

Castle Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	112482
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	378495
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2012
Lead inspector	David Speakman

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	36
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Crathorne
Headteacher	Maxine Bull
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2009
School address	Copeland Street Derby DE1 2PU
Telephone number	01332 347388
Fax number	01332 347388
Email address	admin@castle.derby.sch.uk

Age group	3–5
Inspection date(s)	4–5 July 2012
Inspection number	378495



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012



Introduction

Inspection team

David Speakman

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent four and a half hours directly observing children learning in focus groups and in free-flow activities, and talking to children informally during observations. One teacher and six teaching assistants were observed. The inspector observed support provided for disabled children and those who have special educational needs, or who speak English as an additional language. Meetings were held with members of the governing body and staff. The inspector scrutinised the school's arrangements for safeguarding children. He observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including: improvement plans, self-evaluation, assessment data that are used to monitor children's progress and a selection of children's 'Learning Journeys'. Questionnaire responses from 20 parents and carers and nine members of staff were analysed.

Information about the school

This nursery school is smaller than average, and situated close to the city centre. There is very little local housing so most children travel from different areas of the city, with parents and carers choosing to send their children to Castle Nursery. Attendance arrangements are flexible, ranging from two and a half days or equivalent to five full days. Over 60% of the children come from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages. Eleven languages other than English are spoken by the children. About half speak English, but the rest are at the early stages of learning English and have little experience of speaking English on entry. The proportion of disabled children and those who are supported by school action plus or by a statement of special educational needs is above average for this type of school.

Since April 2010, the school has worked in federation with St Chad's Nursery and Infant School. The previous federation with Cherry Tree Hill Infant School was dissolved. Since the previous inspection there is a new headteacher and governing body for both federated schools. The school has links with Babington Children's Centre and Rose Hill Children's Centre.

There is a breakfast club and after-school care both of which are the responsibility of the governing body and were included in this inspection.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. It is outstanding because it is highly successful in meeting children's wide range of learning needs through providing high-quality teaching and support tailored to suit each individual child.
- Children's academic achievement and personal development are outstanding. Through engaging in investigation and purposeful play, children soon become independent learners. All children, including those who speak English as an additional language, quickly become effective communicators. They develop a good understanding of number. They become extremely confident physically, and learn a great deal about the world around them. Disabled children and those with special educational needs are fully included in all activities and make excellent progress.
- Teaching is outstanding. Adults are highly skilled and lead and support learning of outstanding quality. All adults contribute equally to ensure a very competent teaching force. They monitor children's learning closely and use observations to ensure each child is making excellent progress and experiences a well-balanced learning programme.
- Children behave exceptionally well at all times. Because they are interested in their activities, they remain focused and on task for long periods of time. They form friendships easily and get on with others exceptionally well, seen in the way in which they work and play together. Children are kept very safe in school. They have a secure understanding of what causes risk to themselves and others, acting accordingly.
- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Her skills and those of the assistant headteacher complement each other exceptionally well. They ensure that staff have opportunities to develop their own skills and share experiences so all are highly competent. They rigorously manage performance and make excellent provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural

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

development. The programme of learning opportunities is excellent but, very occasionally, outside activities are not fully exploited. The governing body provides excellent levels of support and challenge.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By September 2013, extend the programme for learning outside, so it is always of the highest quality by maximising use of learning resources for children to learn out of doors.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

All children achieve exceptionally well from starting points that are low compared to those expected for their age. Most children reach age-related expectations in all areas of learning by the time they leave and, this year, the large majority are working at levels beyond this. A smaller proportion, but still the majority, exceeds expectations in their knowledge of letter sounds and in writing.

Because of the school's strong focus on promoting language skills, children who speak English as an additional language very quickly acquire competent skills in English and make the same excellent progress as English-speaking children. Staff use signing and visual learning prompts, for example a simple drawing of an ear with the words 'good listening' to help children understand and quickly build an English vocabulary. Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are identified quickly and receive highly-focused support that is matched exceptionally well to their individual needs. They too, make exceptional progress. This means that the attainment gap between the lowest-attaining children and the levels nationally expected for their age is closing quickly.

Children are very enthusiastic learners and readily engage in activities. Following a trip to Matlock Bath, children demonstrated their competence in speaking and listening skills. They are confident speakers and contributed well to the discussion about their trip. They spoke to the younger children who were not part of the visit, explaining clearly what was happening in the photographs displayed. Through accurate vocabulary, they expressed their ideas and thoughts well. They explained accurately, for example, how they crossed the road using the pelican crossing, demonstrating their secure knowledge and understanding of how to keep safe. Children have a good knowledge of number. In an adult-led session, children rapidly ordered numbers from one to 10 and even knew that zero came before one.

Children enjoy using books. At story time, children used pictures in the story book, *Spot goes to the seaside*, to say what they thought was happening at each stage of

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

the story and what they thought was going to happen next. They recognise a good range of letters and the sounds they make and recognise many simple words, being able to accurately pick out rhyming words.

Children are very confident physically. They play on the outdoor equipment safely, but are still adventurous when climbing on the apparatus or when riding the tricycles. One child is able to balance and ride the two-wheeled 'wobbly bike'. They are very creative. Their painting is expressive, colourful and paintings of trains, for example, are easily recognisable. They are very enthusiastic singers and know a number of songs so they can join in singing confidently. They show good rhythm and body control, for example while moulding play dough at the 'dough disco'.

Inspection findings on achievement are endorsed by parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire. The views of many parents and carers, including those spoken to as part of the inspection, are accurately summed up in the following statement: 'My child has learnt so much since he started; he is growing in confidence each week and is now learning to do fantastic writing, and it's because he wants to do it and enjoys it. Castle Nursery really is a fantastic school where the children learn, grow and develop while having lots of fun – and they make it fun to learn.'

Quality of teaching

All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agree with inspection findings that their children are taught exceptionally well and that the school meets their children's needs. Teaching is outstanding because staff know each child and the needs of each group of entrants exceptionally well. They use this knowledge carefully to plan learning activities that consolidate previous learning and challenge children to take the next steps, moving on very quickly. Staff are highly skilled, through their professional development, in all areas that directly support children's learning and well-being. Staff expertise includes communicating through signs and symbols, physical literacy, accurate assessment of children's progress, forest schools and playful learning. They are very competent at teaching reading. Beginning with initial letter sounds, using visual prompts and introducing simple word recognition, they are very effective in teaching children to read, including those children who speak English as an additional language. Staff share their expertise with each other so there is consistency of quality across all key worker groups. This excellent level of staff development to raise the impact of teaching is a direct result of the school's federation with St Chad's Infant School.

Adults constantly interact with children during independent learning. Highly focused questioning and the use of signs and symbols during children's play develop vocabulary and language very well, particularly for children who speak English as an additional language. For example, in the role-play area, children were given the opportunity to go on a train journey. They filled the train and talked about the journey. The adult asked leading questions that effectively guided their conversation and helped them learn about having to have a ticket to travel. The focus on enquiry,

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

the wide range of cultural activities and opportunities to celebrate achievement are highly effective in promoting pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The teaching of disabled children and those with special educational needs is outstanding. Staff know each individual exceptionally well and manage the support programmes so that children can be independent, but receive timely support to enable them to maintain rapid progress. Children's medical needs are exceptionally well met through skilled intervention. For example, staff are able to adjust the hearing aids of hearing-impaired children so they hear clearly and join in freely.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Children enjoy school as shown in their high level of engagement in activities. They understand what good behaviour is, cooperate readily and are very good at managing their own behaviour. They share, take turns and listen carefully to each other. Because activities are fun, children stay focused, even at the end of the day when some have been at school since the morning. Children attending the breakfast club or after-school care are looked after very well. They have a good breakfast, an opportunity to socialise with other children or join in adult-led activities.

Children feel safe in school. All questionnaire responses confirm parents' and carers' confidence in their children's safety and, typically, very positive attitudes and behaviour. Children behave in a safe manner when riding tricycles and bikes around the outdoor space, climbing on the apparatus, and using equipment. They are very aware of each other's space and there are very few bumps and accidents. Children have a very clear understanding of the risks because adults encourage them to think carefully about potential dangers. No incidents of bullying or poor behaviour have had need to be recorded for some time. Excellent levels of care ensure that there is very effective support for children whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and those with medical conditions.

Leadership and management

Federation with St Chad's Infant School brings outstanding leadership to Castle Nursery School. The headteacher and governing body have ensured that individual staff have developed exceptional expertise, which is shared across all adults working in the school. Close monitoring of provision by the governing body, the headteacher and assistant headteacher has supported and led to improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. They are aware of areas they can improve, such as outdoor learning, but action on this aspect has not been effected. Since the previous inspection, there have been marked improvements in key areas of the school's work. Teaching is outstanding, children's progress is excellent and standards are rising. There has been excellent improvement since the previous inspection. Consequently, the school shows capacity to improve even more.

The governing body meets all statutory duties in relation to safeguarding. Leaders ensure safe recruitment of staff. All staff are well trained in child protection to a level

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

appropriate to their responsibility. Staff make very careful checks of any potential hazards, both for special events and for the daily school routine.

The excellent programme of learning provides children with rich opportunities to become highly effective learners, with a strong emphasis on developing their skills in communication, language and numeracy. They make rapid progress and achieve outstandingly well in all areas of their development. The organisation of the school into themed areas enables adults to focus on specific knowledge, understanding and skills and ensures that all areas of learning are very well resourced.

Very occasionally, opportunities for children to learn outside, such as water play to develop early knowledge and understanding of volume are not readily accessible to promote free-flow of learning activity. Nevertheless, even with this limitation, the impressive programme of learning contributes greatly in guiding teaching and ensuring children's high commitment to learning. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. Children become successful independent learners. They learn about and respect the diverse range of backgrounds from which others come. They value their own achievements and celebrate those of others. The school is highly inclusive; equality is promoted exceptionally well and there is no discrimination of any kind. The close monitoring each child's performance enables leaders to ensure that children have equal of opportunity to succeed.

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.



6 July 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Castle Nursery School, Derby DE1 2PU

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I could see how much you enjoy yourselves because you all joined in with the activities and got very excited when taking part. Your school is outstanding, which means it gives you an excellent start to your school life. You all learn new things very quickly and very well. Those of you who speak languages other than English soon learn enough to join in all learning activities.

These are the best things about your school.

- Adults organise lots of interesting activities for you to enjoy and you learn new things every day. Although good, activities outside do not match the excellent ones indoors well enough.
- You all behave really well and you all get on well together. You are all kept very safe in the nursery.
- Adults join in with your play and learning and ask lots of questions which help you find things out for yourselves and become good talkers.
- You are able to make choices about what you join in and stick at tasks for a long time.
- Your skills in speaking and listening, early reading and writing, and counting develop really well during the time you are in the school.

Even in the very best schools, something can be improved, so I have asked the adults to make sure they always make the most of opportunities for you to learn outside and to organise the equipment to allow you to do this.

All the adults work hard for you but never stop trying to improve what they do even more. You can help by continuing to do your best and to keep trying new things, even when you find them hard at first.

Yours sincerely

David Speakman
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**