

Hillfields Early Years Centre

Clifton Street, Coventry, CV1 5GR

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The achievement of children is outstanding. They enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills well below those typical for their age. They make excellent progress to catch up with most children of a similar age.
- Almost all teaching is outstanding.
- The head of centre and other senior leaders provide outstanding leadership with good support from the governing body. They have a long track record of successfully maintaining outstanding teaching and achievement.
- Children love to come to the nursery and work hard because teachers plan exciting activities that interest and inspire them.
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is promoted extremely well because they take part in many activities that develop their interest in the world around them.
- Adults are extremely skilled in developing the children's ability to behave exceptionally well.
- The centre is outstanding in promoting strong, trusting relationships and making sure that children and their families feel safe and well cared for.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons or parts of lessons. Four of these observations were carried out jointly with the head of centre or the leading teacher for the nursery.
- Meetings and discussions were held with staff, children, parents and carers, three representatives of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at the centre's plans for improvement; information about how well children in the nursery are learning, lesson plans, and children's learning journals, the centre's systems for checking how well the nursery is performing, nursery policies and records of the governing body's work.
- The inspector took account of 11 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the views of parents and carers spoken to during the inspection. They also took account of responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the centre's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Joanne Harvey, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized nursery school.
- The children come from a wide range of backgrounds and nationalities. The largest identifiable groups include Black British African, Asian British Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and White British. The area has a high concentration of families who have asylum seeking status. A higher number of children start and leave the nursery at other than the usual times.
- There are 55 languages currently spoken in the centre. A large majority of children speak English as an additional language and some are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of children with minor learning difficulties (school action) is broadly average. The proportions of pupils with more complex learning needs (school action plus) or with a statement of special educational needs are also broadly average. The range of these pupils' needs includes: speech, language and communication, autism and behavioural difficulties.
- The nursery provision for three and four year olds is part of a children's centre which provides an extensive range of integrated services and day care facilities for families. These other services are inspected and reported on separately.
- The nursery has 72 children on roll under the age of three years old. This aspect of the nursery's work was not inspected as it is subject to separate inspection arrangements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the impact of the governing body by ensuring that governors are able to effectively lead their own procedures for checking on the work of the nursery without the direction of senior leaders.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children of all abilities and backgrounds make outstanding progress from low starting points. They reach the levels of skills expected for their age in every area of learning by the time they leave the nursery. The proportion of children exceeding these levels is growing year on year.
- Children learning to speak English make excellent progress. The very strong focus on developing children's listening and speaking skills leads to rapid gains in their communication skills.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs make excellent progress from their individual starting points. Teachers make very good use of precise assessments of children's progress to help them build the skills and attributes they need for their future learning.
- Teachers expect the best for all children. They identify gaps in learning and close them swiftly. Boys catch up with girls. The progress of the most able children has been accelerated. The current focus on accelerating the progress of White British children is paying dividends.
- Children learn through well thought out extended projects for example through art and music. These develop a depth and breadth of understanding, not only of the world but of the children's own talents and interests. These are exploited to the full and give confidence and a secure base from which children can explore and take risks.
- Children's early reading and writing skills are well developed. They respond with excitement to stories and are keen to make up their own. Often with a musical accompaniment! They develop a love of stories and enthusiastically make marks to represent writing.
- Many children are beginning to recognise the relationship between letters and the sounds they make to form words. Some are ready to build words for themselves.
- Children make outstanding progress in their early mathematical skills. They count and order numbers well. They make very good progress in recognising written numbers and using them in the correct sequence. For example, they quickly learn which box to go to for the correct size of wellingtons.
- Children make excellent progress in developing their personal and social skills. This lays a firm foundation for their future learning and their ability to make the right choices. They listen well, respond to directions and follow them carefully. They keep going until tasks are completed. They can work together to solve problems.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Outstanding teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. Centre leaders regularly check teachers' effectiveness and, through research, training and the pursuit of additional qualifications, raise their expectations even higher.
- Teachers have an exceptionally good understanding of how young children learn and of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are able to instantly recognise children's needs and plan highly effectively to build their knowledge and skills.

- An excellent use is made of the information about children's progress to set work which is pitched at the right level for them. Teachers make frequent and detailed observations of children's learning in different circumstances and gather information from parents and carers to reinforce their findings.
- All staff are involved in thorough lesson planning and daily discussions about individual children's next steps. This means that expectations are clear and consistently high and plans can be changed on the spot if necessary to keep children on track.
- Teachers plan activities that are stimulating, ensuring high levels of engagement and enjoyment. Children spoke with excitement about their experience of sculpture and its influence on their paintings and clay work. Others enthusiastically composed a musical accompaniment and drew characters and scenery for their own stories.
- Early reading, writing and mathematical skills are very well taught. Children listen to and identify sounds and share stories with repeated phrases. The environment and lessons are rich with experiences to reinforce children's understanding of numbers and shapes.
- Teachers model and promote positive and caring relationships very well. They ensure children have the time to think for themselves and explain their ideas. Whilst working in the garden, three boys worked together to transfer soil from a one tonne bag into planters. They tried different methods, explained their choices, and overcame differences of opinion maturely.
- The environment and resources are organised very well so that children can make their own choices about what to use and access them by themselves. Teachers are effective in ensuring children use resources responsibly and without prompting, tidy up after themselves.
- Teachers involve the children very well in thinking about their own learning and how they can improve. They make excellent use of photographs in children's learning journeys, so that children can reflect on what they have done and learned. They give them helpful and timely feedback about the work they have completed and how they can achieve even more.
- Staff are skilled in supporting and promoting the rapid progress of children for whom English is an additional language. This is because they provide consistently good models for listening and speaking and make excellent use of external specialist support services.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are given sensitive and skilled support which enables them to make outstanding progress. They are also encouraged to work as independently as possible. Excellent use is made of specialist staff such as the speech and language therapist, to develop all adults' skills in meeting children's needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children's behaviour is exemplary throughout the setting. They respond extremely well to the high standards of care and support they receive.
 - The majority of children come to nursery regularly and are keen to start learning as soon as they arrive. For the very few where this is not the case, there are rigorous procedures to encourage good attendance.
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- Children are clear about everyday routines, such as registration. They are excited to get out their learning journeys and to share them with their parents, carers and teachers.
- Children make friends easily, share equipment sensibly and help each other with their coats and painting aprons. They learn to show kindness and consideration and how to manage their emotions because all the adults in the nursery model this for them consistently.
- Children learn behaviour which helps them to make the most of the opportunities they are offered. For example, independence, confidence and bravery quickly come naturally to them. They learn that they can take small risks which extend their learning further.
- Teachers work closely with parents and carers and other agencies to help children settle in to nursery life quickly and effectively. The most vulnerable are helped to overcome any extra barriers they face and can make the most of everything the nursery has to offer.
- Everything is in place to make sure that children's health and safety is well promoted. Children are aware of nursery routines and consequently they use equipment safely. They know what to do if they are worried about strangers or when they are near roads.
- Children and adults, whatever their background, get on very well together in the centre so that everyone is included equally and thrives in the vibrant community that is Hillfields Early Years Centre.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The leadership of the head of centre supported by other leaders is extremely effective. Leaders have exceptionally good systems for deciding what works well, particularly to ensure that teaching and children's achievement remain outstanding. Roles and responsibilities are clear.
- The use of training to improve teaching and the quality of education provided is a considerable strength. Staff share and discuss best practice frequently and all planning is a team responsibility. Several staff and parents and carers have gained additional qualifications and employment in the nursery as a result of support from leaders.
- There is a clear shared vision of excellence. The work of the nursery is constantly under review. Leaders seek out successful practice nationally and internationally, visit first hand and then tailor their findings to Hillfields. They are generous in sharing their own success with others.
- Staff have great enthusiasm and commitment to the education and welfare of the children. They work very productively with other professionals and benefit from their specialist knowledge, such as the speech and language therapist and health professionals based in the centre.
- Staff work extremely well in partnership with parents and carers and support them to be successfully involved in their children's development. There are regular opportunities to examine and discuss their learning journeys to which everyone's contribution is equally valued.
- Parents and carers spoken to were overwhelmingly supportive of the nursery's work. They value highly the information and care they are given by staff, face-to-face, through newsletters and on the website.

- The school embraces diversity and promotes equality of opportunity extremely well. Children from many different nationalities and backgrounds play productively and harmoniously together. Children learn successfully about different peoples cultures.

 - The local authority provides an appropriate level of support to this outstanding nursery. Nursery leaders are happy to access the support of the Education Improvement Advisor as and when they need to. For example, they valued the support they have been given to bring more rigour to the way they collect and use information about children’s progress.

 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body makes sure that the nursery is a safe place and that staff are suitably checked and trained in child protection matters. They make sure decisions about how to use the funds available are sensible and in the best interests of children. They have systems in place to set targets for leaders’ work and decide whether staff should be rewarded with salary increases. They carefully consider the information they are given about how well the nursery is doing and sometimes visit the nursery to carry out first-hand checks on its work. Governors have recognised that their programme for checking on the work of the school is not systematic enough and relies too much on prompts from school leaders. As a consequence training has been arranged with the local authority so that governors are able to successfully lead their own procedures for checking on the work of the nursery.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	103633
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	400637

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brinder Seni
Headteacher	Helen Watson
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2010
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