

The Castle Nursery School

255 Barnsley Road, Sandal, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF1 5NU

Inspection dates 15–16 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children enjoy their education, make good progress and achieve well in all areas of learning.
- Teaching is good. Some elements are outstanding in terms of the support for children with English as an additional language and for those with disabilities and special educational needs.
- Parents are welcomed into the Nursery and are extremely supportive of all that is done for their children. They benefit from excellent communication from the school.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Children work together very well and benefit from high quality care from adults. They settle in quickly and learn what is expected of them.
- Children are very secure at school and have an exceptionally good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe. They are very well looked after.
- Innovative use of the outdoors contributes significantly to the quality of learning of the children.
- The school provides a wide range of exciting activities which build on children's interests, stimulate their curiosity and capture their imagination. These activities promote excellent levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher has created a strong staff team with the energy, drive and skills to improve the school further.
- Governors' support and monitoring of the work of the school is now good. They ask searching questions and hold staff to account for children's achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most-able children are not identified well enough and given the support they need to make the progress they are able to make.
- Assessment data are not analysed well enough to create a school development plan that has sharp targets for raising the achievement of the most-able children.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven sessions, indoors and out, including those led by adults and also times when children chose activities for themselves.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the staff team and four governors. In addition, a telephone conversation was conducted with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's view of how well it is doing, its plans for improvement; information on children's progress and attainment; school policies; records relating to safeguarding and behaviour and teachers' planning of learning. Samples of children's work were scrutinised from their 'learning journeys' and information sent to parents about their children's achievements was considered.
- The views expressed in 10 questionnaires completed by staff were taken into account.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire, (Parent View), to get an indication of the views of parents. The inspector sought their views through informal discussions at the start of the Nursery sessions and a meeting with one parent who wished to give an opinion of the school.

Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school provides part-time nursery education for 40 children.
- Children enter the Nursery school in the term after their third birthday. Children join the school at three points each year, at the start of each term, dependent on when they have their third birthday. During the time of the inspection, 39 children were attending.
- An above average proportion of pupils speaks English as an additional language. Around half of children are new arrivals in the United Kingdom and are at the very early stage of acquiring English. Polish is the most common mother tongue, with some children speaking Latvian, Urdu and Chinese.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs supported through Early Years action and Early Years action plus or with a statement of special educational need is above average.
- There have been significant changes to the leadership and management of the Nursery since the previous inspection. In April 2013, the school federated with Crigglestone Nursery school under the leadership of a single headteacher and a shared governing body.
- The school is part of the Kettlethorpe Collaborative Partnership (KCP). This is a group of schools which supports each other through shared training and curriculum developments.
- The Nursery school is on the same site as a children's centre. This is not managed by the school and is inspected separately. It receives a separate report which is available on the Ofsted website.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement from good to outstanding by:
 - improving the analysis of assessment data so that it enables leaders to create a development plan with sharp targets for raising the achievement of the most-able children
 - making sure that the assessment data enable all teaching staff to identify and offer suitably challenging intervention for the most-able children.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's effective leadership is evident in all that goes on in the school. Supported by the recently appointed deputy headteacher and a talented school bursar and office management team, the school is managed and run effectively. Parents value the school's contribution to their lives and feel their children get a good start there.
- Staff have a very clear understanding of their roles and work together to set and achieve the best possible standards for the children. Leaders know the school well and this is reflected in the school's generally accurate view of its work. The areas for improvement, however, are not as sharp as they could be to secure the most effective way forward. This is because the procedures for assessing and recording children's attainment and progress are not yet as refined as they need to be. The information is not yet used well enough to secure suitably high expectations for the most-able children and to guide the most productive training for staff.
- Professional development does, however, have a high priority. Staff constantly seek new ideas and ways of improving their skills. Links to an Early Years Centre of Excellence for example, has boosted the confidence and ability of staff to make best use of outdoor learning.
- The curriculum is good, with outstanding use of learning outdoors. It is not yet outstanding, because it does not always provide well enough for the most-able children. However, the focus is clearly on enjoyment and children with English with as an additional language and disabilities and special educational needs receive very well focused support. Success is evident in children's good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and in their exemplary behaviour. Children are taught British values of tolerance, respect, equality and why rules are important. As a result, children play happily together, share toys and equipment, and look after one another.
- Leaders foster excellent relationships with parents. In addition to the regular updates of the children's achievement and progress, parents are welcomed to school each day and there are regular events, such as the recent Harvest Festival to which they are invited. One parent was very complimentary about the support and information they received prior to their child starting school.
- The local authority has given light touch support in recent years, guiding the school as it went through federation.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have given effective support and challenge for the school during and since the school's federation. The governing body has responded very positively to a local authority review of its performance. Governors are fully involved in setting performance targets for the headteacher and come to the school regularly. As a result, they have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and the progress of different groups of children. They ensure that teachers' pay and promotion are tied to the effectiveness of their teaching and to the progress their children make. Governors monitor the school's finances carefully and fulfil their statutory duties by ensuring, for example, that procedures for safeguarding children meet national requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is outstanding.
- The children's mature self-discipline and awareness of others' rights and needs, such as their respect for each other, create a very happy environment in which children grow in confidence and self-esteem. Children benefit from exceptional levels of care, reflecting the genuine warmth and attention they receive from the staff team.
- Children bound into school at the start of each session bursting with excitement. There is no sign of fear or uncertainty, just a desire to get going with what for them is fun! Each child quickly settles to the 'Hello Time' where they meet the member of staff who welcomes them and shares the events available for them each day. Their enthusiasm for school is reflected in the way that most children attend regularly. Parents are adamant that that outstanding behaviour is the norm. They particularly appreciate the impact the school has on improving their children's personal skills and attitudes. One parent expressed the view that the school had 'met their child where he is at, enabling him to settle to school quickly and make friends.'
- Children's excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development shows in their exemplary behaviour and in how children of varying backgrounds and abilities play and learn so harmoniously together. The

diverse cultural backgrounds in the school are celebrated. Children explore celebrations such as Christmas, Ramadan, Diwali and the Chinese New Year.

Safety

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding.
- Children's outstanding awareness of safety enables them to experiment and enjoy their time at the Nursery to the full. They are extremely clear about how to keep themselves safe and healthy. For example, as they venture into the outdoor area, they routinely put on their waterproofs and wellies to protect against the weather. Personal hygiene is encouraged with care to make sure they wash hands whenever they need to, for example before snack time. Regular 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.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Staff are a well organised team who share the view that learning should be led by the children's interests. Children benefit from a teaching team that understands what is important to three- and four-year-olds. There is a wide range of activities indoors and out that inspires children to learn. Children are encouraged to use their imagination and creativity to help them learn. Children are constantly encouraged to make choices and to make decisions in order to solve problems and gain confidence in themselves. Daily small-group sessions enable children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills through songs, rhymes, stories and games.
- Both indoors and out, staff and children interact constantly and whenever a moment occurs when children can learn, they are encouraged to do so. Children are enabled make their own choices about what they do. Outdoors, for example, some children dressed up as explorers and boldly set off to locate animals hiding in the flower beds. As they did this, adults entered into discussions to encourage and promote their understanding and use of English, as well as their knowledge of the wider world. Children are constantly enabled to talk in a wide variety of ways. Whether using their electronic mobile phones to talk with each other, sitting together to learn their letters of sounds or working together to build a 'castle' using blocks, they develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Children with English as an additional language benefit from support from experienced bilingual staff who converse in their mother tongue when necessary, but strive to develop the individual child's English skills. During a role play activity based on the recent film 'Frozen,' children dressed as princesses, living out their role and responded to prompts from an adult to talk and discuss using English alone.
- Early reading and writing are developed well. Regular reading time introduces children to books. Good foundations are laid for children to become writers. A wide range of opportunities is available for children to strengthen the muscles in their hands in readiness for holding writing implements. Children use paint brushes to create pictures, use chalk to make marks in the outside area or create images from their imagination using large crayons. When ready, children are enabled to practise shaping sounds as letters, using dough or tracing them in the sand. All of this helps the children to understand the early skills of writing, while recognising the shape of letters.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are a close team who together are developing their skills in understanding about how young children learn. They continuously share information about children's needs, interests and achievements, and use this in their planning. This ensures that children make good gains in their learning.
- Assessment has improved over the last year and is now accurate. While children with disabilities and special educational needs are swiftly identified and effective actions given to support them, the needs of the most-able children are not yet picked up enough so that sufficient challenge can be assured. The school is aware of the need to refine further its use of assessment to secure even better learning for children.
- Parents are very positive about the communication they receive from the staff about their children's progress. The significant steps children make in their learning are recorded in individual books called 'learning journeys' which they can access, and regular news flashes are sent to parents, making them aware of key steps and experiences of their child.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good. This view is endorsed by the comments offered by parents who were keen to say how much progress their children make in their time in the school. As one commented, 'This is a great school, I have had three children here and everyone has loved it and been made ready to start full time school.'
- Children generally start Nursery with skills that are significantly below those typical for their age group, particularly in their language, communication and personal, social and emotional development. Close consideration of the children's progress records in their 'learning journeys', observations during the inspection and analysis of the Nursery's performance data show that children make good progress and leave Nursery with skills typical for their ages. By the time children move on to their Reception class, the proportion on track to reach a good level of development is above average, reflecting good progress.
- Children are encouraged to discuss and share their thoughts about everything they do. Books have a high profile in the Nursery, which enables children to see and use books when learning both in and outdoors. As a result, they develop an interest in, and enjoyment of books and stories. There is good progress in the children's understanding of the sounds that letters make (phonics). As a result, children develop a secure understanding for their age of phonics; they gain the confidence to explore mark-making, which leads them to start to write letters associated with familiar words such as their names.
- Children make good improvement in their mathematical development. By the start of Reception, most children reach levels of development that are typical for their age. They make good progress in counting in order up to ten, in recognising and pointing to numbers with accuracy and sorting objects by their properties, such as shape, size and colour.
- Outstanding learning outdoors benefits all learners. The children's understanding of the world and aspects of their physical development come on in leaps and bounds as a result. Their ability to work with others, to share and co-operate improve rapidly. Children thrive on the freedom they have to explore the natural environment, playing with water, observing plants and animals and selecting resources with which they wish to play.
- The school is committed to securing equal opportunities for all and to removing any form of discrimination. Around half of children start school as new arrivals to the United Kingdom and have little or no English. Skilled bilingual staff assess each child in their mother tongue to identify individual needs. Bilingual staff are always at hand to work with the children and as a result, they make rapid progress overall in their ability to speak and understand English.
- Parents of children needing additional support are very complimentary about the progress their children make and the support they receive. The children with disabilities and special educational needs are carefully assessed by staff and support is tailored to the needs of each child. Close liaison with outside agencies, for example speech and language therapists, strengthens the skills of staff which then benefits the children.
- The needs of most-able children are met well within adult-led group activities, for example, when working together in a group counting vegetables and fruit. When children are learning through activities they have chosen, however, adults do not always challenge the most-able children enough and their progress slows at times. This is because assessment does not always inform all staff of the targets and expectations required to extend the skills of the most-able children.

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	132014
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	447877

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	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Biddy Crawford
Headteacher	Jo Gogarty
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2012
Telephone number	01924 303211
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	headteacher@crigglestonecastle.wakefield.sch.uk

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