

# Ashgate Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112479
<b>Local Authority</b>	City of Derby LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	302142
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sue Hall

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	62
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Philip Lucas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sharron Colton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 January 2000
<b>School address</b>	18 Stepping Lane Derby Derbyshire DE1 1GJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01332 371769
<b>Fax number</b>	01332 371769

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a small nursery school in a mixed area of Derby where there are pockets of deprivation. The school has recently been fully refurbished and is part of a newly established children's centre. More children are eligible for free school meals than is the average. Most children are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is average. The school has attained the Investors in People award.

## 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 which enables the children to make a happy and purposeful start to their learning. Carers are pleased with the quality of education and support provided and one notes 'Ashgate Nursery offers me as a parent everything I could wish for my children; a clean, safe and inspiring environment, coupled with dedicated staff who work together with parents to help all children achieve their potential.'

Children enter the nursery with widely varying skills, knowledge and understanding that overall are below the expectations for their age. Many children have restricted early communication skills and their mathematical understanding is below expectations. Similarly their knowledge and understanding of the world is limited and several have little experience of life beyond their local area. Personal and social skills and physical development are close to the expectations for their age. During their three, four or five terms in nursery, children make good progress. They achieve well, especially in their personal development, although many make less progress in developing their speaking skills. When they transfer to the next stage of their education, standards are close to the expectations for their age. Boys and girls do equally well. Those with learning difficulties make good progress because of the effective support they receive. The small number speaking English as an additional language often make rapid strides in learning English and make good progress overall.

The personal development of the children is excellent. Their enjoyment of the range of activities is outstanding. Children like helping others, which enables them to grow in confidence, become part of the school community and prepare very well for their future. Children have an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and really enjoy active outdoor play and their healthy snacks. Behaviour is generally good and most learn how to keep safe, although at times their play is too boisterous.

Teaching and learning are good. A real strength is that staff provide endless opportunities for children to make choices in their learning alongside adult directed activities. However, staff miss opportunities to model and repeat key words to help children develop a wider vocabulary. The curriculum is good, with some outstanding features. It is carefully planned with a very good focus on learning through play and first hand experience. The care, guidance and support of children are also good and their pastoral care is excellent. Staff liaise very well with parents and carers and quickly recognise when children may need a bit more care and support. There are extensive arrangements to check and track the progress made. However, the system to manage such information is not fully effective and does not make it easy to track the progress children make.

Leadership and management are good and staff work well as a team. The headteacher has a good overview of all aspects of the work of the nursery. School improvement planning is well focussed on continually raising standards. Governors have worked hard to support the school and help lead it through the many challenges of becoming a children's centre. The school has good capacity to continue to improve and provides good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the opportunities for children to learn and use a wider key vocabulary.
- Streamline the system used to gather assessment information in order to make it easier for staff to check, track and compare the progress made.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Many families are starting to take advantage of the new facilities offered by the children's centre to help boost children's early learning. However, as yet, on entry to the nursery children's overall skills, knowledge and understanding are below expectations. This is particularly so in writing, shape, calculating and linking sounds with letters. Speaking and listening skills vary widely and are sometimes quite limited. Physical development and personal and social skills are largely average. Children of all abilities and from all backgrounds achieve well. Many make very good progress in personal and social development because they have lots of opportunities to make choices and develop independence and confidence in themselves. Children make good progress in most other areas although occasionally less so in speaking and listening. By the time they leave the nursery many are working at levels that are close to the expectations for their age and sometimes above average in their personal and social development.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

The personal development of the children is outstanding as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are excellent opportunities to develop social skills through working with individuals and groups in a wide range of practical activities. This is reflected in how they learn to share and take turns, including unprompted use of timers to check how long they have to use the equipment. Children blossom and grow in confidence because of the very good range of activities where they make choices in their learning. Children's enjoyment is excellent. They particularly like the opportunities to play and work outside. Many are keen to help staff by getting out and putting away resources. This growing sense of responsibility helps them contribute well to the school community and prepare well for their future. Most learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe especially when playing with the wheeled toys, although at times some become excitable, which causes safety concerns. Attendance is good.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are effective and enable children to make good progress. A strength is how staff provide a very wide range of opportunities for children to make choices. As one parent notes 'I have nothing but praise for the way the teachers allow the children to choose their activity but are also steered in a positive way to try new things.' This motivates children well. Staff manage children positively and have good expectations of what they can achieve. Temporary teachers and senior nursery staff are enthusiastic and ensure a sense of fun is created in many activities. Overall planning is satisfactory but some details are not emphasised sufficiently. As a result, staff do not always provide enough opportunities for children to learn key words and develop a wider vocabulary.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good with excellent features, in particular the many and varied opportunities for practical activities and learning through play. Particularly effective use is made of the outside

area to develop social and physical skills. The nursery is well resourced and the good quality environment encourages children to take care of their school. Staff plan tasks around well considered themes including the current focus on the seaside. Activities such as using and sorting seaside items enable the children to learn, for example, about the properties of sand and water when they are mixed. There is a good range of visits and visitors that enrich learning. There is an appropriate focus on the development of key skills in all areas of learning, although there are not always enough planned or impromptu opportunities to practice and develop speaking skills.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care, guidance and support of children are good overall and their pastoral care is excellent. There is real warmth in relationships between adults and children. The system of a key worker focusing on the needs of a group of children is very effective. Parents are delighted with the personal care and support offered, epitomised in the recent purchase of dual language books for children to enjoy with adults including grandparents. Child protection procedures are in place and security in and around the school is a high priority. While the checks and tracking of children's progress are extensive, the information available is not always managed well and therefore it is not always easy to identify the exact progress made.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher leads the school well. She has a strong commitment to the children and their families, which is reflected in their almost unanimous praise of the quality of education provided. The staff work very well as a team and school self-evaluation is good. The recently appointed special educational needs coordinator works effectively in recognising and supporting children identified as gifted and talented and those with English as an additional language. There are appropriate procedures to monitor the work of the school although at times such work is descriptive rather than evaluative and does not always help identify the small steps needed to bring about further improvement. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have worked effectively to support the development of the children's centre. They are now keen to develop a more extensive programme of focused visits to help enable them to be in a good position to support school improvement planning.

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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	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

13 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Ashgate Nursery, Stepping Lane, Derby, DE1 1GJ

Thank you very much for looking after me when I visited your nursery recently. I really enjoyed chatting to you during activities and at lunchtime. I think that there are lots of good things about your nursery.

These are the things that I think are best:

- You really enjoy your time at nursery and have a lot of fun.
- The staff work well together as a team and expect you to behave and work hard.
- You learn a lot and make loads of progress.
- You get on well together and grow in confidence.
- Sharron does a good job of leading the staff which helps your parents like the school.

This is what I think could be improved:

- The teachers could organise what they know about your work a bit better to help find out what else you need to do.
- Staff could give you more chances to learn and use more exciting words.

Thank you again for chatting to me. Enjoy your time at nursery and all the interesting things you do there. Remember to take care when you are playing and try and make sure you come to school whenever you can.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead Inspector