

Knowle West Children's Centre

Inspection report

Unique reference number	134241
Local authority	Bristol
Inspection number	381645
Inspection dates	10–11 January 2012
Lead inspector	Christine Huard

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Leslie Edwards
Headteacher	Sarah Salmon
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Christine Huard

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Observations were made of a range of activities over both days. These included settling time, circle time, small-groups time and work time as well as the 'free-flow' activities taking place both in- and outdoors. Both of the teachers and three other Early Years staff assisting children in their learning were observed over a total period of three hours. Meetings were held with members of staff and the governing body. The inspector observed the nursery's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, monitoring records, assessment and tracking information as well as other documentation provided by the school. The inspector analysed the 13 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

Information about the school

The nursery class is part of the well-established Knowle West Children's Centre. There are 55 children on roll, mostly part time. The children's centre was subject to a separate inspection. The nursery has an above-average proportion of children with special educational needs. The main areas of need are speech, language and communication. While most of the children are of White British heritage, a wide range of other cultures are represented and an average proportion of children are at the very early stages of learning English as an additional language. The accommodation comprises a large classroom and an extensive outdoor area. The head of centre took up her post on 1 November 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- The nursery class provides a good education for its children. All children make good progress in their learning and for some it is outstanding. The nursery is working hard to improve the progress of the lowest-attaining children, but has not yet put in place all the specific small-group activities planned to boost the learning of these children in order to meet their age-related expectations.
- Teaching is good over time and much that was observed during the inspection was of an outstanding quality. Teachers plan carefully to build on children’s learning on both a day-to-day and a longer-term basis. Activities are planned very well to ensure they meet the needs of all children. However, there are too few opportunities identified in the excellent outdoor area to enable children to develop their counting and numeracy skills.
- Children’s behaviour is outstanding, both in the classroom and in the outdoor area. They play happily and harmoniously together, reflecting their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They listen extremely well to each other and to the adults and respond enthusiastically to questions. Staff ensure that children new to the class become aware of routines quickly and, as a result, they settle in quickly. It is clear that children feel very secure and they have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example by always walking, not running, around the classroom and taking especial care on the climbing apparatus outside.
- Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the senior leadership team is very strong. The ‘Everyone a Leader’ initiative is utilising the specific skills of all staff well in a leadership role. It is still in an early stage of development, but it demonstrates very well the dedication and commitment of staff to the centre and to driving up standards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Put in place as soon as possible the planned small-groups provision in order to build up the language skills and increase the progress of children not currently meeting age-related expectations.
- Extend and develop children’s counting and calculation skills by providing more

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planned focused activities in the outdoor area.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

When children enter the nursery, their attainment is below the levels expected for their ages. All children make good progress and many make outstanding progress so that by the time they leave most are reaching the age-related expectations in all areas of learning. However, there is still a proportion of children who are not working at the levels expected. The staff are working hard to increase the progress made by those children and close the gap in attainment. To that end, additional small-group times have been planned for those children, but have not yet been put in place so they are not getting all the benefit they could.

All children make at least good progress because staff assess how well they are doing regularly and activities meet the full range of children's needs. Those children with special educational needs benefit from additional support and education plans which ensure that tasks are provided which develop their learning well. It was clear in observed lessons that, while many activities are devised for the whole class, they are planned so that they can be adapted to provide a different level of challenge for individual children. In addition, small-group times in each session provide more individually planned activities which cater for each child's specific needs. In those sessions, staff take every opportunity to encourage children to speak and improve their language, to count, sort and also develop social and interpersonal skills.

Parents and carers who returned questionnaires and those spoken to during the course of the inspection were all very pleased with how well their children were achieving. The progress of all groups of children is tracked carefully. The Centre has been particularly successful in closing the gap between the progress made by boys and girls. That has been done by providing activities which appeal to boys particularly and which develop not only their language and numeracy skills, but also their creative and physical development and understanding of the outside world. Thus, the fire station that has been established in the classroom and the workshop outside provide very good opportunities for children to write and develop their vocabulary and speaking and listening skills. Staff know and understand the needs of all the children and are skilled at providing exactly the amount of support that is required to take them forward in their learning. A consistency of approach by all staff means that children receive the same messages about their learning constantly.

Quality of teaching

Staff use information from assessments well to ensure that all children are supported well in lessons and that activities are interesting and challenging. Their planning is meticulous and there is an excellent consistency of approach across the whole team. The staff motivate and enthuse children effectively, and it is evident that children

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enjoy their learning. Questioning skills are particularly well developed; these are not only used to challenge children's thinking, but are also used well to encourage children to reflect and think about what they are learning. Staff seize every opportunity to move children's learning forward. During an imaginary visit to the fire station, a member of staff used questions very effectively to enable children to decide what they should say to the fire brigade when they report a fire. Another prompt enabled the children to select suitable equipment. Children became totally engrossed in their role play and also gained a good understanding of cause and effect. One little boy turned in anguish to the inspector saying, 'Where's the hose? I must have the hose to put out the fire.'

Teachers ensure that activities are available to meet the developmental needs of children at a range of levels. For example, some children were using chalk to make marks on the playground outside while others were using smaller implements to write on paper. There is a good balance between activities the children choose for themselves and those led by an adult. Children are encouraged to work independently and make choices. Some were mixing cornflour and water, learning how it changes as more water or cornflour is added. They relished exploring its feel and learning how they could draw in it, but how it would quickly resume its own level.

The curriculum has a very positive impact on children's progress, particularly in communication, language and literacy. The excellent work carried out with a visiting artist is developing the creativity of both children and their parents and carers, who relish the opportunity of being able to participate in their children's learning in this way. The outdoor area has been improved greatly since the last inspection and now provides a range of stimuli and activities for the children to explore for themselves. However, although staff make every effort to promote numeracy and counting activities in the classroom, there are occasions when they miss opportunities to provide a range of activities for children to practice and develop their number and counting skills outside.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Children have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, both indoors and out. They are encouraged to take risks safely, particularly on the large adventure apparatus. Staff assess the children's degree of confidence and competence carefully on a 'red', 'amber' and 'green' scale, which means that every child receives the level of support and encouragement needed to negotiate the apparatus successfully. Children say that they feel very safe and understand the need to move around the classroom safely. One older child spotted a new entrant to the class running into the room and observed, 'He mustn't run inside, it isn't safe.'

Children's behaviour is exemplary. They listen to stories with great concentration and take turns with and listen to each other sensibly and carefully. They are very aware of rules, sanctions and routines, with the latter, in particular, of great benefit in ensuring the very smooth day-to-day running of the class. There are very few upsets

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and when these occur children demonstrate that they can use simple conflict-resolution strategies extremely effectively. There is no evidence of any bullying and parents and carers are confident that this does not occur. School documentation and discussions with parents and carers show that for some children there have been excellent improvements in behaviour over time. Parents and carers are extremely pleased with the success of the behaviour strategies used and many said that they now use the same strategies at home and that they have been extremely beneficial.

Leadership and management

The leadership of the head of centre and senior leadership team is strong. The last 18 months have seen some turbulence in the centre with a period of transition before the current head of centre took up post. During that time, the acting head and deputy pursued opportunities to improve provision relentlessly and the arrival of the new head of centre has reaffirmed the strong vision and ethos of the centre in its drive to improve. The centre's self-evaluation is accurate and significant improvement in the progress of boys and the development of the outside area demonstrate its good capacity to sustain improvement.

Leadership by middle leaders is good. The effort to establish distributed leadership is being supported well by training for staff and is being monitored carefully to ensure its effectiveness. The governing body is supportive and has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the centre. It is rigorous in ensuring that children are safe and secure and all statutory requirements regarding safeguarding and child protection are fully met.

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and ensures that all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum are covered and that activities for the children excite and motivate them. The promotion of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children are taught to be thoughtful and reflective and they have extremely good social skills and a strong sense of right and wrong. The nursery ensures that there are good opportunities for every child and that there is no discrimination. For example, the progress of all groups of children is monitored extremely carefully to ensure that boys, girls, children at an early stage of learning English and those with special educational needs all make the progress they should. As a result, all children achieve equally well. The nursery has excellent relationships with parents and carers and the work it carries out with parents, carers and families is having an extremely positive effect on the progress and learning of the children.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 January 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Knowle West Early Years Centre, Bristol BS4 1NN

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I loved seeing you so happy and enjoying all the wonderful things to do and learn. You have a good nursery with a fabulous outdoor area and I thought your outdoor climbing apparatus was wonderful. You, certainly, enjoy your time playing on it and trying to conquer the climbing wall and net.

You go to a good nursery. All the adults give you the help you need to help you learn well, but I would like to see some extra groups for those of you who find learning a little more difficult. I know these will be there for you very soon.

You behave excellently and you play very happily with each other. You help to keep yourselves safe by being so sensible, both inside the classroom and outside. All the adults look after you exceptionally well and keep you safe.

You all enjoy all the activities that are provided for you. You have a wonderful time playing outside. I have asked your teachers to give you more things to do outside that will help you to make your number and counting skills even better.

Your headteacher and other leaders keep everything running well and everyone enjoys working and learning at Knowle West because it is such a happy and well-organised place to be. I hope you continue to enjoy nursery; you can help by continuing to behave well and showing such enthusiasm for your learning.

Yours sincerely

Christine Huard
Lead inspector

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