



Peartree Way Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117080
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 290715
Inspection dates 28 June 2006 to 28 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Jackie Cousins AI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Peartree Way
School category	Maintained		SG2 9EA
Age range of pupils	3 to 5		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01438 353897
Number on roll	81	Fax number	01438 351073
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs. Bridy Speller
Date of previous inspection	25 February 2002	Headteacher	Mrs. Rosemary Alexander

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 5	28 June 2006 - 28 June 2006	290715

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector had discussions with the acting headteacher, new headteacher, staff, children, parents and a governor. A range of documentation was analysed and the school's self-evaluation document was evaluated. Classrooms were visited and children were observed at work and play inside and outside the building.

Description of the school

This is an average sized nursery school in Stevenage. It serves a stable community, with an above average proportion of children who are eligible for free school meals. Nearly one-third of children have learning difficulties. No children are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. A few children are from travelling communities or are looked after by the local authority. When children start at the school their levels of knowledge and understanding especially in language, literacy and communication and numeracy skills are significantly below those expected for three year-olds. At the time of the inspection the positions of headteacher and chairman of the governors were held on a temporary basis.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Peartree Way Nursery School has rightly had a good reputation in the area for many years and is an effective place for children to learn. The acting headteacher and senior teacher have maintained a good quality of education through a period of staffing change. The school has appointed a new headteacher for September and she is already working with the school. The acting headteacher and staff are very committed to the school and children, and have provided good support for each other during a rather unsettled year. Children from all backgrounds are welcomed and are effectively integrated into school life because of strong leadership from all staff. Leaders of curriculum areas such as language, literacy and communication and mathematical development have worked well to develop these areas of learning. Effective leadership from the headteacher and senior teacher mean the school is always looking for ways to improve. The school development plan is a good management tool but it could be presented more clearly to identify the key areas for improvement. Governors fulfil their roles satisfactorily. The acting chair of governors knows the strengths of the school and areas for development. However, many other governors are new and few are fully involved in checking children's standards and achievements. The secret of the school's success is the particularly good partnership which is in place between the parents, the headteacher and staff. Parents feel that the school is particularly good for many reasons. One parent said, 'The staff are very approachable and you can always speak to them if you need to.' Parents are welcomed into the school at the start of the day which helps most children to settle quickly. They also come in to change children's library books or borrow from a wide range of games packs to enjoy at home with their children. This term, meetings have been re-established for parents to discuss more formally their children's progress. Children really enjoy school. This is because of the effective care, support and guidance that they receive from staff and teachers. All staff share the belief that children learn best where they feel comfortable. Because pastoral care is very good, the children feel safe, relaxed and ready to learn. All required legal checks are carried out on staff and the building, ensuring children are safe. Children with learning difficulties get the right help from staff and make good progress socially and in their reading, writing and mathematical development. Staff have a very positive approach when talking with children generally and this helps build good self-esteem. However, when they talk to children about their work they do not consistently tell them what they have done well or how their work could be improved. This means that children do not always have as much guidance as they could to develop their key skills in language, literacy and numeracy. Children make good progress from low levels of knowledge and understanding in language, communication and literacy and mathematical skills. By the time they leave, standards are only slightly below average. They make good progress in developing their social skills and are well prepared for their next school. The key to this progress is the very effective way that staff use their time. The morning and afternoon sessions start with more formal teacher-led activities which focus effectively on the development of basic skills. Later, children choose the activities for themselves which helps develop their independence well. The staff carefully assess the children's levels of knowledge and understanding when they

start and make further regular assessments in all areas of learning. They check and evaluate children's progress well and the information gathered is used effectively to identify gaps in the children's learning. For example, when children start, their understanding of shape, space and measurement is insecure. The staff provide many good quality opportunities to develop their knowledge in this area. As a result, the children who are going on to the infant school next term have levels of understanding in this area which are in line with those expected for four year-olds. Children concentrate well in group sessions because of good quality teaching and learning. Staff capture children's interests and use resources well. In a good lesson observed, model animals were used to develop children's counting skills as they compared how many legs a man and an elephant have. Staff use questioning well to help children learn. For instance, one teacher asked children, 'Why are they different?' This allowed children to think deeply and explain their thinking orally when comparing objects. Children's observation skills are also developed well through the many well constructed activities such as using a magnifying glass to study small creatures in the outside play area. Joint planning by staff each week ensures consistency and coherence. They display information about what the children

which found no major areas for development. The smaller issues for attention have all been addressed well. Staff reflect on their own practices effectively. Many teachers and nursery nurses undertake further training and so develop their self-evaluation and teaching skills. For example, one member of staff has been on a course for children's language development and has reviewed her own practice well so that she can improve the ways this area of learning is taught. This school is not complacent and is effectively looking for ways to improve the quality of children's learning. Therefore, it is likely to continue to make improvements and has a good capacity to improve in the future.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

This information can be found in the Overall Effectiveness of the school section.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This information can be found in the Overall Effectiveness of the school section.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

This information can be found in the Overall Effectiveness of the school section.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

This information can be found in the Overall Effectiveness of the school section.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This information can be found in the Overall Effectiveness of the school section.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

This information can be found in the Overall Effectiveness of the school section.

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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	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?	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

The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA

The quality of education

How effective is the provision of education in meeting the learners' needs?		
How well do the school's curriculum, teaching and assessment meet the learners' needs and interests?		
How well are learners challenged and supported to progress?		

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally high; 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	3	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

Thank you for helping me find out about your school. I enjoyed watching lessons and talking to you. It was interesting to talk to your teachers. You are lucky to go to such a happy and friendly school. These are the things I think are especially good about your school: - Your teachers and teaching assistants care for you well and teach you how to stay safe and healthy - Your behaviour is good and nearly all of you enjoy school - Your teachers have good ideas about ways to improve the school - You are learning really well to read, speak, write and count - Teachers work hard to make lessons interesting - Your teachers plan really exciting and well thought out activities for both inside and outside. I have suggested a few things to help your teachers make things even better. The most important is for them to explain more carefully what you have done well and could do to improve your work. That way they can help you do even better. Keep up the wonderful work at Peartree Way Nursery School.