

Achievement and Quality in Subjects: Junior House

The Foundation Stage

- 8.1 The school provides a very caring learning environment at the Foundation Stage. Three-year-olds attend daily sessions each week on a part-time basis and four-year-olds attend full-time in one of two reception classes. The nursery is self-contained and provides excellent accommodation. The reception classrooms are located nearby in the Millennium Building with good access to a small outdoor play area. Although located in separate buildings, staff ensure the nursery and reception classes operate closely as a Foundation Stage unit, sharing many facilities.
- 8.2 Children achieve high and frequently very high standards relative to age and ability. They are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the age of five and many will be working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Progress is mostly rapid and often excellent in all six areas of learning.

Personal and Social Development

- 8.3 Pupils achieve high and often very high standards in personal, social and emotional development. They are happy, well motivated and eager to learn. They build good relationships, show consideration for each other and have growing self-esteem. Three-year-olds play harmoniously in small groups, 'baking cakes' in the nursery home corner, and four-year-olds support each other well working in pairs at the computer. Behaviour is very good, with pupils having a growing awareness of right and wrong. They persevere well in tasks and respond especially well to the excellent provision for independent learning. Pupils use initiative in selecting activities and have growing personal independence. Their spiritual and cultural development is nurtured with care and they respond well to various religious and cultural festivities. Pupils make good use of the multicultural play resources.

Language and Literacy

- 8.4 Standards of attainment are high and often very high. Pupils develop very good speaking and listening skills. They listen avidly to stories, contribute confidently in discussion and use a widening vocabulary when making up imaginative stories in role-play, as, for example, in their 'veterinary clinic'. Pupils enjoy books, handling them with care and retelling favourite stories, a result of their teachers making effective use of stories in cross-curricular work. They develop very good writing skills. Three-year-olds recognise letters by shape, name and sound and learn to write their own names. Four-year-olds develop good phonic skills, blending letter sounds in writing sentences. Handwriting skills are developed well and pupils present their work with great care. Excellent wall displays and pupils' workbooks show high quality work. Effective use is made of ICT to support learning.

Mathematics

- 8.5 Attainment is high and often very high. Mathematical language is used well; three-year-olds participate in number rhymes and four-year-olds confidently describe properties of three-dimensional shapes. Pupils respond well to number activities and counting games, using everyday objects effectively for sorting, matching and counting. Three-year-olds recognise and count numbers up to 10, and four-year-olds use numbers up to 20 and

beyond, as in recognising number patterns using a 100-number square. In practical activities, pupils have growing understanding of simple addition and subtraction in problem solving, using appropriate language, such as ‘the same as’ and ‘add one more’. Daily lessons are differentiated well with teachers using appropriate workbooks and individually-prepared number books. Excellent provision is made for independent learning, such as four-year-olds developing ideas of weight and money in the classroom ‘Post Office’. Information and communication technology is used with good effect to support learning.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- 8.6 Attainment is high and often very high. Pupils talk about past and present events in their own lives. They explore features of living things by visiting a farm to observe baby animals, planting daffodils and learning about seasonal changes. Pupils record weather observations and make good use of the school nature area. They investigate the properties of materials, as in mixing ‘cement’ as part of an excellent ‘house building’ topic. Pupils are familiar with the use of technology and confidently follow instructions on the computer. They build and construct using a variety of materials, developing skills of cutting and joining for various purposes. Pupils learn about people of different cultures and beliefs through experiences such as a visit to a Chinese restaurant.

Physical Development

- 8.7 Attainment is good overall. Pupils move confidently with increasing bodily control and co-ordination. They develop good motor-skills using large and small equipment, especially when under the guidance of a specialist teacher. Pupils make good use of the nursery’s outdoor provision, with its safe, soft-surfaced play areas and varied facilities, which are frequently shared with the reception children. Limited provision is made for developing climbing skills, however. Pupils handle tools safely, using malleable materials, and they benefit well from the good provision for developing small muscle skills.

Creative Development

- 8.8 Attainment is high and often very high. Pupils’ learning is effectively enriched with creative experiences in music, art and imaginative play. Pupils listen to music, sing tunefully and explore sound using simple percussion instruments. Sensitive use is made of background music in the nursery. Pupils explore colour, texture, shape, space and form with a variety of materials, using different techniques, such as painting, printing and weaving. They work in two- and three-dimensional form well, exploring malleable materials and creating models using recycled materials. The excellent displays reflect pupils’ enjoyment and high quality work. Provision for imaginative play is outstanding, contributing effectively to pupils’ learning.

Other Aspects of the Foundation Stage

- 8.9 Overall, the quality of learning is very good and often excellent. Pupils are eager to learn and concentrate well. They respond well to their teachers and show initiative in independent learning. Pupils show increasing self-discipline; their behaviour is very good.
- 8.10 The quality of teaching is very good and frequently excellent. Staff provide a wide range of varied, first-hand learning experiences, stimulating pupils’ interest and challenging

them well. Good individual support is given to all pupils, especially those for whom English is an additional language. Teachers organise well and base their lesson planning on detailed schemes of work. The early learning goals are broken down into easy steps, in which the objectives are clear and which are differentiated to meet pupils' individual needs. Learning through play is highly valued. Staff meet regularly to assess pupils' attainment and progress, and use the information effectively in their planning.

- 8.11 Leadership and management in the Foundation Stage are very good. The headteacher of Junior House supports early years well and the Foundation Stage is represented on the Junior House management team. Good liaison is maintained with Key Stage 1 classes, especially at the time of transition. The accommodation is attractively presented and resources are mostly very good. Staff are suitably qualified and regularly attend appropriate training opportunities. Excellent staff development has been achieved with the recent Quality Matters Accreditation being awarded at the highest level for the work in the Foundation Stage. The adult-to-pupil ratio meets the requirements for mainstream lessons. Outdoor play opportunities continue to be developed and would benefit from increased adult support. Following the Ofsted nursery inspection report of 1999, role-play provision has been improved in the reception classes.