

Kingswood Nursery School and Early Years Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117076
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	358074
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Carolyn Carnaghan

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	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gary Hill
Headteacher	Bernice Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2007
School address	Briar Road Watford WD25 0DX
Telephone number	01923 672531
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Email address	admin@kingswood.herts.sch.uk

Registered Childcare provision	Kingswood Early Years Centre
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	35
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected

Age group	2–4
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2011
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They saw five lessons taught by two teachers and held meetings with staff, parents and carers, children and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's documents, policies, plans and minutes of meetings. They also reviewed 17 responses to questionnaires for parents and carers.

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

- How well does the school understand children's attainment on entry and leaving?
- How effective are the school's systems for assessment and how well do they inform curriculum development?
- What contribution do partnerships, parents and carers make to the development and progress of the children?

Information about the school

The Nursery and Early Years Centre share the same building where there is integrated provision for children. There is an acting headteacher who has been in post for less than two terms. The Early Years Centre provides all-day care for children aged two and three years and is managed by the school's governing body. The nursery provides part-time education and is below average in size. Approximately a tenth of the children have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the majority with speech, language and communication needs. Most children are from a White British heritage. A small minority of children speak English as an additional language.

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

The school provides a satisfactory start to the education of its children. Children are often well known when they arrive in the nursery because many have already been coming to the day-care centre. Their age-related skills are broadly average when they start, and they make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning. Those with speech, language and communication needs make at least satisfactory progress because their needs have been carefully diagnosed. Expert support has been put into place to help ensure these children can keep up with their peers. However, children do not have enough opportunities to use their emerging writing skills across learning activities.

Children make good progress in their personal development, often working well together in pairs and groups. They cooperate well, making good contributions to the daily life of the nursery. They enjoy taking time to wonder at the world they live in, particularly where animals are involved. Several children in the nursery said it was the 'best thing ever' when they observed chicks emerging from their shells, during the inspection. Others said they preferred dinosaurs! Children behave well and are interested in celebrating how other people live and worship.

The acting headteacher has already set about reforming many aspects of the school's work. She has clear ambition for the children, and staff are enthused by her focus. Planning of teaching and the curriculum is slowly improving, based on a growing understanding of children's needs. There is still not enough appropriate questioning, however, that helps those who are more able to progress quickly. Her evaluation of what the school needs to do better is accurate, and progress is starting to rise after slowing over previous years. This means the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. Children in the nursery and the day-care class are now beginning to self-assess their own work, although teachers in the nursery do not always make the best use of assessment in adult-initiated learning. Outdoor activities are used effectively, particularly in the day care, to extend the children's learning. Children have a wide range of equipment to enjoy outside that ensures they can play and learn with large toys and climbing frames.

The governing body has several new members and, while it is highly supportive, it has only recently started to hold the school to account and contribute to future planning. It ensures children are safe and secure and that staff are appropriately qualified and experienced and has begun learning actively about what goes on in the classroom. Effective partnerships with outside agencies assist the school to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and help them to develop confidence and communication skills.

Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by December 2011 by:
 - providing more opportunities for writing across the range of learning activities
 - using questioning more appropriately to enable children, particularly the more able, to move on at their own pace
 - ensuring assessment is used effectively throughout learning and in planning new activities.
- Develop the governing body's skills and confidence so it can more effectively challenge the school and hold it to account.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

3

Children make satisfactory progress from their broadly average starting points. However, progress has been weaker in communication, language and literacy than in the other areas of learning. This is because there are not enough opportunities for children to practise writing in different contexts, as they learn and play. Children make better progress in their creative development and the results of this can be seen around the school in their art. They are very keen on singing, making rhymes and role-playing. Those with speech, language and communication needs are quickly recognised and extensive support is put in place so their progress matches that of their peers. Achievement for all groups of children, including those with English as an additional language, is satisfactory.

Children in the day-care class are encouraged to be independent and inquisitive. They play together harmoniously, often using information and communication technology, and sometimes recording their achievements in sound. Curiosity is encouraged here so children extend their learning by, for example, using a magnifying glass to look at texture and reflection in rocks. In the nursery, children use their child-initiated learning sessions to explore around the planned theme, augmented through questions and activities set by staff. Sometimes, children are not stretched enough through questioning, so opportunities to extend curiosity are lost. For instance, even though the hatching chicks were an excellent source of wonderment and a chance to think about how life begins, they were not fully used as a basis for scientific questions.

Children's good behaviour means that learning and play are rarely interrupted and their positive attitudes to school build a strong sense of community. Children are careful as they play, share well and look after one another. Parents and carers are encouraged to bring them to nursery whenever they have a designated session and this means attendance has improved markedly. Children are very interested in other people and how they live, learning about and celebrating religious festivals that are relevant to them and the wider world.

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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	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	2
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	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?

Learning activities are planned effectively, ensuring a broad mix of choices during child-initiated learning. Children in the day-care class are carefully steered towards activities based on themes, such as building a house. In nursery, there are always choices to be made involving drawing and painting, playing with soil and sand and doing puzzles. Adult-led learning is occasionally too formal in nursery and children spend too long waiting for others to catch up or get ready. More-able children are not always questioned enough and this holds them back. Sometimes, teachers do not clearly demonstrate to children the best way to make letter shapes.

Assessment is a growing focus for planning, and children frequently record their achievements in their learning journey book. Parents and carers are actively encouraged to contribute to these journals, bringing in examples of exciting things that have happened outside school. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are assessed quickly when they arrive, and well-targeted support ensures they can take part in everything that is on offer. One-to-one support from nursery assistants enables these children to build progress. The curriculum offers a wide range of activities, including small and large apparatus, puzzles, materials for sculpture and art and musical instruments. Observations of learning go on regularly and are now being used to inform plans that

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more accurately meet children's needs. However, the accuracy of assessments has been the subject of staff training because they have not always been sharply focused.

The care and support of all the children are at the heart of the school, ensuring that their needs, and those of their families and carers, can be addressed. The headteacher and her staff are on hand at the start and end of each session to provide guidance and talk through problems. Additional support for those with speech, language and communication needs has been forthcoming, and parents and carers express their gratitude for this. Transition arrangements are well ordered so that children can confidently go up from day care to nursery and beyond.

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 has made an accurate assessment of where the school is currently. She has started to galvanise her staff through addressing their training needs, supporting them as they implement new systems of assessment and planning. Her audit of the school's provision has led to improvements in the outdoor area, although there is still more to be done to make it an even more creative space. She has developed more accurate monitoring of progress, and is beginning to hold staff to account for children's outcomes. Learning in the day-care class is now improving because the staff have been enthused by her ambition for the children.

The governing body has recently taken on new members who are swiftly learning about the complexities of their responsibilities. They are becoming highly supportive and are taking ownership for events and surveys of parents. They have not yet developed sufficient confidence to fully challenge the school and hold it to account for the school's outcomes. They help ensure this is a secure environment for everyone, effectively monitoring and developing relevant policies, and safely recruiting staff when necessary. The site is carefully managed and maintained safely for the children to learn and play in.

The school has close relationships with its parents and carers. Very regular communication helps parents and carers to support their children's learning at home. Experiences are shared between school and families, and the learning journey books are proving to be effective tools of evaluation for both home and school. The school's partners make a good contribution to the children's outcomes. For example, outside agencies have helped build up good support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have begun to develop the curriculum, through music and the arts. Children are helped to

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understand the dangers of the roads and what to do if they are worried, through the intervention of the community police.

There is a strong sense of community within Kingswood. Children get on well together and are careful when they play. The curriculum ensures they have plenty of chances to learn about other cultures, to enjoy and make music and to care for our environment. Children have equal opportunities to progress and enjoy their education because the good care, guidance and support afforded to them mean they can all access activities and challenges throughout their learning. Sometimes, this comes as a result of intervention from outside services but, in all cases, the school is proactive in ensuring everyone has an equal chance here.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

The responses of parents and carers to questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive. All parents and carers said that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps them safe. A few said that the school does not inform them about their children's progress. The inspection found that care, guidance and support are good, that the school welcomes parents and carers into school every day and that staff are happy to discuss progress or any other aspect of their children's education. The proportion of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires was above average.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Kingswood 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 17 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 86 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	76	4	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	88	2	12	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	8	47	6	35	3	18	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	41	10	59	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	65	5	29	1	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	59	5	29	2	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	65	6	35	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	29	8	47	2	12	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	47	9	53	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	47	8	47	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	59	5	29	1	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	53	7	41	1	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	71	5	29	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



25 March 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Kingswood Nursery School and Early Years Centre,
Watford, WD25 0DX

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we recently visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting and talking to you, particularly about the baby chicks who were busy hatching out of their eggs at the time. We found that your school makes sure your progress is satisfactory, that you enjoy yourselves and that you are safe while you are there. We also found that you get on well together and your school is a happy place to be.

Your school cares well for you and helps you when you need it. We have asked the school to do a few things to make it even better for you. These are to:

- make sure your progress gets better by always asking questions that really stretch you
- check up on your work more carefully so that everything they plan for you really meets your needs
- ensure the governing body challenges the school to do better in the future.

You can help by always asking what you can do next, so you can get on and learn as much as possible.

Yours sincerely

Carolyn Carnaghan

Lead inspector

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