

Evesham Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	132104
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	381444
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2012
Lead inspector	Lois Furness

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 sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Witheford
Headteacher	Marian Gager
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2009
School address	Four Pools Lane Evesham WR11 1BN
Telephone number	01386 423118
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Email address	head@evesham-nur.worcs.sch.uk

Registered childcare provision	EY317978
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	8
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected

Age group	3–4
Inspection date(s)	26–27 April 2012
Inspection number	381444



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Introduction

Inspection team

Lois Furness

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent six hours and 25 minutes either observing direct teaching and independent, continuous learning or discussing and observing individual children at play. Two teachers and eight other practitioners were seen and spoken to. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, parents and carers, staff and children. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at observation, assessment and planning records, policies and management documentation in relation to school improvement, safeguarding and health and safety. She scrutinised examples of children's 'learning journeys' and the school's assessment documentation. Account was taken of questionnaires completed by 12 staff and 40 parents and carers.

Information about the school

Evesham Nursery School is smaller than average. Most children join the school after their third birthday and admissions are ongoing throughout the year. Children attend on a flexible basis, with a variety of patterns of provision matched to the needs of individual families. There is a small proportion of children with special educational needs. Most children are White British. A minority of children have English as an additional language and these children are mainly from Eastern European countries. As a nursery school, children's eligibility for free school meals is not known. Childcare services provided include family group sessions for parent and carers with young children between the ages of two and three years; Acorns Pre-School for children aged between two and three years where parents and carers can leave their children for two hours; an after-school club which is open to the nursery school children who need to stay from 3.30pm-5pm; and a lunch club open to all nursery school children from 11.30am-12.30pm.

There have been many changes since the time of the previous inspection. The school has moved into a new building, and the future of the setting and staffing has been uncertain. However, these issues have now been resolved and the current headteacher who was initially seconded to the school for two terms, was made permanent in February 2012.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Although improving over recent months, the school is not yet good, because assessment information is not used rigorously enough to ensure all children make good progress. Observations and assessment records do not provide a clear enough picture of each child’s progress in all six areas of learning. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Children achieve satisfactorily from starting points that mainly match those expected for their age, although progress is good in children’s personal, social and emotional development.
- Teaching overall is satisfactory although there are strengths in areas such as encouraging independence and in behaviour management. This is because staff do not consistently use what they know about children’s attainment to plan future learning experiences. Teachers’ performance is satisfactorily managed and suitable plans are in place to improve teaching quality through extensive professional development opportunities.
- Well-established routines ensure children feel safe, behave well and are confident to select tasks and join in activities with adults and other children in the indoor and outdoor spaces. Children enjoy school and have good attitudes towards learning. They know how to use equipment safely and take risks sensibly for example, in the Forest School.
- The new headteacher and the governing body have effectively steered the school through a period of disruption. Although a good start has been made in implementing improvements to provision, monitoring and evaluation systems and the analysis of assessment data are not sharp enough. This means underachievement is not quickly identified and action taken. The curriculum does not always reflect children’s interests and, until very recently, themes have

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been mainly chosen by staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the good achievement of all children, by staff:
 - making accurate initial assessments of children’s starting points in all areas of learning by October 2012
 - using ongoing assessment information from regular observations to plan next steps of learning for children
 - providing different groups, including disabled children and those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, with specific targeted support
 - implementing a curriculum that is reflective of children’s learning needs and interests
 - having the opportunities to improve their knowledge of the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and to view good Early Years Foundation Stage practice.

- Improve leadership and management by July 2012 by:
 - establishing a rigorous cycle of checking planning and children’s termly progress information including ‘learning journeys’
 - regularly analysing assessment data to identify any underachievement and then taking any necessary action
 - the governing body developing its role in challenging the school’s work, and also reviewing and updating any necessary policies.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children’s knowledge and skills on entry broadly match those expected for their age, in all six areas of learning. However, the evidence for attainment on entry over time is not as secure as it should be. This is because, in the past, initial assessments have been made only for children’s personal, social and emotional development. This practice has stopped and now more detailed assessments of children’s starting points are being introduced. A tracking system has also been recently introduced and this shows that progress is satisfactory for all groups of children including disabled children and those with special educational needs. Analysis of assessment data available shows boys and girls make equal progress in their learning, and those who are learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. However, these different groups of pupils do not always receive the targeted support necessary to accelerate their progress. By the time children leave the nursery, attainment is in line with age-related expectations, apart from in their personal, social and emotional development which is above that expected for their age.

Staff conscientiously plan a range of exciting activities for children, particularly in the

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Forest School. Children are enthused at these times, and become completely engrossed in their learning. For example, after working hard to dig a fish pond, children then carefully fished for 'dandelion' fish. They were mesmerised when a tiny frog was discovered and commented on how it uses its legs to jump along. Staff are on hand at these times to develop vocabulary, so there is a positive impact on children's learning. At another time, three children were thinking about spiders and their habitats. As a result of good questioning, they decided the hole in the shed would be good place for a spider's home as it was dark and warm.

Early reading skills are promoted satisfactorily. Daily opportunities for children to hear stories are available, alongside an early introduction to phonics (linking letters with the sounds they make). Staff encourage children to say the initial sounds of words when thinking of ingredients for the giant's soup or when writing their name, for example. However, not all staff are competent in teaching phonics and, at times, children are taught sounds incorrectly.

All parents and carers who returned the Ofsted questionnaire are pleased with the progress made by their children, saying they enjoy school. This enjoyment can be seen as children excitedly come into the nursery with smiles on their faces. They quickly find an activity and interestedly begin their work. The inspection, however, found that children make satisfactory progress overall with good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. This is because planning has not focused sufficiently on the intended learning within activities, and ongoing assessment information is not used rigorously to ensure all children are challenged well.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers say teaching is good and meets the needs of their children. The inspection found that teaching is satisfactory including that for disabled children and those with special educational needs. A broad range of activities is planned in both the indoor and outdoor environments and there is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning. However, the planning of learning is only satisfactory, focusing too much on the activities rather than what different children might learn from them. Observations are carried out regularly and outcomes are recorded. This information is not used well enough to plan next steps of learning for each child. Those children who are learning English as an additional language do not consistently receive the language support necessary to ensure their good progress. On occasions, groups working with a teacher are too large and children have to wait too long for their turn, which slows the pace of learning. Assessment records including children's 'learning journeys' do not provide detailed evidence of children's progress over time.

Good relationships between staff and children and good use of praise ensure that children grow in confidence and independence. Staff manage behaviour effectively, carefully explaining if behaviour is unkind. Children are taught the importance of sharing resources and of helping each other, which was seen as children made the

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giant's soup and poured water down the drainpipe. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively supported through activities that promote emotional development such as giving children time to reflect, and talk about their feelings. Visits to the museum, music and dance activities and working with the artist-in-residence support children's good cultural development. The curriculum is improving as the new headteacher encourages staff to plan themes and activities that are more relevant to children's interest. The latest theme of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' has involved children's interests as they have thought about what they would like to find out, rather than adults planning all of the activities.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is good and this is reflected in the views of parents and carers, none of whom raised any concerns regarding the behaviour or safety of children in school. Staff provide good role models and set consistent high expectations for behaviour. Rarely was any disruption due to unacceptable behaviour seen during the inspection. Children have good attitudes towards learning and eagerly apply themselves to their activities. They concentrate well, for example during story reading sessions, and willingly join in question and answer sessions.

Children effectively learn personal values such as honesty, fairness and respect for one another. For example, family customs and religious beliefs are shared through children's exploration of similarities and differences. There have been no exclusions, instances of racism or seriously unkind behaviour of any description (bullying) over time. Despite their young age, children are aware that name calling or pushing each other is inappropriate. They are encouraged to behave in a considerate manner and resolve any conflicts amicably. As a result, children are clearly happy and relaxed. They are cooperative and friendly, and most help with tasks such as tidying away equipment or helping to prepare snacks.

Children say that adults are kind and helpful and they enjoy playing with their friends. They like coming to nursery school and learn how to keep themselves safe. This was evident as one member of staff carefully explained to a child how to use a tyre swing safely. There are many opportunities for children to learn about safety in their work and play. For example, children learn how to use scissors safely, a knife and fork appropriately and how to be careful when using gardening equipment. Most children attend regularly and arrive punctually for the start of a session.

Leadership and management

The new headteacher has a clear vision and knows exactly the strengths and weaknesses in provision. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school development plan provides a useful tool for school improvement. In a short time, she has earned the respect of parents and carers, staff and children and through the successful reduction of the deficit budget, the expected redundancy of teaching staff has been avoided. Staff morale is high and they have been made aware that changes are necessary with regard to planning, use of assessment and the curriculum. They

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recognise that professional development is required to enable them to move forward. The changes made so far, the response to the key issues identified at the previous inspection and performance management which has started to improve teaching, indicate a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

The satisfactory curriculum is improving as children contribute their ideas and staff acknowledge children's interests. However, themes are structured too tightly into time blocks, and staff do not always modify them as a result of children's response. Opportunities are missed to promote literacy, especially for children who are learning English as an additional language, by providing a text-rich environment. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Staff work hard, and successfully, to encourage cooperation, teach right from wrong, provide opportunities for awe and wonder and extend children's understanding of different cultures.

The governing body is supportive and actively involved in the school's work. However, the lack of rigorous monitoring and evaluation, including analysis of data, has made it difficult for the governing body to challenge the work of the school. Also, many policies are out of date and do not reflect current practice. Statutory requirements in respect of safeguarding and all vetting and recruitment requirements are met fully. Parents and carers believe that children are kept safe.

The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily: it does not track children's progress well enough to ensure all make as much progress as they could. Nevertheless, all children are equally valued and there is no place for discrimination. Parents and carers feel engaged in, and are fully supportive of, the work of the school. The lunch and after-school clubs are appreciated and the parents' and carers' group sessions provide a good opportunity for children and adults to meet and learn together. All who returned the questionnaire would recommend this school to others.

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The Early Years Foundation Stage delivered in the registered childcare provision

Acorns Pre-School operates mainly from a separate partitioned area to the main nursery room with a shared outdoor area. At times, the partition is drawn back and then all children play together. The facility is available for children aged between two and three years of age, and a maximum of eight children can attend at any one time. It is open for three sessions each week during term time and registration requirements are fully met.

Children's welfare, learning and development are satisfactory, as are leadership and management. All staff are suitably qualified and have undertaken safeguarding training. They are aware of the necessary steps to take should they have any concerns about the welfare of a child. Observations show children are happy and settled. They enjoy activities such as painting, playing with construction toys or solving problems during sand and water play. They particularly like going outside, as was seen when children excitedly played in puddles of water. They are encouraged to play safely and to eat healthy food. Personal hygiene practices are developed effectively as children wash their hands after painting and before eating, for example. Children follow instructions and behaviour is good. Although there are a lot of interesting activities available, it is not consistently clear what children are expected to learn from these. Adult interactions do not always encourage children to verbalise their ideas. Children's 'learning journeys' provide a satisfactory record of their learning and these are shared with parents. However, parents have only very recently been encouraged to contribute to this record.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage of the registered childcare provision, inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage for the registered provision	3

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



30 April 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Evesham Nursery School, Evesham, WR11 1BN

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I came to visit your nursery school. Your teachers try very hard to make sure you are happy and enjoy your time at school. They do this very well, as I saw you all laughing lots throughout the day. You certainly found activities such as splashing in water and catching dandelion fish great fun. You behave well and listen carefully to instructions. Most of you are keen to help each other and the staff and it was good to see you helping to tidy away resources or helping to get ready for snack time. Your teachers also take good care of you and make sure you are kept safe. It was good to see how you are taught to use different equipment such as spades or scissors in a safe way. Your parents and carers told me they like the school a lot and you also told me you like coming to nursery.

I judged your school to be satisfactory and to make your school good I have asked for two things to happen. First, I want the teachers to make sure that you are all making good progress in your learning. Teachers need to make sure that activities are carefully planned so that they are at the right level of difficulty for all of you, including those of you who sometimes need more help. Second, your Headteacher needs to work with all adults to find ways to make everything even better.

You can help your teachers by telling them about the things you like to do and would like to find out, and by carrying on working hard and enjoying playing together.

Finally, I would like to thank you again and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Lois Furness
Lead inspector

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