

Rawmarsh Children's Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106827
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	356031
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Lesley Clark

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Bird
Headteacher	Judy Oldale
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2008
School address	Barbers Crescent Rawmarsh Rotherham S62 6AD
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed for seven hours in six learning sessions led by four teachers, five early years practitioners and three teaching assistants. Meetings were held with parents, governors and staff. The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including: 'learning journeys' (individual records of children's learning and development); the school improvement plan; the school's monitoring of teaching and learning; and documentation relating to safeguarding. The team analysed questionnaires returned from staff and 43 questionnaires from parents and carers.

Information about the school

The nursery is part of Rawmarsh Children's Centre. The children's centre and day-care provision are inspected separately. These reports can be found on the Ofsted website.

The nursery is smaller than average-sized nursery schools. It offers flexible provision for up to 48 weeks a year with 'wrap-around' care for 16 children at breakfast and tea times and for 24 children at lunchtime. Almost all children are White British. The proportion of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have a statement of special educational needs is higher than that usually found in nursery schools. The school has an enhanced resource provision for up to four children. Approximately 5% of children are looked after. The headteacher works part time as part of a phased retirement until July 2011 and a new head of Centre has been appointed and will take over in August 2011.

The school has leading aspect awards for inclusion and speaking and listening. It was awarded the Quality Mark for Early Years in 2008 and 2011.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement	2
Teaching	2
Leadership and management	2
Behaviour and safety	1
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

This is a good nursery where children thrive. They are happy, well settled and enjoy learning. The nursery has several outstanding elements.

- It makes excellent provision for children with special educational needs, those who are looked after and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. These groups of children make outstanding progress from their below expected starting points.
- The nursery is exceptionally good at promoting children's personal, social and emotional development and their communication skills.
- Children's first-rate behaviour and awareness of safety are major factors in helping them to learn successfully.
- The nursery has outstanding links with parents and carers and makes sure that they are fully included in as many aspects of their children's learning as possible.
- The flexible care across three different but linked settings is exceptionally well managed because all settings follow the same procedures and have the same aims.

Children achieve well because they are well taught. Staff are very skilled at promoting children's language development through playing and talking with them, encouraging them to make independent choices and to play constructively together. The following aspects of teaching and learning are less effective.

- The most-able children are not always sufficiently challenged, especially in developing early reading skills.
- Staff do not always use the information in children's 'learning journeys' to help them plan activities based on children's needs and interests.
- Staff sometimes miss opportunities to extend learning through providing exciting, large-scale, investigative activities that challenge children to think for

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themselves.

The nursery is well led and managed and promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Parents and carers agree that 'it is a fantastic nursery, always available to help with any questions or concerns'. As a result, children develop into confident, sociable young people who are curious about the world around them and keen to try new experiences.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the learning and challenge for the most-able children, especially in developing early reading skills by:
 - increasing the opportunities for children to practise linking letters and sounds
 - providing an environment rich in the provision of printed work in many forms such as large written words and displays at child level
 - encouraging children to tell and 'write' their own stories and read them to adults and other children.
- Improve children's 'learning journeys' by:
 - including the next steps that children need to make in their learning
 - using this information to plan activities to ensure that children's interests and needs are met.
- Give children further opportunities to engage in exciting, large-scale and thought-provoking activities so as to extend their learning and challenge them to think for themselves.

Main report

Children quickly busy themselves when they come into the nursery because there are lots of interesting activities to do. They greet friends and staff affectionately and are keen to communicate what they have done at home. Parents and carers help their children to settle and exchange relevant information with staff. This includes checking daily the high-quality individual education and care plans and the 'My Week at Nursery' sheets for children with special educational needs or for children who have complex physical, emotional or behavioural problems or whose circumstances make them vulnerable. An excellent feature of these plans is the use of symbols, pictures and photographs as well as words. This enables staff, parents, carers and children, all of whom contribute to the plans, to identify very quickly if there are any concerns so immediate action can be taken. As a result, these children, including looked after children, make exceptional progress and the nursery is successfully closing the gap between their learning and development and that of others.

Children make good progress overall to reach levels that are broadly as expected by the end of the nursery stage. They lead their own learning for much of the day and

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choose freely from a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities. Children concentrate well when they work together in small groups at the start of each morning and afternoon session. Staff are adept at keeping tasks brief and using songs and repetitive rhymes to engage children's interests. Good use of resources such as dice and counting games facilitate children's secure understanding of numbers as labels and for counting. Staff are extremely good at developing children's language and communication skills. They give children time to listen and to respond to questions, helping children to become more articulate and to sustain conversations. In exceptionally well-taught sessions, children learn rapidly, as when, for example, they soaked up exciting new words such as 'shiny cloth' and 'yam' and gained insight into other cultures, as they joined in with an African story and passed these objects round.

Sometimes, staff miss opportunities to develop children's early reading skills to the full, especially the most-able children who are beginning to recognise and show a keen interest in letters, sounds and words. Children have relatively few times to practise linking sounds and letters systematically or to absorb new words through seeing them every day in key places. While children have a wide range of materials and implements to write with and very imaginative ideas, they have few occasions to write down their own stories or to make books that they can read to adults or each other. On the other hand, the involvement of parents and carers in reading to their children every day is very successful and fuels children's interest in books.

Staff record children's learning and development in detailed observations and parents add informative observations too. They record moments of wonder as when children found a frog, as well as significant learning moments. However, because staff identify very few 'next steps' that children need to make in their learning, they do not use the information as systematically as they should to ensure that they take children's needs and interests fully into account when planning activities. The weekly planning of many short activities restricts the potential to develop large-scale, investigative and thought-provoking activities, which take children's interests as a starting point. For example, children were very excited about the small pirate ship and finding buried treasure and some drew their own treasure map, copying one provided for them, and some donned pirate headscarves. Nearby, on an 'island' of grass, children, helped by an adult were building a den. An opportunity was therefore missed to join these two activities into a large-scale, exciting role play, to create a treasure island, for instance, so as to extend children's learning, challenge them to think for themselves and to use a wide range of materials while doing so.

Children's behaviour and awareness of staying safe is exceptionally mature for their age. They empathise with and respect each other, pointing out, for example, that some children were reluctant to join in because, 'maybe he didn't sleep much at night', or, 'she's just done lots of work'. They are kind to each other. They learn that there are 'golden rules' and explain that 'just one person' can talk at a time and that 'we need to be friends.' They know 'keep your hands and feet to yourself' means 'no nipping or kicking'. In these ways they show their advanced social and moral development. Parents and carers are completely in agreement that their children are

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safe and that their children act sensibly and behave very well. They pour drinks, for example, without spillage and use knives safely to make their sandwiches at tea time. When they ride bikes they take care not to bump into each other and when whirling streamers in the wind they stay a safe distance from other people so they do not become entangled.

The considerable strengths in the leadership and management of the nursery have contributed to good and improving outcomes for children not only academically but also in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through valuing children's home cultures and extending their understanding of different communities. As a result, children happily sample a wide range of foods from different cultures and celebrate festivals such as the Chinese New Year. Leaders, managers and governors promote equality and tackle diversity successfully. For example, through scrupulously accurate self-evaluation, senior leaders identified that boys were performing less well than girls. There is now minimal difference in their achievements because staff have successfully improved boys' learning through targeting their social development, teaching them in 'boys only' groups and placing a strong emphasis on active learning and using hands-on resources.

Leaders and managers are ambitious and drive improvements at a good rate. A significant development since the last inspection is the extent to which leadership and management is shared across the centre as a whole and works in partnership with other educational providers to the benefit of the staff and children. Governors play a full part in these initiatives and see themselves as a 'think tank for problem-solving'. The impact of this coherent, consistent and outward-looking approach is seen in the outstanding involvement of parents and carers not only in their children's learning and development but in local projects such as the one to 'Get Rawmarsh Reading'. The middle layer of leadership and management is developing well and becoming increasingly effective as staff begin to take part in monitoring teaching and learning, for instance. The staff work well as a team and are keen to make suggestions. The nursery demonstrates its capacity to improve further at this good rate. Safeguarding meets all current requirements and is meticulously and regularly checked.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rawmarsh Children's Centre 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 112 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	38	88	5	12	0	0	0	0
Q2 My child feels safe at school	36	84	7	16	0	0	0	0
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	38	88	5	12	0	0	0	0
Q4 The school meets my child's particular needs	36	84	6	14	1	2	0	0
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	37	86	6	14	0	0	0	0
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	36	84	7	16	0	0	0	0
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	32	74	8	19	1	2	0	0
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	32	74	8	19	0	0	0	0
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	31	72	7	16	1	2	0	0
Q10 The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	84	7	16	0	0	0	0
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	35	81	7	16	1	2	0	0
Q12 The school is well led and managed	37	86	6	14	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 pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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 pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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 pupils 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 achievement of all pupils. ■ Behaviour and safety. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

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 May 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Rawmarsh Children's Centre, Rotherham, S62 6AD

Thank you for your friendly welcome. We really enjoyed meeting you all and talking to you. You go to a good nursery, with kind staff who give you lots of interesting things to do. The adults are extremely good at helping you to learn new words and to use them to talk to everyone. They are extremely good at teaching you to behave kindly towards each other. Your behaviour and safety are excellent. You make your own sandwiches using knives sensibly just like older people. If some of you are struggling to learn, the adults in your nursery know just what to do to help you. The help they give is outstanding. Your parents and carers think so too. They are part of your nursery and this is excellent. The people in charge are in charge of the babies and toddlers as well as you and they manage this extremely well.

This is what your nursery needs to do next to make it even better.

- Adults should give more help to those of you who are ready to start reading because some of you are very interested in letters, sounds and words.
- We have asked adults to add extra bits to your special books called 'learning journeys' to help them plan activities that are just right for each of you.
- Lastly, we think adults could make your activities even more exciting by involving you in making and building big things like a treasure island and thinking things out by yourselves.

You can help by coming to nursery every day, asking lots of questions and saying what you would like to do too.

With very best wishes to you all.

Lesley Clark
Lead inspector

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