

# Peartree Way Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117080
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326519
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 June –1 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Pangbourne

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	85
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	33
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Bridy Speller
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Penelope Allingham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 June 2006
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Peartree Way Stevenage Hertfordshire SG2 9EA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01438 353897
<b>Fax number</b>	01438 351073

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<b>Age group</b>	3–4
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

## Description of the school

This is an average-size nursery school providing for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most children come from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language. When children join the nursery, most are at a very early stage of development, particularly in personal and social development and speaking and listening skills. Their skills and knowledge are significantly lower than is usual for children of this age, although this is not the case for all children. A high proportion of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Many need specific speech and language support and the nursery employs a speech therapist to work with children. Many children join or leave the nursery at short notice. An above average proportion of children are eligible for free school meals.

Peardrops day care, which includes a lunch club, is available from 08.30 until 17.30 for children who attend the nursery sessions and caters for children from three to four years of age. The governing body manages this provision and it was included as part of this inspection. The nursery works in partnership with the Shephall Children's Centre.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding nursery school. Parents are delighted with it. Typical of many, one wrote, 'The staff are all extremely welcoming and make all members of the family feel very welcome. I could not have chosen a better nursery.' The children enjoy every moment, eager to come in to see what exciting activities are offered.

Fundamental to the nursery's success is the outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher, who is extremely well supported by her staff. They fulfil their management roles very well, sharing expertise and constantly looking to improve provision for the children. There is a very strong sense of teamwork. This also extends to the governors, who fulfil their role well.

Children's achievement is excellent. Many children start nursery with very low skills, particularly in language and social development. By the time they leave, their skills and knowledge are better than those usually found for children of their age in several areas of learning. The nursery is skilled in identifying vulnerable children or those who require additional support and quickly puts in programmes to help them, such as speech therapy.

Several factors help children to do so well. Many attend the high-quality Peardrops day care before or after their nursery session. Shared values and expectations mean that children develop their skills extremely well. The nursery shows a very strong commitment to working with parents and works extremely well with them so they are better able to support their children's learning. Parents value this greatly. Children are helped to learn and develop outstandingly well. Staff work very closely together, focusing on the children's needs and interests. The quality of teaching is excellent. Staff are skilled in using questions to challenge the children's thinking. They take every opportunity to develop language skills and have very high expectations. The extensive outdoor area provides a wealth of opportunities for learning in an exciting and interesting way across all six areas of learning. Topics are based around the children's interests and include an excellent range of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum. Children are keen to learn and their behaviour is excellent. Every child is valued and their welfare is promoted exceptionally well. This contributes very positively to their outstanding personal development. Children have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy, particularly when tasting foods. They make an excellent contribution to the community through growing sunflowers to raise funds for play equipment and through charity walks.

Procedures for checking and tracking children's progress are well established. Children have their own targets, based on thorough assessment, which are shared with parents. Adults talk to children about what they have learned during an activity and help them to know how to improve it next time. The nursery is constantly looking for ways to improve the recording of its information about the children and comprehensive records are maintained. These enable staff to have a good view of children's progress and development across all areas of learning. Day care staff also record effectively what children know and can do. However, the nursery has rightly identified that these assessments are not yet fully integrated into the nursery's assessments. Consequently, staff across the whole setting, whilst having a good view of children's achievements from the respective assessments made in the nursery and day care setting, do not always have as full a view as they might. The very effective leadership and the outstanding teaching shows that the nursery is in an excellent position to continue to improve in the future.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen the systems to share information between the day care and the nursery to give all staff a clearer view of what children know and need to learn next.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

When children start nursery their skills are well below what is expected for their age, particularly in social and language skills. They quickly settle into daily routines and make huge strides in developing their social skills, rapidly becoming independent learners and showing good levels of concentration. Those who find it hard to learn and the very few who speak English as an additional language are very well integrated and supported so that they can make excellent progress. By the time children leave nursery, their skills are better than most children of their age in their personal and social development, physical development, creative development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Their reading, writing, speaking and listening, and mathematical development is broadly as expected for their age. This represents outstanding progress from their starting points and their achievement is excellent.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Children are taught to respect others and understand their feelings. Consequently, they show an excellent understanding of right and wrong and their behaviour is outstanding. Children play happily together and share resources. Their understanding of other cultures develops well through celebrations such as Chinese New Year and through tasting Turkish foods. Children have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. They know they must wash their hands before eating and after touching a snakeskin. Children remind each other to wear a hat when playing outside because they know it is important. They are proud of the fruit and vegetables they are growing and are eager for the strawberries to be ripe enough to eat! Their enjoyment at being helper of the day, taking responsibility willingly for tidying resources is excellent. Children thoroughly enjoy coming to school. Their attendance is good. The strong emphasis on promoting early language, mathematical and computer skills, together with well-developed social skills means that children have an excellent foundation for their future learning.

## Quality of provision

### Effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development

#### Grade: 1

The excellent quality of teaching is one of the main reasons why children make such excellent progress. Staff have very good relationships with the children and are consistent in their expectations. Similarly exciting activities are planned for all groups both morning and afternoon. This ensures excellent consistency across the nursery. There is a very strong emphasis on developing children's language and social skills. This has a positive impact both on children's behaviour and on their achievement. Staff use questions extremely well to challenge children to think. 'I wonder what would happen if...' is regularly heard throughout the nursery. Every opportunity is taken to develop children's skills across all the areas of learning in an enjoyable

way. For example, children voted for their favourite story by placing counters on books and totalling them up.

The excellent curriculum provides a clear structure for teaching in all the areas of learning. There is an outstanding balance between adult-directed and child-initiated activities in the vibrant environment, both indoors and outside. Activities are based around children's interests and staff often pick up on a child's comment to extend learning for all. There are ample opportunities for children to find out for themselves. For example, children showed their curiosity when looking at a snakeskin, brought in by a child, through a digital microscope. The exciting outdoor area provides endless opportunities for learning. Children can build a wall in the sandpit using the sand as mortar, curl up with a cuddly tiger in the covered book corner or develop their physical skills through climbing, pedalling and balancing. Visits and visitors also enhance children's experiences.

Very thorough assessment and record keeping ensures that children are given activities that are at the right level for them. Staff regularly make observations about children and these are recorded in their 'learning journeys'. Although staff in the day care also make observations these are not always fully integrated into the nursery's records to give an even wider picture of what each child has achieved.

## **Effectiveness in promoting children's welfare**

### **Grade: 1**

Children's happiness and welfare are promoted extremely effectively. Every child is valued and nurtured. All safeguarding policies and procedures are of a high standard and meet requirements. Ensuring children's health and well being are paramount with letters going to parents to keep them informed of health issues such as a chicken pox outbreak. The children themselves are taught to keep safe at all times. The key worker scheme is well established and the children know who to turn to if they have a problem. This also extends to parents who are welcomed into the nursery at the beginning and end of each session. Many parents speak highly of the support they receive from the nursery to help them with their children. The nursery is very flexible if parents need to change their child's session or to access the day care. This ensures that parents' needs are met and, therefore, enables them to better support their child's learning. Individualised programmes are devised for those who need speech therapy and for those who find it hard to learn.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The headteacher provides very strong leadership for both the day care and the nursery. Both she and the senior teacher have a very clear view of the school through their regular monitoring. She is supported extremely well by her staff who work very effectively as a team, sharing responsibility for the areas of learning. The governors support the school well and are confident to ask challenging questions. Despite the quick turnaround of some parent governors because their child is only in nursery for a year, there is a strong nucleus of governors who fulfil their roles very well and quickly include and involve new governors, encouraging them to visit more frequently. The community is at the heart of all the nursery does and consequently, community cohesion is excellent. It helps children gain an excellent understanding of different beliefs and customs both in the local community and across the world. There are excellent links with the

local children's centre, the many pre-schools which feed into the nursery and the infant school to which most children transfer.

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## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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**Overall effectiveness**

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do children in the EYFS achieve?</b>	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/or disabilities make progress	1

**Personal development and well-being**

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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**

<b>How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?</b>	1
<b>How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?</b>	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	2
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

**Annex B**

**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

2 July 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Peartree Way Nursery School, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG2 9EA

I have asked Mrs Allingham to read this to you. I expect you saw me in your lovely nursery recently. Thank you for talking to me and showing me what you were doing. I would like to tell you what I found out.

You are all very good children and you all played very nicely together. You have some lovely toys to play with and help you learn. You have a super garden to play in and I enjoyed watching you having such fun. It was good to see how interested you were in hearing about Turkey and trying some Turkish food. You know how important it is to keep safe in the sun and when to wash your hands. All the grown ups look after you extremely well and help you learn about new things. You do better than many children of your age because you are given activities that are just right for you. Mrs Allingham and the governors make sure that your nursery is a lovely place to be. Your families know that you go to an excellent nursery school.

I have asked Mrs Allingham to make sure that all the grown ups share everything that they know about you so that everyone knows what you can do. You can help by carrying on working as hard as you do now.

I hope you carry on enjoying your time at Peartree Way Nursery School and do well in your next school.

Best wishes

Alison Pangbourne

Lead inspector