

Colleges Nursery and Family Centre

Campkin Road, Cambridge, CB4 2LD

Inspection dates 10–11 December 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides good leadership. She is passionate about making the school as good as possible and has made many positive changes to raise achievement and improve teaching.
- The governing body is well informed about the school's effectiveness and works very well with the headteacher to bring about improvement, raise achievement and improve teaching.
- The school is well resourced and the high quality outdoor area provides children with exciting learning opportunities.
- The day-care is of good quality and the staff in the Daisy Room work well as a team, supporting children's development.
- Children make good progress in most areas of learning in the nursery, and there have been improvements in learning since the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching is good. It is consistently good in the Daisy Room and it is often outstanding when teachers in the nursery teach groups of children new skills.
- Children behave well and become absorbed in the activities provided. They settle quickly and feel safe.
- The school works well in partnership with parents. It keeps them closely informed and involved in their children's learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Children do not experience as many adult-led sessions as they could. As part of this, the school has rightly identified that they would benefit from a more structured approach to the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make).
- The staff are not always quick enough to identify the next steps in children's development, especially in writing for the most-able children.
- While a number of staff with leadership and management responsibilities support the headteacher well, not all leaders contribute as fully as they could to improving teaching and raising achievement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning activities for two year olds and three and four year olds in the nursery and the Daisy Room, which provides day-care each day, and sessions indoors and outdoors. This enabled her to gather evidence about different aspects of teaching and learning.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and the senior teachers. Informal discussions took place with some other staff and with individual children. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors. A telephone discussion took place with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector considered the 10 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the views of parents expressed in the school's own parental surveys. She spoke with a small number of parents when they brought their children to or collected them from school. The inspector also considered the 20 completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation. This included: the school's self-evaluation and development plan; records of children's attainment, progress and behaviour; and evidence of systems for protecting and safeguarding children.

Inspection team

Margaret Goodchild, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- All children in this school are in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Eighty three- and four-year-old children attend the nursery for five half-day sessions each week. In addition, the school provides day-care for 24 two to four year olds in the Daisy Room from 8.00 am to 4.45 pm each day for 48 weeks of the year.
- There has been an increase since the last inspection in the percentage of children of minority ethnic heritage. A well above average proportion of children, just over half, fall into this category and also speak English as an additional language. The main languages spoken by this group are Polish, Bengali and Spanish.
- The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs is above the national average at just over a quarter.
- Being a nursery school, the school does not receive pupil premium funding but one in ten children are eligible for free school meals. There are no national figures for free school meals in nurseries with which to compare this percentage.
- The school has one full-time and three part-time teachers, together with a large number of other staff.
- A new headteacher took up post in January 2013 and there have been several changes in governors since the last inspection, including a new Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body.
- The children's centre, which shares the school site, is subject to separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise children's achievement and build on existing strengths in teaching by:
 - introducing a more structured approach to the teaching of phonics
 - increasing the frequency with which children experience adult-led sessions where they learn new skills
 - making sure that staff are always quick to identify the next steps in children's learning and use these in their planning, especially so that the most-able children make faster progress in writing.
- Increase the pace of school improvement by making sure that all staff with leadership responsibilities fully support the headteacher in raising achievement and improving teaching.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides good leadership and has a clear vision for the school. She is passionate about providing the best possible learning opportunities for the children and has brought about a good amount of change since she took over the headship. She promotes an atmosphere where good behaviour and teaching are the basic expectation. She has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and is very well supported in this by the governing body. Their joint determination to move the school forward means that it is well placed to improve further.
- Since the last inspection, the headteacher has forged links with one of the main primary schools to which children transfer at the end of their time in the nursery. This has enabled her to assess children's attainment more accurately, and work in partnership with the primary school is supporting planned improvements in the teaching of phonics. Staff are all due to take part in training in phonics at the beginning of next term.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership of teaching and her judgements are accurate. When observing teaching, she gives staff clear direction about how to improve their work. The management of teachers' performance has resulted in some underperformance being tackled and good teaching rewarded. The headteacher has made sure that teachers plan sessions more thoroughly. Training sessions have supported staff in developing their skills and have been used to introduce various changes. Staff now have appraisal targets that focus more sharply on raising children's achievement.
- A good amount of data is collected and this is used well to track children's attainment and progress, including through termly meetings between the headteacher, senior teachers and staff. Providing time out of class for the special educational needs co-ordinator has helped to make sure different groups of children, including those who are disabled and have special educational needs, receive equal opportunities. The school ensures that there is no discrimination and that positive relationships are promoted.
- Partnership with parents has improved since the last inspection. Parents have had the opportunity to attend workshops; they have information in advance about the topics their children will be covering and receive very detailed newsletters. Staff all make themselves available to parents when they bring their children to school and collect them, so that there are plenty of opportunities to forge links between home and school. Regular surveys of parents' views provide valuable information and help to shape the school's development.
- The headteacher receives good support from some teachers and other staff with responsibility for particular aspects of the school's work including managers in the Daisy Room, and the leadership of special educational needs is good. However, leaders do not all contribute to the drive to improve teaching and raise achievement as fully as they could.
- The curriculum meets children's needs well. The school is very well resourced with toys and equipment to promote children's early development. The high-quality outdoor area promotes children's physical, imaginative and personal development exceptionally well, and there has been an increase in trips into the local area to stimulate their learning.
- Outdoor activities as part of Forest Explorers, where they learn in a wooded area, provide children with stimulating and magical experiences which contribute to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school makes sure that children have carefully planned experiences to prepare them for life in British society. They celebrate various festivals, and displays in the school entrance celebrate the range of children's cultural backgrounds and the home languages spoken. Parents who speak English as an additional language are welcomed into the school to translate materials and read stories in home languages.
- The school has good systems for making sure children are kept safe. Daily risk assessments are undertaken for indoor and outdoor learning, and to cover any visits out. The school has several staff who are trained to lead on child protection. It is quick to investigate any concerns and the headteacher keeps a

rigorous check on anything that is reported to her. Close work with the children's centre ensures that the school is fully informed and kept up to date where children and families use both establishments.

- The local authority has provided good support to the school. When the new headteacher took up post, the local authority linked her with the headteacher from another school. Being made a partner school with a local nursery teaching school, which consists of three outstanding nurseries, is giving the headteacher opportunities to communicate regularly with outstanding leaders. The school has also taken up training opportunities in the local authority for staff and governors.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is effective. Governors bring valuable skills and expertise to their role and share the headteacher's drive and ambition to make the school as good as possible. They regularly visit the school and provide detailed reports of what they have found.
- The governing body provides good support and challenge for senior leaders, and asks challenging questions about teaching and learning. Governors have a good understanding of what data reveal and know how teachers' performance is managed, including where underperformance has been tackled and effectiveness rewarded. Governors have endorsed the headteacher's actions in making teachers' job descriptions more specific to make them more accountable for children's progress.
- The governing body ensures that financial management is strong and that all statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding, are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is good. The school has very good systems for settling children in when they join the nursery and the Daisy Room, and they arrive each day eager to take part in the activities provided. Although attendance is not a legal requirement for this age group, most children come to school regularly.
- The rooms are well organised and provide a calm, orderly learning environment. Children have a good understanding of the routines and independently choose toys and equipment. They become absorbed for lengthy periods of time, for instance, completing wooden puzzles and working with programs on the electronic tablets.
- Children develop good independence skills, for example, helping to cut up fruit and pour their own drinks at snack time in the Daisy Room. They readily help out when it is time to tidy up at the end of a session. Children get on well together, share harmoniously and learn to take turns. They seek out others to play with, readily help one another and praise each other when they have learnt something new.
- In adult-led sessions where children develop new skills, their behaviour is nearly always outstanding, and they show an excellent interest in learning. They try hard and sustain their concentration exceptionally well in these sessions.
- The staff usually manage children's behaviour well. Occasionally when adults work with groups of children, they do not convey high expectations clearly enough or make sure children know how to respond to their instructions effectively. When this happens, the standard of behaviour drops temporarily.

Safety

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is good. Parents who expressed their views all believe that their children are kept safe. Children know that it is important to treat one another with kindness and tolerance, and this ensures that bullying rarely takes place. The school is quick to involve parents if any incident occurs.
- Children have good opportunities to learn about safety, for example, being careful around the camp fire when they are learning outdoors as part of their Forest Explorers sessions. When they are playing on the challenging climbing equipment in the outdoor area, they show a good awareness of one another's safety

and they play sensibly with the water tray. They understand why they need to wash their hands before cooking.

The quality of teaching is good

- Inspection findings confirm the school's own judgement that teaching is good overall and there is some that is outstanding.
- The introduction of home visits before children join the school has increased the information available to staff about children's backgrounds and their existing development. There are good systems for assessing what children can already do when they join the nursery and the Daisy Room, and for involving parents in the ongoing assessment of their children's learning.
- Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement in the opportunities children have to make marks to promote their early writing. On a daily basis, equipment is provided both indoors and out to encourage them to make marks and to write for a purpose. In the Daisy Room, children were mark making and creating envelopes ready to put their Christmas messages in the post box. In the studio, children used the touch screen and selected a range of colours in their mark making, and in the outdoor area they drew on a large chalk board.
- There has been improvement also in the way print is displayed around the nursery so that children are continuously exposed to words, letters and numbers as part of the displays. Books are easily accessible to children and they have good opportunities to develop a love of books through story times. They regularly take home books from the newly established library and parents are particularly pleased with the many story sacks that they are able to borrow from the nursery to bring books to life when sharing them with their children at home.
- In sessions where teachers take a group of children and focus on literacy and mathematics, the teaching is often outstanding though children would benefit from more sessions of this kind. These sessions are very well planned and teachers question children exceptionally well to probe their thinking. They organise activities so that learning builds systematically and provides challenge for all so that children increase their recognition of initial letter sounds and begin to recognise some whole words.
- Staff generally promote children's communication, language and thinking well when they work with small groups, for instance, when playing with the farmyard animals and making Christmas decorations in the Daisy Room, and rolling play dough in the nursery. During these and many other activities, adults talk to children about what they are doing and demonstrate how to increase their skills.
- Children have individual learning targets and some records and learning journeys clearly identify the next steps in their learning. However, there is some inconsistency in this area and staff are not always quick enough to identify the next steps in children's development, especially in writing for the most-able children. This is slowing the progress of a few children.

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children joined the school last year, their skills were similar to those typical for their age in a number of areas but their existing skills in mathematics, reading, writing and understanding the world were weaker areas. By the end of their time in nursery, children had made good progress in most areas of learning and their skills were closer to those typically found for their age. They made their best progress in writing, mathematics, being imaginative and in aspects of their personal, social and emotional development. Most groups made better progress in 2014 than in 2013, indicating a rise in achievement.
- Attainment on entry this year is higher than before and, with the exception of writing and speaking, nearly all children joined the school with skills at least typical for their age. Two year olds and three to four year olds are making good progress in the Daisy Room. Children in the nursery are making good progress in most areas of learning and doing particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development, and

their physical development. They are being prepared well for moving on to primary school.

- Children increase their understanding of the world around them by growing vegetables in the outdoor area. They have taken part in Forest Explorer activities at a local country park and plans are in place for them to have more experiences of the natural world at the nearby primary school. This raises their awareness of nature and encourages sensitivity to living creatures. This was evident when a child looked at the caterpillar on his fingers and put it back on a leaf, saying, 'I don't want to squash him. I don't want him to die.'
- Children make good progress in their language development and communication, including those who are learning English as an additional language. They benefit from the many opportunities to talk about what they are doing when they play alongside the staff, and use the toy phone to pretend to call people and invite them to a party.
- Children make good progress in their mathematical development, learning to count, match and sort objects by shape and colour. In the outdoor 'mud kitchen', they fill and empty containers and learn about how much different containers hold when playing with water.
- Children make good progress in expressive art and design, for example, making candle holders for Diwali and more recently Christmas decorations, enlivening their creations with glitter, and they enjoy dressing up in the various costumes available.
- Children make good progress in their early mark making, which has improved since the last inspection, and in developing the muscles in their hands to support their writing. Some children can already write their names and they all recognise their name cards. Through being exposed to more print all around them, they have a better awareness of words, letters and numbers and this stimulates their interest in literacy. They listen to stories and answer questions about the characters. They show respect for books, holding them correctly.
- The school has used data from last year to identify that children could make faster progress in reading. It has rightly identified that they would benefit from a more structured approach to the teaching of phonics, and intends to make sure that all three and four year olds have daily opportunities in this area.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are carefully identified and the staff work closely with therapists, such as the speech and language therapist, parents and other agencies to plan support for them. These children are included well in activities.
- Children of minority ethnic heritage and those learning English as an additional language make similar progress to other children. Those who receive free school meals developed similar skills to other children in most areas of learning last year.
- The most-able children make good progress in most areas of learning. The learning journeys of children from last year show that they covered a good amount of work and were able to pursue their interests which enabled them to learn in depth about particular topics.
- The most-able children currently in the nursery make good progress in mathematics, developing their counting skills and their knowledge of geometric shapes. They enjoy books and stories, recognise rhyming words and produce detailed drawings with a clear meaning. They are beginning to point at words and know that they convey meaning, sometimes inventing what they might say. However, they make less progress than they could in writing because staff do not always quickly identify the next steps in their development and provide them with enough guidance and challenge.

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	110597
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	447945

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	2–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Cooper
Headteacher	Kristal-Lee McIntosh
Date of previous school inspection	22 February 2012
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