

Colleges Nursery and Family Centre

Inspection report

Unique reference number	110597
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	378124
Inspection dates	22–23 February 2012
Lead Inspector	Sue Hall

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Chudleigh
Headteacher	Helen Snow
Date of previous school inspection	25 March 2009
School address	Campkin Road Cambridge CB4 2LD
Telephone number	01223 712168
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Email address	office@colleges.cambs.sch.uk

Registered childcare provision	EY336288
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	41
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	25 March 2009

Age group	3-4
Inspection date(s)	22–23 February 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Sue Hall

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days notice. The inspector observed four teachers and 10 support staff, in eight lessons and several shorter activities in the Nursery and daycare facility. She observed a guided group-reading session and heard a small number of children read individually. The inspector also held meetings with a group of children, with senior leaders and with representatives of the governing body. The inspector took account of responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at data about achievement across the school and children's records. She also looked at documents including: the school's self-evaluation information, the improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings and a sample of whole-school policies. She examined evidence regarding the safeguarding of children. The inspector analysed 42 questionnaires received from parents and carers and nine from members of staff.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than the average-sized Nursery school and daycare facility. The majority of children are of White British heritage and almost half is from a range of minority ethnic heritages, a proportion considerably above average nationally. Nearly one in three children speak another language at home including Polish, Bengali and Korean – a well-above average proportion. The proportions with disabilities or those with special educational needs are above average. Most of these children have speech and language difficulties or a range of individual additional needs. There is a small staff team of headteacher, four part-time teachers and a good number of support staff.

The school has achieved awards recently, including as a Health Promoting School and as a Pathfinder for Early Arts.

There is provision for children from the age of three in the Nursery. There is day-care provision in the Daisy Room for two to four-year-old children. This includes some free day-care places for two-year-old children whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. There is also wrap-around care from 8am to 6pm. Previous inspection of these services was included in the last report and taken account of in this inspection. The adjoining Children's Centre is managed and inspected separately.

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

- This is a good school. Staff are caring and thoughtful individuals who nurture the children well. This high quality of care enables children to grow in confidence and become enthusiastic young learners who behave exceptionally well. The school is not outstanding because staff sometimes miss opportunities to stimulate children’s interest in words, especially in and around the Nursery, including through detailed discussions, mark-making and early writing activities. Resources are not always used to best effect to support such activities. The monitoring of activities is supportive and descriptive but at times lacks evaluative rigour in identifying where further improvements can be made.
- All children make good progress and achieve well in all areas of their early learning and development. There are good systems to check the progress made and those who need extra help receive very effective support.
- Teaching is good and staff are particularly skilled at developing children’s confidence. The curriculum has strengths in the effective enrichment of learning including ‘Forest Explorer’ activities.
- The calm and supportive learning environment enables the children to settle very well and become responsible and caring towards each other. Parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are unanimous in their belief that their children are kept safe and that learning is not disrupted by bad behaviour. The inspection confirmed these views.
- The headteacher has an effective grasp of what works well and promotes further improvement of this effective school. The leadership of teaching is good as is the management of performance which is linked to further training activities. The staff team and governors are effective, very committed to the school and local community and determined to improve the life chances of the children. At times this has made it difficult to stand back and evaluate long-standing practices.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve children's communication skills by:
 - enriching literacy in the learning environment by providing more labels, captions and words in displays that the children use in detailed discussions
 - making more use of resources to encourage mark-making and early writing skills in a range of structured and imaginative activities.
- Improve the monitoring of the work of the school by:
 - making sure that all monitoring activities are rigorously evaluative and identify the exact effectiveness of activities, and areas for further improvement
 - extending the roles of senior leaders in challenging the school to ensure it continues to improve.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Nursery with very widely ranging skills and early learning experiences. Assessment records and inspection observations confirm the accuracy of the school's evaluation that entry skills are currently at a slightly lower level than in recent years, including more children whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Overall, attainment on entry is a little below the expectations for this age in several key areas, including communication, language and literacy. Parents and carers believe, and the inspector agrees, that children of all abilities and from all social backgrounds and ethnic heritages make good progress and achieve well.

Initially, a number of children have a limited vocabulary and lack confidence in their own abilities. Several children, including some who speak a language other than English at home, have little English on admission, but most make rapid progress and achieve well. Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are well supported. This provision is usually very well tailored to individual learning needs, and specific support meets all children's needs particularly well. Support enables the children to become enthusiastic learners who, for example, enjoy moving bags of sand around in a wheelbarrow and helping others. These activities help them to make good progress towards their individual targets, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development.

By the end of the Nursery Year, most children reach at least age-related expectations in all areas of learning. Several exceed some of these targets. Recently boys' skills and understanding have been a little below those of girls in early writing, but the gap is narrowing.

Children make good progress in developing an interest in books to prepare them for

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later learning. They respond well to shared stories and retell familiar tales, such as *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, including in the role-play area. When looking at a familiar story about dinosaurs, children know what to say in chorus-style phrases, which they repeat in an animated fashion. Good use is made of storybags for children to share stories at home. Some higher-attaining children are able to identify a few simple words and individual letters and sounds.

Quality of teaching

Inspection findings endorse the views of parents and carers that children are well taught and that the school meets their individual needs effectively. The staff team is a very reflective and caring group of experienced practitioners. They provide a range of activities and opportunities that interest the children and extend their learning and understanding of the world beyond the immediate area. This breadth of learning opportunities helps children develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness of their surroundings and an understanding of how they can care for the environment. Adult-led activities also help groups of children develop more specific skills, although, at times, more could be made of such opportunities.

Children enjoyed discussing the good range of digital photographs taken the day before the inspection from their visit to the local Country Park for regular Forest Explorers sessions. There was good use of both open questions, and those directed at specific children to include them in discussions. However, across the Nursery, staff sometimes miss the opportunity to take learning further with subsequent questions or through repeating, reading or writing key words for children to use in other activities. The learning environment lacks text for the children to refer to and use in discussion. Early reading skills are taught through group and individual reading activities which the children enjoy and join in with enthusiastically. While there are mark-making, writing materials inside the classroom and outside, some were not seen in use when the occasion was appropriate. As yet staff have not monitored if this has a specific impact on boys' early writing skills.

The use of a visiting music specialist is very effective, and provides outstanding teaching. The curriculum generally meets the needs of the children well and they say they particularly like 'playing and finding things out'.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour for learning and the safety of children are typically excellent and a key strength of the school. These aspects are widely and rightly praised by parents and carers. One commented, 'Just watching the skilled staff dealing with children so competently each time I pop in fills me with great confidence that my child is safe, happy and learning well.' Parents, carers, children and staff have no concerns about bullying and there is no evidence of incidents of inappropriate behaviour, such as racist talk. The school is careful to maintain behavioural records.

The well-established group system in the Nursery ensures that children start each

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session knowing who they will be with, which helps them feel very secure and settled. Most arrive with big smiles on their faces and a real sense of enthusiasm to get into Nursery and to learn new things. Staff help children plan what they would like to do in a calm and purposeful manner that sets the tone for the rest of the session. Children very clearly know what behaviour is expected and are exceptionally keen to live up to these high expectations. They share and take turns very well and show great care when moving around inside and out. For example, they behave in a safe manner when digging in the large sandpit and recognise that they must not throw sand around. They climb equipment carefully, and unprompted, wait their turn to slide down, demonstrating good moral and social development. The small number of children with behaviour, social and emotional difficulties is very well managed. All children's attitudes to learning are highly positive, but occasionally teaching does not support the development of communication skills well enough to make achievement outstanding.

Children have a very good understanding of how to keep safe. They all know they must wash their hands when getting ready to make pancakes. They carefully demonstrate how to handle children's knives to cut up a lemon or orange and explain why an adult has to use the cooker, but that they can help toss the pancakes. In discussion with a group of children, they clearly explained how to cross the road, knowing they can press the button at the crossing but have to wait until the green man shows before they walk across. Attendance is not compulsory but is around the average for the age of the children.

Leadership and management

This is a school in which all children are warmly welcomed and equally valued and in which discrimination has no place. The curriculum promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The school holds a Health Promoting Schools award and activities enable children to understand about healthy eating with some declaring, 'I love mangoes.' The school holds a Pathfinder for Early Arts award with creative work in the school's studio and high-quality music sessions supporting cultural development well. Children learn about festivals, but the limited focus on displays does not help them recall, for example, recent celebrations of Chinese New Year.

The progress children make is carefully tracked in all areas of learning. Information is used particularly well to identify specific needs, including for disabled children and those who have special educational needs and any at the early stages of learning English. Additional support is well organised and effective in meeting children's individual needs.

A suitable programme of performance management for staff is linked to their continuing professional development and the school has effective links with other local schools to assist this process. There is a range of monitoring activities to identify the effectiveness of provision. Lesson observations are sometimes more descriptive than evaluative and do not always identify well enough what can be

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improved to make teaching outstanding. However, good teaching has sustained good progress for all children and their behaviour and application to learn are outstanding. Consequently, the school's capacity to improve further is good.

Procedures to safeguard the children are very well organised and meet requirements. The governing body is effective. Governors are closely involved with the work of the school and very supportive of its long-standing success. Their close links, coupled with the long service of staff, makes it challenging for everyone to stand back and be critically evaluative of what is provided. Parents and carers are very appreciative and supportive of the work of the school on behalf of their children. Staff and governors show a clear commitment to working with and for the community.

The Early Years Foundation Stage delivered in the registered childcare provision

Children attend the Daisy Room from the age of two to four. This is in a separate but adjoining area to the Nursery with a shared outdoor area. There are many opportunities for children to work together, which is appropriate as some attend both groups at different parts of the day. The quality of provision and outcomes for all individuals are good because staff make clear their expectations of the children and care for them well. The Daisy Room is well equipped and adults have a good relationship with the children resulting in good behaviour and safety. Staff are particularly effective at supporting children with disabilities and those with special educational needs. Adults join in children’s play activities, such as the class ‘hospital’, and encourage the children to describe what they are doing when caring for a support assistant’s ‘broken arm’. The progress children make is good and most reach the targets for their age, although their communication skills are often lower than other areas. Staff know the children well and recognise when they need to sleep by providing rest areas. Wrap-around care from 8am to 6pm is well organised and, for example, children enjoy having breakfast together with their friends. Displays are used well to help children understand that words carry meaning. During the childcare manager’s absence, temporary leadership arrangements are effective in ensuring a continuation of good practice. Parents and carers are pleased with the good quality of care provided and as one notes, ‘Staff meet or exceed my expectations.’

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	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage for the registered provision	2

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.



24 February 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Colleges Nursery and Family Centre, Cambridge, CB4 2LD

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I visited your Nursery and the Daisy Room recently. I enjoyed talking to you and listening to your ideas. I also liked watching what you do in lessons and other activities. I particularly enjoyed seeing the children in the Nursery in the music session and when using the ribbons for a dance. I noticed seeing how much fun children had in the Daisy Room when they were playing in their class hospital.

Your school is a good one and there are many good things about it.

- Your behaviour and safety are excellent and you look after each other very well including when you play outside.
- There are some very interesting activities and the Forest Explorers and music sessions are particularly enjoyable.
- There are lots of opportunities for you to decide what you want to do and to find things out.
- All the staff care for you well and those of you who find things a bit difficult are very well looked after.
- You make good progress in all areas of learning and enjoy your time at Nursery and in the Daisy Room.

These are the things I have asked your school to do to make it even better.

- To help you improve how you communicate with others, especially by giving you more opportunities to improve your speaking and writing skills.
- To make sure the adults check even more carefully how things are working so that things improve even more.

You can also help by making sure that you continue to always try as hard as you can.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall
Lead Inspector

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