

Croyland Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	121783
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	380317
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2012
Lead inspector	Michael Miller

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	2–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Davis
Headteacher	Christine Whelan
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2009
School address	Croyland Road Wellingborough NN8 2AX
Telephone number	01933 279681
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Email address	head@croyland-nur.northants-ecl.gov.uk

Registered childcare provision	Neighbourhood Nursery Provision
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	46
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	5 May 2009

Age group	2–4
Inspection date(s)	12–13 January 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Miller

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. All morning and afternoon sessions were sampled and observed, over five and a quarter hours. This covered the full range of activities provided for both fee-paying and non-fee paying children. Both teachers (the headteacher and deputy headteacher) and the speech and language therapist were observed. Other staff were also seen teaching and working with the children; these included an early years practitioner, a family support worker, 11 nursery workers and four nursery assistants. Discussions were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, other representatives of the governing body, the centre's finance officer (responsible for maintaining safeguarding records), various support staff, the caretaker, and the school's cook. Many informal opportunities were taken to talk with the children as they worked and played. Discussions were held with parents and carers at the start and end of school sessions. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), but account was taken of the 63 responses to the parents' and/or carers' questionnaires returned during the inspection. The proportion of responses was well above average for a nursery school. The inspector scrutinised and took account of a wide range of school documents including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, and information provided for parents and carers. Minutes of governing body meetings were examined, including the headteacher's reports to the governing body and other reviews of the school's performance.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average school. It operates as a maintained nursery for 50 weeks of the year with 88 non fee-paying, part-time places for three- and four-year-old children. In addition, it offers up to 36 full-time, fee-paying places for children aged two to four (the Neighbourhood Nursery provision). The fee-paying provision is integrated fully with the maintained nursery and Croyland Children's Centre. The children's centre, which was inspected separately by Ofsted in December 2010, is also managed by the headteacher and governing body. Croyland Nursery School has designated special provision for children who have speech and language or communication difficulties. Up to 25% of the three- to four-years-olds may be referred for priority placement in the nursery by the Children and Young Peoples Services, social care, community speech and language therapists or health visitors. Consequently, the proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. The large majority of children are of White British heritage. The proportion from other ethnic groups, mainly Eastern European, or for whom English is not their home language, is above average. The school has gained the Heartbeat Award for healthy catering.

Inspection judgements

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

Key findings

- This is an outstanding nursery school. It has sustained successfully all aspects of excellence identified at its last inspection, when it was also judged outstanding.
- Leadership and management are of high quality, and ensure a thoroughly integrated approach between the school and the children’s centre, which enhances significantly the support provided to promote the learning, development and welfare of the children and their families.
- Almost all children make rapid progress in their personal, social and emotional development; this enables outstanding achievement by preparing them very well for their work and play across all other areas of learning.
- Children’s spiritual and social development is particularly strong, through the consistent encouragement of their curiosity, respect and care for each other.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding because children develop self-confidence, are polite and show consistently high levels of concentration during the day.
- Teaching and assessment are exceptional because staff use their daily observations the children and to build very effectively on their experiences and contributions, and to enhance their learning.
- Work on sounds and letters (early phonics work) is taught very systematically, and embedded in an approach where the development of children’s speaking, listening and numeracy skills are given high priority. However, displays to reinforce phonics and numeracy are not always prominent in the working areas for sufficient ease of reference during teaching.
- Key workers contribute very well to assessments, and information for parents and carers, through their ‘Learning Stories’ about the children.
- The school encourages parents and carers to enrich their children’s ‘Learning Record Books’ by contributing to their own family pages, but relatively few choose to do so in practice.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the school’s excellent work in the promotion of literacy and numeracy by ensuring the more prominent display of phonics and number work in the classrooms and working areas.

- Encourage more parents and carers to contribute to their children's 'Learning Record Books' through the family pages provided for their personal comments and photographs relating to their children's learning and development at home.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The excellent learning is aided significantly by both maintained and fee-paying provision being available for 50 weeks each year. This extended service contributes to children's achievement by enabling the continuity of learning and the maintenance of regular contact between the school and families. As one parent wrote, 'The support I am given is great. I have daily feedback and am very much kept involved in my child's progress.' All those responding feel their children are making good progress, and the school is meeting fully their needs. This reflects the inspection findings.

School data, from accurate and extensive assessments, show that nearly half of the children start at the school with levels of knowledge and skills which are lower than those expected for their age; very few are in advance of their age. Most children make significant, rapid and sustained progress. They gain levels of development above those expected for their age by the time they transfer to the Reception classes in other schools. The large majority of children make much better than expected progress. Given their individual starting points, and the proportion with specialist needs and communication difficulties, this represents excellent achievement.

All groups of children make excellent progress in the development of their dispositions and attitudes to learning. Most children are significantly ahead of expectations in their ability to persist at activities for extended periods of time. This was demonstrated particularly well by children working in their own 'Baby Clinic'. The key worker showed excellent personal knowledge of baby development and needs, and made excellent use of proper equipment from the children's centre. A constant dialogue was maintained with the children which enabled the seamless promotion of: their personal, social and emotional development; sense of community and care for others; use of language for communication and thinking; application of exploration and investigation skills; use of equipment and materials; and the development of their imaginative play. Children gained significantly in their understanding of how their bodies had changed since they were babies, and of the importance of good health and hygiene. Children showed an appreciation of the importance of human contact beyond their ages through the extended concentration and care with which they prepared real baths and food for their dolls, changed their nappies and talked with them. In this, the work of the school with the children mirrored the parallel work of the children's centre with their parents and carers.

Quality of teaching

All parents and carers responding to the questionnaire agree their children are taught well. As one family wrote, 'Our child has developed a love of learning and a curiosity about the world through the well-planned activities that are made available.' Children

may join the school at any time during the 50 weeks it is open, although most do so at the start of a normal school term. Assessments are, therefore, very individual, and there is always an adult somewhere observing and assessing the children. There is exemplary practice in the way such assessments are used to adapt and develop day-to-day activities and foci for individuals. Staff listen carefully to the children and build instinctively on their individual contributions.

There is outstanding teaching for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The specialist speech therapist has built excellent working relationships with the children. One-to-one sessions enable a fine focus on individual difficulties and needs; consequently, children make excellent progress. Children and the teacher clearly enjoy these sessions, and there is a very positive sense of achievement. The bilingual skills of some members of staff also support very well those for whom English is not their first language. In one session, the teacher used her personal skills with a major European language very effectively. This aided a child at an early stage of English language development to understand new vocabulary while working on concepts of measure as they played together in the sandpit.

A key strength of the teaching lies in it taking every opportunity to develop children's speaking and listening skills. This is not only to enable the children to explain their thinking and ideas, but also to explore the sounds made by the spoken word. This support for early phonics work is strengthened by the school's promotion of a love of picture books and stories. Children cherish story time; in one session, the quality of the assistant's intonation and reading for meaning captured the attention of the children. Where children were at an early stage of English language development, this skill enabled them to follow and enjoy the story with the support of the illustrations in the big book. In an excellent circle time lesson, the children's cultural development was supported very well through the teaching of the traditional nursery rhyme 'Patter cake'. Musically, the lesson enabled the children to explore the sound various untuned percussion instruments make, and develop their sense of rhythm. Spiritually, it gave them a great sense of achievement in recognising the sounds made by the first letters of their own names when singing '...and mark it with...'

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Unacceptable behaviour, including bullying, is very rare as all staff are consistent in their high expectations and behaviour management. There is invariably a low-key approach to any problems which enables the children to overcome rapidly any disagreement and allows for sustained play and working relationships. The school's approach is always one of, 'How can we fix it?' As one parent wrote, 'I feel reassured, when I leave my child at this school, that my child is safe and well looked after.' Children act safely because simple courtesy and consideration for others are embedded in the approach of all adults; the children learn quickly to follow their example. Children are taught to use equipment safely, and show an awareness of others, and their surroundings, which is in advance of their age.

The school's excellent promotion of the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also a vital part of the school's approach. Behaviour and safety are so good because the children are enabled to be confident, develop self-control, and are comfortable both with themselves and others. They work and play together

cooperatively, and use their imagination well. There is a very strong sense of family and community at the school. This was highlighted in discussions with parents and carers as a major factor in their choice of the school.

Leadership and management

The leadership of the school has established high levels of trust and credibility with the children's families through the work of both the school and the children's centre. All parents and carers responding to the questionnaire agree that the school is led and managed well. Typical of these views was the parental comment, 'The headteacher works hard to ensure children at the nursery are treated as special and unique.' There is significant pride in being a member of the school, which is also shared by representatives of the governing body. Together, the staff and governors make a formidable team as advocates for the children.

Staff, governors, caretaker and office staff alike ensure the school is resourced and maintained well. The school cook has enabled the school to gain the Heartbeat Award for healthy catering. The outdoor classrooms and environment are excellent and used extremely effectively to support both children's work and play. Children are protected in a safe environment; safeguarding and the welfare of the children have a very high priority. This includes those whose family circumstances may make them more vulnerable, and/or who may be subject to Common Assessment Framework processes. Such children, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, benefit well from the strong links between the school and the children's centre. The common leadership and management of the school and centre has ensured an integrated approach which provides equality for all children and their families, and a holistic approach to tackling any discrimination they may experience.

The curriculum is excellent because it is planned and related so consistently well to the children's key areas of development. What is taught is reviewed daily as a result of routine assessments of its impact in terms of successful outcomes for the children. Daily planning shows the wide range of staff having an input into any revisions and to ensure learning experiences are tailored to meet the specific needs of individuals. Excellent opportunities are taken to promote the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The practical monitoring of teaching and the curriculum is an everyday activity on the part of the headteacher and her deputy. There is excellent teamwork throughout the school, which is supported very effectively by a regular programme of professional development. Overall, the school's track record of success and its commitment to development ensure this is a school which never stands still in its thinking and approach. Staff are reflective, do not rest on their laurels, and demonstrate excellent capacity to sustain the school's success.

The Early Years Foundation Stage delivered in the registered childcare provision

The school meets fully its statutory requirements relating to provision in its registered setting. This setting is not regarded in any way as being separate from the maintained provision. Maintained and fee-paying children are taught alongside each other by the same staff and enjoy the same activities and benefits of the school's

approach, planning and resources. There is equally excellent attention to the health and welfare of the children. Overall effectiveness is outstanding. The school’s integrated approach and excellent outcomes were typified in one session where a practitioner was working with a group of children on mark making. Discussion with one child showed she was drawing leaves, following outside play. Effective questioning by the practitioner about other patterns showed the child was drawing a route to the shops. This was picked up immediately and the children’s knowledge of forms of transport discussed. Early phonics work was supported by exploring the sounds of vehicles. The children’s creativity was captured by making an imaginary ‘bus’ and ‘driving’ to another part of the class where they created a bus using chairs. Numeracy was developed through the issue and counting of ‘tickets’. Courtesy was encouraged through the politeness of the ‘conductor’. Achievement was excellent.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage of the registered childcare provision, inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage for the registered provision	1

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.



16 January 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Croyland Nursery School, Wellingborough, NN8 2AX

Thank you so much for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed my visit very much, talking with you and seeing all the exciting things you do each day. I think your nursery is outstanding. The adults are very skilled at caring for you, keeping you safe and making sure you do as well as you can in everything you do. They are excellent at knowing how to make things even better.

These are just some of the things I found are excellent at your nursery.

- It is a very friendly place in which to work and play.
- You make outstanding progress in your learning.
- You enjoy school very much because there is always something to interest you.
- The outdoor areas are excellent and give you many exciting things to do.
- You concentrate very hard at everything you do, and work very well together.
- You are always curious and use your imagination very well indeed.

I have asked your teachers to do two things. First, I have asked them to display more work and information on letters and sounds. There are many exciting things displayed on the walls of your classrooms to help you learn, but this will help you even more. Secondly, I am asking the adults at your school to encourage more of your parents and carers to add to the family pages of your 'Learning Record Books'. You can help by asking them to write about all the good things you do at home. They can also add any pictures of the things you enjoy doing or working on at home.

In your main classroom there is a display which says, 'Every picture tells a story.' The picture you paint is that you are a credit to your school and your families.

Yours sincerely

Michael Miller
Lead inspector

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