

St Edmund's Nursery School & Children's Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107190
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	377548
Inspection dates	7–8 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Dodd

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	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mairead Hinchliffe
Headteacher	Anne-Marie Merifield
Date of previous school inspection	09 December 2008
School address	Washington Street Girlington Bradford BD8 9QW
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Registered childcare provision	St Edmunds Nursery School & Children's Centre
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	75
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	February 2007

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons involving five teachers and several support staff. The inspectors held discussions with staff, with children and with members of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed documentation, including a review of improvement plans, the systems for tracking children's progress and the arrangements for safeguarding children. The inspectors analysed 101 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and 40 from staff.

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

- Whether attainment by the end of nursery is above average and whether children make consistently outstanding progress from their starting points.
- The rate of attendance and whether efforts to improve it are working.
- The quality of teaching, particularly how well assessment information is used to provide work that matches children's varying abilities.
- How effectively teachers and support staff develop children's speech and language skills.
- How effectively leaders and managers and the governing body contribute to reviewing children's progress, to monitoring the quality of provision and to self-evaluation processes, and whether this leads to an accurate view of children's achievements and the school's effectiveness.

Information about the school

Most of the children at this larger than average-sized nursery school are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Although the majority are of Pakistani heritage, the proportion of children from other ethnic backgrounds, particularly from Eastern Europe, is increasing. Most children speak English as an additional language, with almost one half at an early stage of learning to speak English when they join. Since the previous inspection, the number of children attending has increased by about one third. Although the majority of children live nearby, the school draws from a wide area across the city. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. The school provides a 'resource base' for the local authority for up to 20 children with severe or complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These children are fully integrated into the main school. The school also provides registered childcare to local families from 7.45am to 5.45pm which runs all year round for up to 54 children from birth to the age of five. The education and welfare of children in the registered childcare was included as part of this inspection. The children's centre, also located on-site, was not part of this inspection, although was inspected at the same time. A separate report for the children's centre is available on the Ofsted website. The school has been accredited with several awards, including the Inclusion Kite Mark, the Gold Standard for Healthy Teeth and it has achieved Healthy School status. It has also been designated as a National Early Years Teaching Centre and a Centre for Excellence in Child Safety.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This school continues to provide an outstanding education for children. 'The St Edmund's experience is something very special', and 'My children love it and so do I' are comments that typify the overwhelmingly positive views of parents and carers. By working closely together as a highly effective staff team, since the previous inspection, the school has gone from strength to strength, building successfully on its track record of outstanding achievement. Improvements in children's attendance, to the outstanding quality of teaching, enhancement of the excellent curriculum, along with even stronger partnerships fostered with a growing number of parents and carers, are just a few examples of the many recent successes. Apart from children's attainment and their attendance both of which are above average, all aspects of the school's work are outstanding.

Children's achievement in the nursery, registered childcare and for those attending the resourced provision are all outstanding. By the time children leave, the proportion that reaches or exceeds the skills expected for their age is above average. This represents outstanding progress from their often well below average skills when they join. Relationships between adults and children are exceptionally warm and caring. This, along with the vibrant, well-organised and extremely well-resourced learning environment, ensures that children feel totally safe and are very happy. Excellent attention is given to ensuring that the welfare needs of children are met, including those in the registered childcare. Children's personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. Their behaviour is consistently excellent. This is because the activities offered continually promote their independence and curiosity, fires their young imaginations and challenges their thinking. Highly skilled questioning by very experienced teachers ensures that children make outstanding progress. Teachers use their meticulous assessments of what children already know and can do extremely well in order to identify and plan children's next steps in learning. Occasionally, opportunities to develop speech and language skills or to pinpoint children's next steps are overlooked when children learn and play alongside support staff. This is because the questioning skills of a few, less experienced staff, are not yet fully developed.

A key factor in the school's sustained successes and improvement is the very strong, strategic and inspirational leadership of the headteacher. Providing a fully inclusive and high-quality learning environment, so that children reach their full potential, is constantly in firm view. All staff and the governing body share in this vision and

strive to meet it with equal determination. The professionalism, commitment and dedication of everyone make a significant contribution. This is a school that knows itself particularly well. An ethos of continual self-reflection and evaluation pervades. Although leaders and managers have accurately evaluated their effectiveness as outstanding, there is absolutely no complacency. Rather, they share an unwavering determination not to 'rest on their laurels' and to seek further opportunities for helping children to achieve even more. As a result of these strengths, the school has an excellent capacity to sustain this level of performance and provides excellent value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the questioning skills of support staff so that opportunities to promote speech and language development and to pinpoint children's next steps are always maximised.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Achievement is outstanding. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those that speak English as an additional language, enjoy school immensely and make outstanding progress. Children are continually captivated by an extensive range of activities that enable them to learn through very varied and high-quality sensory experiences. Children, including those with complex and severe learning difficulties, show high levels of independence, influencing how, what and where they play and learn. They revel in wonderful opportunities to develop their creativity, for example, by working alongside a community artist, building dens outdoors or baking gingerbread. Although some children have only attended the school for a short period, their ability to sit and listen to adults or to one another and to share and take turns, is impressive. They respond extremely politely to instructions and to questions. They effectively sustain their concentration because the activities are always exciting, engaging and challenging.

Children show an excellent awareness of the importance of eating healthily. They choose and buy their preferred healthy snack at the weekly 'Food Co-op' stalls. They adopt excellent routines for hygiene, continually rising to the very high expectations engendered by staff. Children's understanding of how to keep safe is outstanding. They are extremely clear about what to do in the event of a fire. Ongoing opportunities for taking calculated risks, such as when playing on the climbing equipment, always under very close guidance by staff, ensure that they develop a keen understanding of potential dangers and of their own limitations. Children's excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development shows in their exemplary behaviour and in how children of varying ethnic backgrounds and abilities play and learn so harmoniously together. These striking personal qualities, along with their outstanding progress and eagerness to learn, ensure they are extremely well-prepared for their future. Attendance is not compulsory for children of this age. Even so, the school works highly effectively with parents and carers to promote good attitudes to attendance and, as a result, attendance has recently improved.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and support staff work very closely and enthusiastically together to promote children's outstanding achievement and welfare. They form excellent relationships with children so that they can learn in a very calm, nurturing and purposeful environment, where children's self-confidence and independence are extremely well developed. Through very accurate and frequent assessments of children's skills and abilities, the teachers, in conjunction with support staff, ensure that they constantly adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of every child. Excellent bilingual support enables children at an early stage of learning to speak English to make rapid gains in their learning. Highly skilled specialist teaching of children with severe or complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities provides outstanding support. Activities for these children enable them to explore their learning environment, stimulating their senses. Occasionally, opportunities to promote children's speaking skills remain overlooked when children learn alongside less experienced support staff. Nevertheless, there is an excellent balance of activities between those where children learn under the direct guidance of staff and those where children can initiate their own learning and follow their interests. Staff provide a wonderful array of opportunities to promote learning beyond the classroom. Children regularly visit a local wetland and also now go on a residential visit. Such opportunities foster an excellent early understanding of the wider world and children's personal and social skills.

Making sure children are extremely well cared for so that they can really enjoy learning is at the heart of the school. Excellent quality pastoral support is evident in daily practices. Close partnerships with parents and carers and with external support agencies mirrors the school's unrelenting commitment to helping children with additional needs, including those at early stage of learning to speak English or with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Excellent communication between staff in the nursery, registered childcare and with the children's centre, ensures that all aspects of children's welfare and learning are seamlessly and continuously met.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

This exceptionally caring, safe and supportive school is reflected in the commitment of everyone to promoting excellence. This is why, for example, the school's safeguarding procedures are outstanding. The impact of thorough training of staff at all levels, along with the ongoing communication between staff, home and support agencies shows in very detailed and meticulous written records. A strong emphasis is placed on the inclusion of all children, to eradicate any potential barriers to learning and to ensure all children can participate in everything the school has to offer. This is why children from the resourced provision integrate seamlessly into the main school. This demonstrates the school's successful commitment to providing equal opportunities for all. Furthermore, a rigorous analysis of the school's performance and robust monitoring of the quality of provision by leaders and managers at all levels and by the governing body, pinpoint improvement priorities swiftly and precisely. Leaders already know there remains scope to further develop the skills of support staff to ensure opportunities to boost children's language skills and identify their next steps are always maximised.

The promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. From a young age, children develop an excellent understanding of the diversity of cultures within their own school community, nearby and further afield. The school is highly respected within the locality and influential in improving community life. The school's excellent reputation is acknowledged not only within the locality but is now recognised nationally, reflecting their recent accreditation as a National Early Years Teaching Centre. Staff are always keen to take up professional development opportunities, yet at the same time, to share their outstanding practices with others. Excellent partnerships with external support agencies, with community professionals and with other schools all help to strengthen the quality of provision on offer. Similarly, the outstanding partnership fostered between home and school makes a significant contribution to children's excellent achievement. Parents and carers participate in a plethora of activities that allows them to get fully involved in school life, for example, by attending themed days, such as 'Talking Together'. Similarly, 'Better Together' meetings enable them to fully appreciate their role in supporting their children at home. The governing body makes an exceptional contribution. It offers significant levels of challenge because of members' extensive professional expertise. They have an impressive understanding of how to hold the school to account, both for ensuring that outcomes for the children continually improve and for safeguarding children.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

An above-average proportion of questionnaires were returned. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of all aspects of the school's work. They strongly agree that their children are kept safe and that the quality of teaching and leadership is good. Comments that were made, either through the questionnaires or during discussions with inspectors, all expressed highly positive views. 'Wonderful', 'we couldn't ask for more', and 'the work of staff in this brilliant nursery is exceptional' typify their responses. Many also expressed their appreciation for the open and very warm and welcoming approach by everyone, and for the many opportunities they have to extend their own personal and academic skills.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Edmund's Nursery School & 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 101 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 157 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	79	78	21	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	77	76	23	23	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	78	77	23	23	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	72	71	27	27	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	77	76	24	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	65	64	34	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	58	57	41	41	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)	56	55	41	41	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	64	63	36	36	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	65	64	32	32	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	65	64	32	32	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	72	71	28	28	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	78	77	23	23	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and is 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 up 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 school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



9 November 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of St Edmund's Nursery School & Children's Centre, Bradford, BD8 9QW

Thank you for the lovely warm and friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We really enjoyed being part of your school community and watching you have so much fun. Your school is excellent and you learn a lot, very quickly indeed. There are so many fabulous things happening all the time in your school. These are just a few of the things that we really liked:

- seeing how well you behave all the time and how you get on so well together
- seeing you make lots of choices about what, where and how you learn and play
- watching you concentrating really hard, such as when you play number and memory games, building dens outside and measuring out the ingredients for baking gingerbread
- finding out just how well you are cared for by all the adults and that you also know how to keep yourselves safe
- finding out just how pleased all your parents and carers are with your school and all the chances they have to get involved in your learning and play.

Your school is so good that the staff who look after it are already clear about the ways they can make it even better for you and, they never stop looking. We have asked that they make sure that:

- all the staff that support you always ask you questions that give you a chance to practise your speaking skills.

I hope that you all continue to have a wonderful time and wish you lots of luck for your future.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Dodd
Lead inspector

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