

King's Lynn Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120766
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358837
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Susan Vale

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lindsay Campbell
Headteacher	Jane Belfield (Acting Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	21 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed nine lessons and parts of lessons involving three teachers and several support staff. The inspectors held meetings with the acting headteacher, the teacher in charge of supporting those children new to learning English and the Chair of the Governing Body. They observed children working in small groups and with one-to-one support, as well as at play. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school documents, including tracking information, policies and procedures, governing body minutes and individual children's 'learning journals' for evidence of progress. In addition, inspectors took into account 41 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and those completed by 10 staff.

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

- How well are assessment and progress and tracking systems used to help raise children's attainment and progress?
- How effective is the provision for children who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities?

Information about the school

This is an average-sized nursery school. Over 20% of the children are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds and are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Other than English, the main languages spoken are Russian, Latvian and Lithuanian. A small number of children have special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly related to physical or behavioural difficulties. The Nursery has received the Norfolk Quality Assurance Award.

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

King's Lynn Nursery is a satisfactory school. A warm, caring ethos greets all who attend. As one parent commented, 'My child is happy and safe and any issues raised are dealt with in a quick and professional manner.'

There is a wide spread of attainment on entry to the nursery but the majority of children start with below and in some cases (particularly in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development) well below the expected starting points for their age. They achieve as expected and make satisfactory progress, so that they leave with just below expected levels of attainment. In some areas of learning, such as physical development, many children make good progress and reach expected levels for their age. There is no significant variation in the achievement of different groups.

Children's behaviour is good and staff deal well with those who find it harder to behave. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is satisfactory. Children are well aware of what constitutes right and wrong behaviour and learn about sharing, for example when making gingerbread men in cooking. Children get on well together, but there are still some children who, due to their lower levels of personal development, prefer to play and find things out alone. The attendance of children in some families is poor. The nursery is currently not rigorous enough in its monitoring of attendance. Despite this, children clearly feel safe and secure in their surroundings as they try out new activities. This was particularly noticeable with one child who had returned to nursery after an absence of nearly a term. He soon got back into the routine of things. Healthy lifestyles are adopted well and children join in lots of physical activities throughout the day. There is satisfactory provision for children identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for children who are in the early stages of learning English, and parents and carers are actively encouraged to seek help and support from the nursery.

Teaching varies but is satisfactory overall. Good aspects include the way some staff model spoken English giving time to the children to listen to their responses. Weaker aspects are a lack of consistency around assessment and the fact that some children do not get the opportunity to make their own decisions about whether they would like to play indoors or outside.

The curriculum is satisfactory. There are limited opportunities for children to go out on trips or visit places of local interest. This in turn affects children's links with the local community. The school has recognised this and there are plans to establish greater links with the local community, in order to develop community cohesion further, such as the sponsored bike ride around the park in which the nursery is situated.

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A new system of assessment and tracking of progress was introduced six months ago. There are some good examples of individual learning journals to record what children know, understand and do and what they need to do to improve, although staff are inconsistent in their approach to using them. Despite this variability, assessment information is mostly used well in planning activities to support children's learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is currently no substantive headteacher, and self-evaluation has not been updated fully nor does it include the views of all staff. Likewise, there has been little opportunity for more formal monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure consistency between classes. After numerous advertisements to appoint, the governors were unable to do so. A part-time temporary headteacher leads the nursery. While she is doing a good job in leading, all agree that the situation is not ideal. There are no teachers attending who are full time or in senior positions to lead the nursery when she is absent. It is imperative that plans are put in place soon to ensure some stability in leadership and management in the forthcoming academic year. While the staff are experienced and committed, because of the current leadership situation, capacity for improvement is satisfactory.

Up to 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Stabilise and improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that there is a substantive leader in place by the start of the new academic year
 - regularly and more formally monitoring the impact of teaching and learning to ensure consistency
 - monitoring children's learning journals to ensure consistency between the classes
 - involving the whole staff in self-evaluation
 - reviewing the timetables and staffing ratios in order to ensure a more flexible timetable for the children to meet their individual needs.
- Raise attendance through more rigorous monitoring and by increasing parental awareness of the positive impact that regular attendance has on their children's learning.
- Establish greater links with the local community in order to raise the profile of community cohesion within the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

3

There are few differences in the satisfactory progress made by girls and boys, or those who are new to learning English. Those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities make equal progress to their peers. Some children make better than expected progress in their personal, social and emotional development. As one parent commented to the inspectors: 'Our primary aim for my daughter's time at the school was to help her socialise with other children and the transformation has been brilliant and I feel confident that she will be ready to start primary school in September.'

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The introduction of 'Every Child a Talker' is starting to have a positive impact in developing children's speaking and listening skills. Children are keen to have a go and are keen to talk about what they are doing. This was seen when a group was outside topping up the soil in the plant pots and when the children were inside painting with rollers. They were happy to share their ideas and thoughts with adults. Children are clear in their understanding about what makes a healthy lifestyle, and enjoy their daily fruit snack. Some teachers use this time particularly well to initiate conversation and to encourage children to talk. Where this works well, children really enhance their vocabulary and their spoken language. This supports the increasing numbers of children who are new to learning English. Children who are in need of more support are guided well by staff and given the same equality of opportunity as their peers. Physical development is supported well by the excellent outside learning environment and many children make good progress in this skill.

Behaviour overall is good, although there are children who present more challenging attitudes. Staff support and care for these children well, and this is why children's understanding of moral and social issues is good. The spiritual and cultural development of children is satisfactory. While children have the opportunity to learn about other festivals and customs, there are limited opportunities to develop their links with the local community and beyond.

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	3
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	4
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

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How effective is the provision?

Satisfactory teaching, which has some good aspects, ensures that children make satisfactory progress in their learning. Adults listen to the children and know their individual interests and abilities well. Experienced support staff are effective in caring for and moving children on in their learning. Most adults are good role models of language, which helps to develop children's vocabulary and understanding well. This is of particular relevance for those children who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Teachers have separate classes but come together in the creative area and the outdoor learning environment. There are some inconsistencies in the way children are supported in their learning. In the good lessons seen, children were able to make decisions for themselves about where they would like to play, for example, some of the boys were desperate to get outside and run and climb freely in the lovely outdoor area. Others wanted to stay in and paint gingerbread men or act out stories they had heard in the play theatre. But not all children are offered these opportunities when they decide to choose to do them, they have to wait for the whole class to go either outside or into the craft room.

The assessment of children's knowledge, skills and understanding has been introduced in the last six months and now is regularly undertaken, although it is still too soon to be able to analyse accurately the progress of different groups of children. This is much improved since the last inspection. The tracking of children's progress means that extra support can be provided as needed, and next steps for learning are clearly established and followed through in teachers' planning. As yet, parents and carers are not asked to fully contribute to their children's learning, nor are they involved in reviewing what their children know, understand and can do. The headteacher has identified this as an area for improvement and there are plans for parents and carers to be invited in during the summer term to 'come and play' sessions with their children.

The care and support children receive are good, although not enough has been done to encourage regular attendance. Despite this, a warm, welcoming environment greets all who come. Support for more vulnerable children is an established part of the nursery provision, and the children are cared for very well.

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	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The part-time acting headteacher has done a sterling job in ensuring that progress has been made, particularly in the issues identified in the previous inspection. Working just two days a week, her time is restricted in what can be achieved and she has rightly identified the areas of priority for development, notably in addressing assessment and tracking, in order to ensure that children make sufficient progress in their learning. She is ably supported by the rest of the staff. The staff are willing and eager to seek further improvements and, consequently, although nothing formal has been recorded, the processes of self-review and evaluation are satisfactory.

Governance is satisfactory. The Chair of the Governing Body is caring and supportive and well aware of the need to find a practical solution to the current situation. Discussions have been instigated to ensure that there is substantive leadership and management of the nursery by the start of the next academic year. However, at the time of the inspection these are only plans and nothing substantive is in place to ensure a continuity of leadership and management; consequently, capacity for improvement is satisfactory. Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The school has a positive relationship with parents and carers, and there is a regular exchange of information between school and home. There are clear and accessible strategies for parents and carers to communicate with the school.

Community cohesion within the nursery community and the surrounding locality is satisfactory and an area that the headteacher has rightly identified for further improvement. There are good links with a school in Uganda. The nursery has satisfactory information about the children that it serves and ensures that during their time in school all children have opportunities to participate in all areas of the curriculum. This is particularly strong for children identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and staff are very careful that individual needs are met for these children. Current requirements in relation to safeguarding and child protection have been implemented in full, and there are adequate systems in place for when different members of staff are present on site.

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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	3
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

Around two thirds of the parents and carers returned the questionnaires. The majority of those who did were overwhelmingly positive about the nursery, although they made very few written comments. A couple of parents felt that they did not receive enough information about their children's individual progress. The nursery has plans to address this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at King's Lynn 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 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 72 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	93	3	7	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	88	5	12	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	27	66	12	29	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	80	8	20	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	83	7	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	76	10	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	85	6	15	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)	26	63	11	27	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	83	6	15	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	68	10	24	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	76	8	20	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	36	88	5	12	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	90	4	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.



16 March 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of King's Lynn Nursery School, King's Lynn, PE30 5PT

It was lovely to meet some of you when I came to visit your Nursery. I really liked some of the activities that you do. I enjoyed watching you ride your scooters, play with the play dough, and the gingerbread men you made were delicious!

You go to a satisfactory nursery.

Adults look after you well and make sure that there are interesting things for you to do. This helps you to make satisfactory progress in your learning.

Your parents are very pleased with your nursery and the fact that the teachers look after you well.

The curriculum which is provided for you at nursery is satisfactory, but there are not enough trips and visits to local places of interest for you.

Teaching supports you in helping you to develop your skills, knowledge and understanding, particularly of the world around you.

Those of you who are identified with learning difficulties and those of you who are new to learning English are supported well.

I hope that you continue to enjoy coming to nursery and learning new things. There are always things that can be improved, so I have asked the adults to make sure that they find a solution to you not having a permanent headteacher. I have also asked them to monitor teaching and learning more rigorously, to review the organisation of the day and to help you to go out on more trips and visits so that you have better links with the local community. You and your families can help by making sure that you come to nursery every day.

Yours sincerely

Sue Vale

Lead inspector

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