

ISI INSPECTION REPORT 2005 (excerpt)

The Foundation Stage

- 8.1 The children in the Foundation Stage achieve very good standards in relation to their ability and make rapid progress. By the end of the Reception year, most pupils have attained all the early learning goals and have begun work on the national curriculum programmes of study.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- 8.2 Personal, social and emotional development is very good. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children have achieved the early learning goals in this area. In the Nursery, they learn to co-operate, take turns and help each other. This is strongly reinforced by the care and encouragement shown to them by the staff. Expectations of good behaviour, kindness and thoughtfulness are high. The children are supported in their activities and are given good opportunities to become independent; for example, children clear up after cooking and put toys and equipment away in the allotted storage spaces. Resources are clearly labelled and easily accessible and this promotes further independence. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are well behaved and concentrate on their activities. They listen attentively and follow instructions. They are keen to participate, take turns and co-operate. All children are taught to value each other and their teachers ensure that all have the opportunity to join in group activities. Awareness of ideas, cultures and traditions different from their own are introduced at appropriate festivals throughout the year; for example they have made some lucky money envelopes for Chinese New Year.

Communication, Language and Literacy

- 8.3 Children's attainment in communication, language and literacy is very good in relation to their abilities and they make rapid progress. Most children attain the early learning goals by the end of Reception. Throughout, most children talk confidently and listen attentively. Reception class children read well and good opportunities are given across the Foundation Stage for children to extend and develop their language skills. A story sack library further enriches this experience. In the Nursery, all activities including role-play are used well. A pet shop displayed a wide range of animals to buy, children were also eager to introduce the house of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' and to discuss the different sized bowls for the different sized bears. Pupils show sustained interest and co-operative play as well as good use of language skills in role play situations. In Reception opportunities for role-play such as 'Manor Hospital' and 'the sensory cave' again enhance the development of language and communication. Pupils re-enacted the story of Goldilocks in assembly for their parents and all the other pupils. They spoke and sang clearly and showed remarkable confidence in front of a large audience.

Mathematical Development

- 8.4 Mathematical development across the Foundation Stage is very good and, by the end of it, most children have attained all aspects of the early learning goals. Progress made is very good. In the Nursery, many opportunities for practical activities and play are provided to reinforce the children's knowledge and understanding of number and other mathematical concepts. For example, painting ducks provides counting experiences, and discussions on comparisons of the sizes of bowls the three bears might use gives appreciation of capacity. The provision for mathematical development is very good in both the Nursery and Reception. A great variety of appropriate resources and displays enhances the acquisition of mathematical skills. Careful planning ensures that the needs of children of different abilities are met. In one very good lesson, children were sorting and reasoning using geometrical shapes. All activities assist the children's knowledge of mathematical language and

their understanding. Clear explanations by the teacher enable the children to make very good progress.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- 8.5 Children across the Foundation Stage make very good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world so that, by the age of five, they attain the early learning goal and some exceed it. Well-organised activities provide opportunities for children to investigate objects and materials, explore how things work and build and construct in a variety of ways and pupils are actively encouraged to find out, explore and question. After listening to a story about footprints in the snow, Reception children were encouraged to predict the source of the prints from the shape and size of them. Very good questioning, extension of answers and reinforcement of explanations enabled all children to make good progress in their learning. Frequent use is made of outdoor areas, with many children choosing to complete allotted tasks outdoors. Visits within the local environment make a positive contribution to this area of learning.

Physical Development

- 8.6 Physical development across the Foundation Stage is very good and most pupils attain the early learning goals in this area. Many opportunities are provided for physical development and children's attainment is very good. Frequent use of the safe and secure outdoor area ensures that pupils have the opportunity to develop their gross motor skills and a good range of outdoor equipment provides varied and exciting challenges. Children are encouraged to climb, balance and roll independently and with a partner. They are aware of each other's needs and co-operate well. Enthusiastic staff, both in the Nursery and in Reception ensure that children are actively engaged throughout, thus making very good progress.

Creative Development

- 8.7 Most pupils attain the early learning goal in creative development by the end of Reception, and many exceed it. Pupils make very good progress in a range of activities throughout the Foundation Stage, including painting, printing, cutting and pasting. However opportunities for free choice are limited. Pupils' work is linked to all areas of the curriculum and is well displayed and celebrated. Reception pupils had made good textural collages and weaving samples to develop their understanding of the sense of touch. Creative development through music, movement and singing is very good. In the Nursery children are given the opportunity to sing a 'Hello' song every day and they have learned several songs related to topics they have covered. They are able to clap, stamp and hear a rhythm with the teacher when singing, listening to music and counting patterns. A very good range of percussion instruments and other musical resources supports musical learning and pupils benefit from specialist teaching.

Other Aspects of the Foundation Stage

- 8.8 The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and in many lessons it is very good. Teachers have very good knowledge of the 'stepping stones' of the early learning goals. Teaching is enthusiastic and the approach is gentle and pleasant. Support staff are well trained and deployed and make a valuable contribution to children's learning. A comprehensive screening system ensures that pupils who may have special educational needs are identified early and teachers can plan appropriately for their needs. Teachers' planning is very good and clearly indicates what children need to learn. Collaborative planning between teachers in Nursery and Reception ensures good long term coverage. Monitoring and assessment systems are thorough and photographic evidence of attainment is displayed in classrooms. The Oxfordshire Foundation Stage Profiles are used to assess attainment and inform future planning. Management of the Foundation Stage is very good. The head of the Lower School and the Foundation Stage co-ordinator monitor the curriculum and a portfolio of each pupil's work is kept as a record of achievement and progress. Written reports are

comprehensive and cover all six areas of learning. Links between parents and the school have been well established.