

Caversham Nursery School

114 Amersham Road, Reading, RG4 5NA

Inspection dates 18–19 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children make good progress and achieve well in all areas of learning. The school is particularly successful at developing children's confidence and teaching children to get along with other children and with adults.
- Children are well prepared for the Reception classes in their next schools because adults encourage them to do their best, and try out new things without fear of failure.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points. Their needs are quickly identified and next steps carefully planned for.
- Children who have English as an additional language make good progress because of the skilled teaching they receive.
- Children's behaviour is good. Children can take turns, share toys and equipment, and listen to each other and to adults. They are happy to come to school and enjoy the activities planned for them.
- Children feel safe and secure in school and there are good arrangements to keep them safe.
- The school is well led and managed by the senior leadership team. The team has the support of the staff and the confidence of parents and carers who are very happy with the way that their children are taught and cared for.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most able children do not always make the progress they are capable of because they are not consistently provided with work or activities which are matched to their abilities.
- Although the quality of teaching is good overall, teaching about letters and the sounds they make is not done in a sufficiently systematic way.
- The recently reformed governing body does not yet have a sufficiently clear picture of the progress children make in school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a wide range of activities over two days. This included eight lessons where small groups of children were taught a variety of subjects including letter sounds, counting and understanding feelings. All lesson observations were undertaken with the headteacher or a member of the senior leadership team.
- The inspector observed many activities which were chosen by the children themselves but supported by adults.
- Meetings took place with the headteacher and senior leadership team, governors, staff, parents and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a variety of documents including the school's own information about children's progress, planning, policies, children's records (called learning journeys), and documents relating to safeguarding.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents by speaking to parents during the inspection and scrutinising the 25 responses to Parent View (the government's online survey). She also analysed 24 questionnaires from staff members.

Inspection team

Janet Maul, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The nursery school shares a site with Caversham Children’s Centre. The school and children’s centre were managed by the same governing body and senior leadership team until October 2013. Since that time the children’s centre has been managed by the local authority, although the school and children’s centre maintain close links. The children’s centre was not inspected at this time.
- Shortly before the nursery school split from the children’s centre it formed a hard federation with New Bridge Nursery School, a successful local nursery school. The headteacher of New Bridge was appointed as executive headteacher to both schools, and the governing bodies amalgamated and now manage both schools.
- The governing body and senior leadership team continue to manage day care for children from birth to five years on the Caversham Nursery School site. Evaluating the day care provision did not form part of this inspection.
- The school is the size of the average nursery school. Children are based in groups of about ten. They are the immediate responsibility of a key worker who has day-to-day responsibility for them. Most children attend for half the week, either mornings or afternoons, or the first or second half of the week. A few children attend full time.
- A small proportion of children have disabilities or special educational needs. The proportion of children supported through early years action is below average. The proportion of children supported at early years action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- Most children are from a White British heritage, with a small minority from a range of different ethnic backgrounds and speaking a variety of home languages. A few children are at a very early stage of learning English.
- No children are eligible for the pupil premium funding because schools only receive this additional money for older pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement for children by:
 - planning ways to challenge the most able children in their learning and play activities so that they learn at a faster rate
 - teaching about letters and the sounds they make in a more systematic way.
- Governors need to gain a more detailed picture of the work of the school and the progress children make to enable them to support and challenge the leadership team.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children start the nursery class with skills and abilities similar to other children of the same age. School tracking shows that all children, including those from different ethnic backgrounds, make good progress in all areas of learning and by the time they leave nursery most children are well equipped to make the transition to the Reception classes in their new schools.
- Children whose speech and language are not as developed as might be expected for their age are given very good support and catch up quickly. Similarly, children who join the nursery with little or no knowledge of the English language are also well taught, and make fast progress. By the time they leave nursery they are well equipped to access the curriculum in the Reception classes at their new schools.
- Children who have disabilities or special educational needs make fast progress because their needs are quickly identified and they receive well targeted support and encouragement from all staff.
- Children's progress is tracked carefully, and if it shows signs of slowing additional support is put in place. This enables children to catch up and make good progress.
- Children are familiar with the daily routines and are happy to mix with other children and adults. The school plans activities to help children to develop confidence, with the result that they are keen to join in activities and eager to express their point of view.
- The modelling of polite, respectful behaviour by adults and the specific teaching of social expectations mean that children know how to take turns and to speak and listen carefully to each other and to adults.
- Children are taught to recognise the sounds and letters at the start of words, and a group enjoyed telling the inspector the initials of the names of family members. However, some children were ready for the challenge of the next stage of early reading skills, but were not given the opportunity to move along more quickly.
- Children enjoy listening to a wide range of stories, and a group of children enthusiastically recounted the adventures of princesses from fairy tales. The school has books available for families to borrow, but this facility is not widely known about, and an opportunity to extend learning into the home setting is missed.
- There are many opportunities to develop early writing skills. Children see adults modelling writing; writing equipment is readily available for role play activities.
- Children quickly learn to count forwards and backwards because counting and number talk are incorporated into many nursery activities, for example counting toys while tidying them away, and singing number songs.
- Children make good progress when learning and playing outdoors. They become really involved in role play in an outdoor area that is well designed to develop imaginative play. They extend their physical skills through activities that include painting, digging, building, climbing and riding bicycles.
- Well planned activities help children learn to solve problems. One girl was seen rolling out modelling material to make 'biscuits' and was estimating the size of the piece of dough she would need. Another child was encouraged to estimate the number of tiny toys in her hands; this developed into a lively discussion between two children supported by an adult.
- The school plans activities to help children to become more confident. For example, during a recent visit from a travelling farm, staff supported one child to overcome her fear of animals.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Staff are experienced and dedicated to the children's progress and well-being. They work hard to ensure that children enjoy their learning and make progress. They are particularly good at

encouraging children to 'have a go', and praise their effort as well as their achievement.

- Staff take every opportunity to reinforce learning and use questioning well. This helps children to organise their thoughts and formulate sentences. Adults strike a good balance between asking questions and conversing with children, and standing back to allow the children to follow their own interests.
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- The school takes advantage of expert advice from speech and language therapists based in the children's centre. As a result, most children whose speech and language skills are behind the other children are enabled to catch up. By the time they leave nursery their speaking skills are at a similar level to the other children.
- Children with disabilities or special educational needs have their needs quickly identified and plans are soon put into place. The school works well with parents and external professionals to support this group of children.
- Staff regularly check children's progress and make notes about what the children are able to do. They keep detailed records in children's individual folders, called learning journeys, which are shared with parents. These records are used by staff to identify children's next steps and plan interesting activities. However, staff are not always sufficiently ambitious for the children, some of whom are ready to learn at a faster rate.
- Children are encouraged to persevere when activities become difficult. For example, a child was determined to walk unaided along the balance beam and persevered until he was able to do so. He was encouraged by an adult and another child who offered to hold his hand!
- The dedication of staff is appreciated by parents. The majority of those who spoke to the inspector or responded to the on-line questionnaire believe that their children are taught well. Several commented positively about the patience and caring approach of staff and how well their children are helped and looked after.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The safety of children is good. The school has effective systems in place to check that people who work with children are suitable to do so. All staff have received training in safeguarding and training for staff and governors is updated regularly. Some staff and governors have undertaken specialist training.
- Children are taught how to stay safe, and talked to the inspector about preventing accidents, the importance of keeping away from roads and not talking to strangers.
- The site is kept safe and well maintained, and staff are vigilant about spotting potential hazards.
- The very large majority of children attend regularly and are on time each day. The school follows up absences diligently by working with families to ensure they understand the importance of education for their children.
- Children's behaviour is good. The children take turns when playing games and are able to share toys. For example, they are able to share out the new modelling material fairly without adult intervention. They can also cooperate with others, for example by helping each other to get dressed up in role play clothes.
- Children are polite and well mannered at lunchtime. An adult sits with each group of children and encourages conversation. The inspector ate lunch with the children who were eager to fetch her a chair and a spoon, and take her plate to be washed up.
- Behavioural incidents are rare, but when they do take place they are handled sensitively and parents are informed. The school has systems in place for recording any behavioural, racist or bullying incidents; these are monitored and reported to the governing body.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are committed to the school and are determined

to provide the best quality provision and standard of care for the children. The staff are proud to work at the school and they have confidence in the senior leadership team.

- The leadership of teaching is good. Nursery staff are well trained and knowledgeable. The performance management system is used to reward practitioners and identify areas for further development. Staff are keen to develop their skills and said that they appreciate training opportunities.
- The school makes good use of external expertise, in particular from the school with which it is federated, and the child and social care expertise of the children's centre staff.
- The curriculum is planned to support all aspects of children's development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school receives only light touch support from the local authority. Governors have found the information and training provided by the local authority to be helpful during this time of transition of leadership.
- The school has the confidence of the parents who are happy with the way the school supports and educates their children. Parents find the school to be approachable; they are encouraged to work with the school by sharing information about their child and meeting regularly with the key worker.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed and keen to support the school. All governors have undertaken appropriate training. Governors responsible for safeguarding and overseeing the provision for children with disabilities or special educational needs have had specialist training. The recent amalgamation of Caversham Nursery with New Bridge Nursery, and the joining of the two governing bodies have resulted in governors not yet having a sufficiently clear picture of the quality of teaching or children's progress. They are currently working to rectify this. They have recently had training on understanding performance data and identifying and tackling underperformance. A governing body meeting to assess progress is due to take place. The governors have ensured that staff performance management and pay link well with school priorities.

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	109750
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	426410

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	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Emma Tear
Headteacher	Lisa Bedlow
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 November 2010
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