

Caversham Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109750
Local Authority	Reading
Inspection number	356615
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Jill Bavin

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 section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Stainthorpe
Headteacher	Liz Parker
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2008
School address	114 Amersham Road Reading RG4 5NA
Telephone number	0118 9375429
Fax number	0118 9375231
Email address	admin.cavershamchildrenscentre@reading.gov.uk

Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision

Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected
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Age group	3–5
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2010
Inspection number	356615

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed children working both independently and in group sessions with two teachers and two nursery nurses. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation and policies relating to the safeguarding and welfare of children, how the school tracks children's progress, planning prepared by key workers and the 20 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The impact of the school's work to improve children's early writing skills.
- The impact of the school's recent developments in curriculum and assessment.
- How effectively the governing body challenges the school and influences its development.

Information about the school

Since the previous inspection the school has relocated to become part of the new Caversham Children's Centre. In addition to the maintained nursery, the governing body has taken responsibility for managing the day care for 0 to 5 year olds and the children's centre. It is also responsible for providing a breakfast club and a lunchtime club for those children attending both day care and nursery provision. The day care provision was not inspected on this occasion because it was inspected a year ago. The inspection of the children's centre will take place at a later date.

The headteacher of the nursery school is also the head of the children's centre, including the day care. There has been a 50% change in the membership of both the governing body and the school staff team since the previous inspection.

The majority of children come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds with a small minority speaking English as an additional language. A few children have special educational needs and/or disabilities, most of these are related to language and social skills. The vast majority of children leave the school before the Reception year.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Some elements of its work are significant strengths. Extremely effective links with other external professionals contribute to the very smooth transition children make into the nursery. As a result, children settle rapidly into school routines and are ready to learn. This in turn contributes to their good achievement in key skills and their outstanding progress in personal and social development. Children's behaviour is good and on occasion, it is exemplary.

It is a testament to strengths in the headteacher's leadership and the support of her team that children's good rates of progress have been maintained and improved throughout a period of significant change in organisation and location. This is a school that knows itself well. Priorities for development are well chosen. The school's good track record of improvement indicates its good capacity for further development. Since the previous inspection, children's social and emotional learning has improved, as have levels of independence and perseverance which are now good. The school has worked successfully to improve early writing skills. Curriculum planning has improved to take far greater account of children's interests and needs.

Good teaching is underpinned by a well-planned curriculum. Opportunities for children to make choices and learn both actively and independently throughout the day are woven seamlessly throughout a wide range of stimulating activities. Adults are highly skilled at promoting children's positive attitudes to learning. When adults support children's independent learning they do so sensitively and effectively, skilfully giving children time to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings. That said, while children's interests and participation are reviewed and recorded on a daily basis, and this assessment influences the next day's planning, staff do not always specifically identify the next skills that individual children need to acquire. Adults do not always use this information to intervene with individual children when they are supporting children at activities of their own choice.

The governing body has become increasingly knowledgeable about school provision and children's learning. It is, therefore, supporting and challenging the headteacher more effectively than previously. Nevertheless, the prime focus of the governing body's recent work has been establishing the children's centre and this has diverted governors from fully evaluating the work of the school. The school holds useful information about children's attainment and progress but members of the governing body are not making full use of this to gain a clear picture of learning for different groups of children. While designated governors hold specific responsibilities, no one has a prime responsibility for teaching, learning and progress in the nursery. While safeguarding policies are satisfactory and regularly reviewed, they are not specific to the school.

Children's enjoyment of school is reflected in good levels of attendance. They are enthusiastic learners, who develop a strong sense of right and wrong. They are curious

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about the world around them and respectful of each other and the natural world. The variety of cultural backgrounds represented in the school community is reflected throughout children's activities and resources. Children get on well together and make a good contribution to their school's harmonious ethos. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in key skills by:
 - recording children's next learning steps more consistently
 - ensuring that adults routinely use their knowledge of what children need to do next when they are supporting them in independent learning activities.
- Involve the governing body more effectively in evaluating the work of the school by:
 - ensuring that it checks the progress of different groups of children
 - ensuring that it guarantees that safeguarding policies are geared specifically to the school
 - appointing a designated governor with responsibility for teaching, learning and progress within the nursery.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

While attainment for individual children varies, most typically children join the school well below expectations for their age in key skills. Girls and boys, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, make equally good progress. Children leave the school closer to expectations for their age, but still below in key language, literacy, and mathematical skills. They make extremely good progress to reach expected levels of personal and social development. Children are confident and independent learners, with a good level of curiosity. They mostly concentrate and persevere extremely well in a variety of situations. Children were observed, for example, using a knife to cut cucumber with an adult close by, experimenting with gravity by running a car along guttering, and experiencing weight and shape as they moved guttering to try and construct a van. They enjoy using computer technology and most use the mouse confidently to control images on the screen. Children enjoy stories and number rhymes greatly, especially when involved in, for instance, using the toy shark to reduce the number of ducks.

Children demonstrate a good level of care and concern for each other. On occasion they demonstrate exceptional social skills, for example one girl resolved potential conflict involving two other girls by sharing her own supply of baby clothes, without involving an adult. When younger children visit from day care, the nursery children are welcoming and supportive of them. They care for their environment with a good level of independence, for example returning to pick up a dropped fork at lunch club without being asked. Children are interested in the activity and well-being of the fish in their (safely covered) pond. They direct the lead inspector not to put her finger in the water, 'because they bite'. This exemplifies their good understanding of day-to-day safety issues. Their positive approach to healthy eating is evident in their willingness to try healthy food that extends their experience, whether by trying raita or broccoli.

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

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment ¹	2
The quality of children's learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
Children's behaviour	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance ¹	2
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Adults are highly skilled at nurturing children and promoting their well-being. They set a consistently good example to children of how to behave and how to speak. This underpins positive behaviour management. Adults give children immediate feedback about how well they are doing which reinforces children's learning effectively. Guidance about how to improve is introduced sensitively, mostly through inviting children to extend their ideas. For example, when children chose to use their imaginations and explore their understanding of the world around them by using big cardboard boxes as vehicles, the supporting adult asked, 'how could we make a door?' Similarly, promoting children's understanding of healthy and safe choices is woven throughout activities. For example, as the big box' activity developed, the adult queried, 'do you need lights if it's dark?'

Staff use both the indoor and outdoor learning environment to provide interesting and stimulating activities. They use their daily review meetings to identify children's interests and plan how to extend these the following day. For example, staff extended the initial success of the big box learning by strategically placing steering wheels and construction equipment for the children to discover and use on the second day. Adults resist over preparing and leave free spaces for children to select resources independently and

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develop their own activities and ideas. Activities are planned to a theme only if this emerges from children's interests, such as the recent theme of fishing. These strengths in planning contribute effectively to children's maturity in independence, concentration and perseverance.

Assessment is regular, thorough and shared and contributes to the whole team's understanding of the needs of each child. The team is still evaluating the new format for linking planning and assessment recently introduced, and recognises that it is missing some opportunities to identify children's next steps. Excellent use is made of links with other professionals to support children, especially those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who are facing particular challenging circumstances. The school can point to instances of outstanding progress for individual children as a result of these partnerships.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has successfully led school improvement through a period of considerable change since the previous inspection. Since the appointment of a leading teacher the good pace of change and development has continued, including more effective sharing of roles and responsibilities. The staff team shares a determination to provide good quality learning in a safe and nurturing environment. They are reflective practitioners, and the evaluation of the impact of their developments is shared and continuous.

The importance of ensuring children's safety and security on a day-to-day basis is paramount. Assessments of the safety of equipment used on a daily basis are particularly thorough. The school meets requirements for child protection and safeguarding policies. Safeguarding overall is satisfactory because policies and documentation, while meeting requirements, do not provide more than satisfactory guidance and lack detail that is specific to the school.

The staff team share an accurate understanding of their local community and the impact that it has on children's experience. Community cohesion lies at the heart of the school's ethos. Extremely effective links with other professionals and good relationships with parents ensure the school is valued and appreciated in the local community. The staff team recognises its responsibility to extend children's experience and promotes values of tolerance and cooperation. It does this very successfully. Although the governing body is

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not making full use of information about children's progress it shares the school's strong commitment to equal opportunities for all. The commitment to sensitive and well-timed assessment of children's needs is a key feature in the school's success in helping all groups of children to make equally good progress.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

A broadly typical percentage of parents and carers returned questionnaires and almost all are appreciative of the school's work. Inspectors took note of and investigated the concerns raised by a very few parents and carers. Positive comments were endorsed by the inspection. These mostly referred to good communication with staff and feeling confident that children are safe and cared for well. Parents and carers were unanimous in agreeing that children were helped to have a healthy lifestyle and their child enjoyed school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Caversham Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 53 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	80	4	20	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	14	70	5	25	1	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	6	32	10	53	2	11	1	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	45	10	50	1	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	58	7	37	0	0	1	5
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	97	10	53	2	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	47	10	53	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	5	31	10	63	1	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	42	10	53	0	0	1	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	47	9	47	1	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	56	7	39	1	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	55	8	40	1	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	75	4	20	1	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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 children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
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 children. 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

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.



5 November 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Caversham Nursery School, Reading RG4 5NA

Thank you very much for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school. One of the best things about your good school is how friendly you are to visitors and each other. Here are some of the things we liked best of all.

- You are making good progress in your learning and having fun.
- You are especially good at working without an adult telling you what to do all the time.
- You behave well and sometimes your behaviour is brilliant.
- You get on well together and help each other a lot.
- Your key workers are good at noticing what you enjoy doing and planning for you to explore what interests you most.
- All the adults work extremely well with other grown-ups to work out what is best for you.

We have asked the headteacher, the governing body and the key workers to make sure they are very clear about the exact skills you need to learn next, so they can help you to make even better progress. We have asked the members of the governing body to keep a closer eye on just how well the school is doing, and to make sure that what is written down about keeping you safe matches what actually happens. We think it would be a good idea for one governor to take a special interest in how well you are learning and making progress.

We know that you will continue to enjoy learning and playing in the nursery, and behaving so well.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin

Lead Inspector

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