboards found throughout the nursery. These are complemented by a good range of programs that support the pupils' development across many areas of learning. There is a good balance in each session between small group times that are led by adults and activity sessions when children can choose for themselves.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support provided are outstanding. All current regulations for safeguarding and protecting children are met. Particular care is taken to ensure that any potential risks are reduced when children make visits away from the Nursery. Because the staff know the children so well, and meet together to check progress and needs, they have a pin-point knowledge of each child's development. Great care is taken to ensure that activities are planned to meet these needs. In addition, the headteacher carries out a careful analysis of the entry assessments undertaken on each term's cohort of children. This then enables staff to plan with whole groups in mind. For example, staff noted that the listening skills of children entering at Easter were particularly weak. As a result, they planned additional activities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

One parent wrote, 'The headteacher is someone who strives for excellence.' In doing this she both reflected what many parents said and captured the essence of the leadership of the headteacher. This is characterised by very high expectations of staff and strong and close teamwork in a very complex organisation. Apart from the headteacher, there is only one full-time member of staff in the Nursery out of 12 staff. This is turned to advantage as it provides more opportunities for expertise, skills and teamwork to be secured. In addition, there are other staff that provide for the pre-school and training facilities. All staff have responsibility for different areas of learning. They grasp these duties with relish and check provision and progress well. The leadership team, which is complemented by the pre-school/day care manager and training coordinator, is particularly effective and provides a clear direction for the school and for its continuing improvement. As well as being a partner school with University of Hertfordshire for the training of teachers, the school benefits from a wide range of partnerships with other schools. There are also close partnerships with many health providers who use the school's facilities for their work. All these contribute well to supporting children's and families' achievement and well-being.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

27 June 2007

Dear Children

Rye Park Nursery School, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, EN11 0LN.

I really enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you very much for the friendly way you welcomed me. Even the youngest of you were happy to talk with me. Your parents told me that you love coming to school and that you feel safe and well cared for. I am not surprised. You go to an outstanding school and you make excellent progress in your learning. The adults give you lots of exciting activities to do and make sure that you enjoy each minute of the day. All the staff do a wonderful job, and your headteacher, Mrs Frazer, is brilliant. She makes sure that you all work and play together in a very friendly way and she makes the school successful.

There isn't much cover outside for you to play when it is raining or the sun is hot but the staff are trying to change this so I hope that you will soon have a bigger cover and more things to do outside.

Thank you once again for making me so welcome.

With very best wishes for your future

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector