

# Grace Owen Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106975
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	324500
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kath Halifax

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>	0–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	65
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	46
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Louise Seymour
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jean Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 March 2006
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Hague Row Parkhill Sheffield South Yorkshire S2 5SB
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 2722541
<b>Fax number</b>	0114 2724160

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<b>Age group</b>	0–5
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 May 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

## Description of the school

The school serves an area of high deprivation, close to the city centre. It occupies the ground floor of a 1960s block of high-rise flats. Most children attend the school 15 hours each week, though some are in receipt of full-time education. About half the children are of White British heritage. Others are of South East Asian or mixed race background, and the proportion of children from Eastern European countries is rising. Eight children speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is high. Most children have speech and language needs and a higher than usual number have behavioural needs, moderate learning difficulties, or autism. Only a very small number of children are looked after by the local authority. The school has achieved the Leading Parent Partnership Award. Children between the ages of six months and two years are taught in the Under Three class. Those between the ages of three and five are taught in the Over Three class. This inspection looked at both age groups.

The area surrounding the school is undergoing a massive regeneration programme that is scheduled to last another eight years. At the time of the inspection, 90% of the flats were empty, including the school block. A number of options have been suggested about the school's future, but no final decision has been made.

## 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 school that gives exceptional value for money for the children, their families and others in the locality. It provides an oasis in the midst of derelict buildings and re-building works and reaches out to all corners of the community. Comments such as, 'My child has blossomed and come out of his shell' and 'This nursery is giving my daughters the best start possible in life' are representative of parents' high opinion of a school where every child and adult is valued. Despite an uncertain future, the school has gone from strength to strength since the last inspection. Leaders are constantly seeking new ways to improve the quality of education and life of children and their families. They have the skill, determination and grit to maintain the high quality provision.

It is visionary, passionate leadership that is at the heart of this thriving school. Leaders have very successfully created a setting that embraces all learners. Community cohesion is outstanding and representative of 'families of the world'. As a result, children respect and value their friendships with those from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. They and their families thrive in the welcoming atmosphere. From very low skills on entry, children of all capabilities come on in leaps and bounds especially in the acquisition of language, in their social development and in their concentration. By the end of their time in nursery they are working comfortably towards the early learning goals. The notable progress is a result of high quality teaching and an inspired curriculum. For example, imaginative topics such as 'dance and mathematical opposites' have given children a very good awareness of positional language through ballroom, Eastern, and country dancing. Adults are especially skilled at promoting children's speaking and listening. New vocabulary is carefully explained and reinforced at every opportunity. Signs and pictorial symbols are used very effectively to support children's communication. Examples of the written word are more variable. While some items around the classroom are labelled, more could be done both in English and in community languages. In addition to ensuring children have a solid academic grounding, the school very successfully gives them an enchanting childhood. For example, children hugged themselves with glee as they ventured into the 'jungle' looking for snakes.

Children make excellent gains in their personal qualities because of the outstanding provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They receive tremendous care, guidance and support. The support for the most vulnerable is exemplary, enabling children to cope with significant family changes in their young lives. Attendance is satisfactory. Leaders support families exceptionally well, quickly alerting other professionals if they have concerns. In this nurturing community, children discover their strengths, and the aspirations of families are raised. For example, parents say how much the sign language and 'super nanny' behaviour management courses have changed their home lives. In addition, the classes provided by the school have set six parents on their route to university, something of which they had never dreamt. Families appreciate the 'credit union' set up by the school, commenting how this contributes a great deal to family life and their child's well-being. Links with other schools, universities, professionals and agencies contribute significantly to children's learning and well-being.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure items indoors and outdoors are labelled in English and in the languages children speak at home.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Children achieve outstandingly because their personal development and well-being are at the centre of all that goes on in the school. As a result, from very low social skills on entry, children quickly build up trusting relationships with adults and their classmates and learn at an incredible rate. Before attending the school, children have a very restricted awareness of the world beyond their families. This quickly improves as even the youngest children experience being wheeled outdoors in the playground and the woodland. Babies and toddlers are encouraged to roll, stand and stretch as appropriate for their age. As children get older, they learn to manage their own hygiene needs. Children in both age groups make the most progress in communication and language development owing to very beneficial programmes designed to extend vocabulary. Achievement is strong in all areas of learning because there are so many rich experiences to hasten progress. In particular, children's development in the creative arts, including poetry, is amazing. Achievement is first-rate irrespective of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, gender or ethnicity.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Children make the most of every minute in school. They are made to feel welcome, and the attention given to their individual needs gives even the youngest a sense of belonging. Though many have very poor social skills on entry to the nursery, they quickly come to grips with routines and confidently set about their daily voyage of discovery. Children in the Over Three class relish the responsibility of taking charge of their learning. At the start of each session children, many accompanied by their parents, plan their activities, recording them on a symbol chart. Though the activities may be challenging, they persevere and are thrilled to discuss what they have done in the review session. This prepares children exceedingly well for the next stage of their education and for life out of school. Children's behaviour is impeccable and their enthusiasm for school infectious. They make the most of every minute in school. Through the outdoor provision and sociable snack and mealtimes, they have an increasingly growing awareness of keeping healthy and safe. Children especially enjoy their bracing walks in the locality and their yoga sessions.

## **Quality of provision**

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

#### **Grade: 1**

Children make remarkable progress because teaching is first-rate and because they receive a curriculum that is tailored to their individual needs. Furthermore, adults are very knowledgeable about how young children learn. Detailed planning between all staff ensures balance in a very wide range of fun, challenging, adult-directed and child-led activities. Talented support assistants and nursery nurses play a sizeable role in children's learning. The way adults assess and record children's achievements has improved noticeably since the last inspection. Recording now takes account of the national expectations for children of this age and provides a sound base for children transferring to primary school. In addition, numerous photographs and snippets of information regarding daily activities provide parents a touching record of their child's magical moments. A further change has been in giving children more opportunities to talk by ensuring

they practise familiar phrases and talk about their activities. This has led to greater confidence and a much wider vocabulary. Adults provide some useful written labels and signs both inside and outdoors such as the rules for carpet time, and the 'builders and developers hut' but currently there are too few signs to support children's early reading. Furthermore, all the signs that are around are in English.

The imaginative, stimulating curriculum motivates and excites all children and engages them very well with learning. All the required areas of learning are very well covered both indoors and outside in both age groups. In addition, adult led groups in subjects such as music, science and French for the Over Three children provide far wider opportunities than are usual in a nursery school. The rate of learning for children with language and communication difficulties is accelerated through small group work and from the use of signs, symbols and a picture exchange communication system as appropriate. Very good use is made of the locality. For example, children made considerable gains in all areas of learning in their walk to look at local bridges. They used their observational skills well to recognise shapes and extended their understanding of positional language as they reported the 'tram bridge went over the road'. Provision for the creative arts is outstanding. Visits to the theatre and art gallery, for example, supplement work undertaken in school. Children love being in the well equipped art room, happily working in clay, with paint, or making three-dimensional models. Through the 'song of the week' and 'poem of the week', children have a far wider repertoire than is usual for their age.

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

### **Grade: 1**

All adults provide exceptional personal care, support and guidance for children and their families. The procedures to safeguard all children, including those most at risk, are known to all staff. All the welfare requirements for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Extended Services are met. All adults hold a current first aid certificate. Rigorous systems are in place for recording accidents and administering medication. Regular health and safety checks are carried out, and potential risks identified. Very good hygiene procedures were observed when dealing with food or changing nappies. A daily diary between home and school provides very effective communication for children in the Under Three class. Parents say how much they appreciate the information regarding food eaten, nappy changes and sleep patterns. They are particularly pleased with the photographs and lively descriptions of activities undertaken and milestones reached. Links with other agencies and health professionals are efficient and effective. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and given very good additional support where appropriate, enabling them to make considerable progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The pursuit of excellence coupled with the determination, passion and drive of the headteacher are major contributors to the school's effectiveness and advances. Excellent support from the deputy headteacher, particularly in the provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, has brought about a team that is always looking for next challenge. Excellent systems and attitudes ensure outstanding provision for equality and diversity. Leaders know what they do well and where continued improvement can be made. Alongside governors, they are continually striving to be the best despite the uncertainty surrounding the school's future.

Governors are skilled and fulfil their role in holding the school to account very well. They have a very perceptive overview of the school. The inclusion of past and serving headteachers of primary schools to the group ensure the school keeps abreast of all educational developments. Leaders are proud of their heritage and determined the principles and philosophy of their benefactor Grace Owen, the first national chair person of nursery education, will continue to inspire staff to maintain the very high standard of education.

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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	3
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	3
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	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

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

Inspection of Grace Owen Nursery School, Sheffield, S2 5SB

I would like to tell you about an amazing school I inspected recently. It is a very special place where all the children are happy and smiling. They skip merrily from one task to another, eager to see what exciting activities their teachers have planned for them. The children at this school are very well behaved and exceptionally well cared for. They make excellent progress in all areas of learning because of remarkable teaching and a thrilling curriculum. All this happens because this school is extremely well led and managed.

Can you guess which school I am writing about? Yes, that's right; it is Grace Owen Nursery School. I had a wonderful time during the two days I spent with you, especially when we visited the flats that are being renovated, and when we were playing in the 'jungle'.

There is just one thing that would make your school even more spectacular. Adults work very hard to give you a wide vocabulary and improve your communication by introducing you to lots of new words. Now I would like them to put more labels on things around your classrooms, in English and in the languages you speak at home. This will help your reading.

Thank you for making my short time with you so enjoyable. I am sure you will carry on helping your teachers. I wish you well.