

The Kingsdown Nursery School, Lincoln

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126562
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	360110
Inspection dates	31 January 2011–1 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Alison Cogher

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barry Fippard
Headteacher	Kate Marnoch
Date of previous school inspection	18 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons and observed the teaching of two teachers and three key workers (other adults designated to look after a group of children). They held meetings with the acting headteacher, other leaders, teaching and key worker staff, a local authority representative and members of the governing body. They also held short conversations with children during visits to lessons. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at five staff questionnaires, the 30 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, school policies and plans including those relating to keeping children safe.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress made by children in each of the six areas of learning.
- How well assessment information is used to plan for children's next steps in learning.
- The impact of leadership and management on improving teaching and learning.

Information about the school

This small school serves the area to the south west of Lincoln. Most children have White British backgrounds. A small number of children are from Polish backgrounds and are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The school offers a lunch club each day. The school is emerging from a period of reorganisation and staffing uncertainty. The acting headteacher has been in post for one term. The school holds the Basic Skills Level 3 and the Healthy Schools Awards.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Kingsdown Nursery School provides children with a satisfactory start to their education. Children are happy and enthusiastic and develop into self-assured individuals because of the good levels of care, guidance and support they receive. They feel safe and secure at school and form warm and trusting relationships with adults and each other. Children behave well and play happily together. Parents value the school and say their children are eager to attend. Comments such as 'My child loves coming to nursery and looks forward to it every day.' were typical of those recorded on the parent and carers' questionnaires. The acting headteacher is providing strong leadership that has set a clear direction for school improvement.

Satisfactory teaching ensures that children make the expected progress in most areas of learning. They often make good progress in their physical and personal, social and emotional development and reach above expected levels for their age. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language make good progress because of the well targeted support they receive to help them reach their individual targets. Some of these children make sufficient progress so as to no longer need additional support by the time they leave the school. All staff make notes to record what children say and do during activities but this assessment information is not used in a way that clearly maps children's progress or to provide a guide as to what they need to learn next. Planning through topics ensures all areas of learning are covered but it takes too little account of assessment information. It is not thorough enough in the areas of communication, language and literacy and problem solving, reasoning and number to ensure that children build systematically and at a good rate on their previous learning. For their age, children have a good knowledge of how to lead a healthy lifestyle.

School self-evaluation is accurate but until very recently has largely been the responsibility of the acting headteacher. Staff have taken on increased leadership roles but are at the early stages of acquiring the skills needed to conduct rigorous monitoring of the school's provision. Working constructively with parents contributes positively to children's learning through for example borrowing books and story sacks to share at home. The school is reaching out into the community and has developed some positive links with other schools and support agencies. Staff have succeeded in working together to improve a number of key aspects of the school's work, such as extending the range of activities available for children every day, implementing an open door policy and providing flexible induction arrangements. This illustrates the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2011, improve the system for making and recording assessments so that children's progress can be tracked accurately and what they need to learn next is identified clearly.
- Ensure teacher's planning takes account of assessment information so activities support and challenge all children to learn well, particularly in the areas of communication, language and literacy, and problem solving, reasoning and number.
- Provide middle leaders with training and support so they able to check the impact of the school's provision on children's learning in all six areas of learning.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

3

Children arrive at nursery eager to learn. They happily greet each other and their key worker and quickly busy themselves in activities. Children achieve satisfactorily as they typically start and leave nursery at broadly the level typical for children of this age. They make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning. Children make good progress to reach above expected levels in their personal development as a result of the sensitive pastoral support provided by adults who encourage them make choices and be independent. They are learning to look after themselves, for example, by putting their name tags into the milk tray when they arrive, and putting on their own coats before going outside. Their physical development, particularly the control they have over the large movements they make with their body is also often better than that expected for their age. This is a consequence of the good opportunities they have to run, climb and balance in the well equipped outdoor space. They really enjoy being physically active outdoors.

Children become increasingly confident and articulate speakers as adults encourage them to engage in conversations, and to ask and answer questions. This approach helps those learning English as an additional language to make good progress in building the vocabulary they need to communicate with other children and adults. Children enjoy singing rhymes such as 'Five Currant Buns' whilst also learning to count, take turns and act out the role of a character. In role-play areas such as 'The Chinese Restaurant' adult involvement lifts the quality of children's learning by reinforcing new vocabulary, writing skills, counting and handling money, socially acceptable behaviour and acting out the specific tasks relevant for each character. Children are free to access a wide range of activities indoors and outside. They play sensibly together and have a good awareness of safety. This is evident when playing outside as they look out for each other and take care to manoeuvre tricycles and scooters safely around a track. Children practise good hygiene and understand why it is a good idea for them to wash their hands before eating. They enjoy a range of healthy foods at snack time and during Lunch Club. Children are learning to take responsibility and respond positively to requests to help tidy away at the end of a session. Children are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

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These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment ¹	3
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	3
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance ¹	3
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

Teachers and other key workers have a secure understanding of child development and provide sensitive support for children. They provide a calm and purposeful learning environment in which children can grow as individuals. Adults use questioning in a supportive way to extend children's learning during group activities and when talking to individuals, but their responses are not always flexible enough to support children to pursue their own ideas. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and curriculum planning covers all areas of learning through a range of overarching themes. Planning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is robust and linked closely to the assessment of their individual needs. For other children, assessment is not refined enough and so planning for the areas of communication, language and literacy and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy does not ensure that activities are always matched well enough to meet the differing learning needs of individual children.

Activities available each day provide a satisfactory level of challenge for most children and by varying group activities each week children experience a range of new experiences that take their learning forwards at a satisfactory rate. Good quality resources are used to capture children's interest and enhance learning and there is a good balance between indoor and outdoor activities. Making use of visits and the increasing number of parent

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and carer volunteers is beginning to enrich children's learning. For example, volunteers made it possible for all the children to walk safely to a local wood to observe the colours of trees in the autumn. Children were able to collect natural materials to take back to the nursery to make bonfire sculptures as it was close to 'Bonfire Night'. A grandparent also helped children to make clay divas when children celebrated Divali. Children's ideas are increasingly being used to modify the curriculum and influence the choice of activities provided. For example, small baskets were tied to the front handlebars of the tricycles so children could carry items purchased from 'the supermarket' role-play area more easily. The provision of the well managed Lunch Club enables children to enjoy each others company in a social gathering whilst also promoting healthy eating.

Parents and carers are happy with the provision made to care for their children. Comments such as 'It's an amazing place for little people to feel valued as individuals and able to learn through play.' typifies the confidence they have in the provision made for their children. Trusting relationships are particularly strong and help to ensure the families whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable, receive the support they need. Links with outside agencies are good and on-site facilities provide a welcoming and familiar space for parents and staff to meet with specific agency workers. Staff work constructively with parents, carers and agencies such as the health authority to ensure they receive the training necessary to provide specific care and support for the children whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher is leading by example and has made a good start to raising expectations at the nursery. Her clarity of judgement and the actions she has taken is driving improvement. She has managed tasks in a systematic and measured way that has ensured the nursery meets statutory requirements and clear systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the nursery are being established. Staff work together to identify what the nursery does well and what needs to be improved. Staff who are responsible for the leadership of curriculum areas are beginning to develop the skills and knowledge they require to be effective in their role. Advice from the local authority has supported this work well. Leadership of the provision made for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for those learning English as an additional language is effective and contributes to the good progress these children make. The nursery is now working to

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increase the momentum of improvement using the outcomes of its self-evaluation to identify priorities and set timescales for the completion of tasks.

All staff work to secure equality of access and opportunity for the whole school community. This is guiding the focus for further improvements to teaching and the curriculum. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body brings a good range of skills, personal qualities and experience to their role, but a number of governors are new to the school and are in the process of establishing their specific responsibilities. They are working closely with the acting headteacher, staff and local authority to ensure they are well informed and able to support and challenge the school to improve further.

Measures to protect and safeguard children meet current requirements. Procedures are clear and implemented consistently by well trained staff. Actions taken to reach out to parents and carers and encourage them to be involved in the work of the school and their child's learning have been successful. They express confidence in the school and particularly value the approachability of staff and the support they and their children receive. 'The headteacher and all the staff strive to make all children happy and are completely supportive of requests made by parents and carers.' 'The open-door policy is great.' exemplify parental and carers' comments that express their appreciation of the nursery staff. Family Learning, the Toddler Group and PEEPs (Peers Early Learning Partnership) sessions all held in the nursery building illustrate the commitment to working effectively with parents and carers to help them support their children's learning. The nursery is reaching out to other schools in the immediate area, to other Nurseries in the authority, the local Children's Centre and a range of outside agencies. This work is further strengthening partnership links that have already secured improved induction and transition arrangements and support for the most vulnerable children and their families. The nursery is a cohesive community but the children have few opportunities to develop their awareness of communities in the local area and beyond.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

Parents who returned the questionnaire were very appreciative of the school's provision and made a number of positive comments. In particular they are very confident that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. They value the way staff take the time to talk about any concerns they might have and help them in difficult times. The inspection agrees with these positive comments but judges that more could be done to ensure children are assessed accurately and better use could be made of this information so children's learning improves. Staff new to leadership roles also need support to enable them to carry out their tasks well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at The Kingsdown Nursery School, Lincoln 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 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 84 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	87	4	13	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	87	4	13	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	63	10	33	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	73	7	23	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	80	4	13	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	73	6	20	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	77	6	20	1	3	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)	20	67	7	23	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	80	6	20	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	70	6	20	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	73	7	23	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	77	5	17	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	90	3	10	0	0	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



2 February 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of The Kingsdown Nursery School, Lincoln, Lincoln, LN6 0FB

Thank you very much for looking after us when we visited your Nursery. You were very helpful so we were able to find out about the things you do and the things you enjoy. This letter is to tell you what we noticed. Your school is satisfactory which means it helps you to do all right in your learning. You do some things well because your teachers and other adults help you to do so. These include the way you work and play happily together and the good control you have over your bodies when you are moving around inside and playing in the outdoor space. You behave well and are polite and friendly. You told us you feel safe at school and you know about keeping fit and healthy.

Your teachers and other staff are kind and helpful and they work well with your parents to make sure you are well cared for, supported, and kept safe and secure. Your school's acting headteacher is working with the governors and other staff to make things better for you. We have asked them to do three things to help you learn even better.

These things are:

To carefully check on how well you are getting on and to write it down.

To make sure that activities help you to learn new things as well as to practise skills you already have.

To make sure that leaders in the school know how to check how good the nursery is at helping you to learn.

You can help by making sure you talk to your teachers about the things that you do, about the things you enjoy best and by sharing your ideas with them.

Thank you again for helping us.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cogher

Lead inspector

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