

Histon Early Years Centre

New School Road, Histon, Cambridge CB24 9LL

Inspection dates 14–15 October 2015

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors inspire their whole team and ensure that children learn successfully. They have created an ethos where working together is celebrated for both children and adults.
- Children are happy and very well settled. This is because adults work hard at making sure that children understand how to share well and treat each other fairly. This results in a calm and purposeful environment.
- Achievement is good. Boys and girls achieve equally well because teaching takes place in small groups to keep their interest focused. As a result, children move on to infants' school with levels of development that are often above those expected for their age.
- Children's behaviour is excellent. They respond exceptionally well to the positive approach from staff. Staff have excellent relationships with the children, and successfully promote children's respect and consideration of others.
- Teachers skilfully plan children's learning and development so that their needs and interests are met. Learning inside and outside the classroom is well planned and managed. Consequently, children achieve and enjoy their learning.
- Staff are well trained in keeping children safe. Children's welfare needs are well catered for so that they can develop independence quickly and well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders do not have a sufficiently robust system of monitoring and evaluating the quality of the learning to ensure that teaching is outstanding.
- Teachers do not identify the most able quickly enough, so these children are not as fully challenged and their progress slows.
- Children are not able to fully develop their perseverance skills and abilities for themselves because adults sometimes intervene too soon.
- Children's opportunities to learn in mathematics are not as extensive as other parts of the curriculum.
- A small minority of parents do not share the confidence of others in using the school's established systems to put forward their views or to raise concerns.
- Governors do not ensure that up-to-date policies are fully in place and available on the school's website.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - monitoring the quality of teaching and learning systematically to drive outcomes for groups of children even further
 - taking further steps to improve and maintain positive communication with parents who do not understand the school processes and procedures
 - governors more consistently checking that statutory systems and procedures are fully in place.

- Improve children's achievement by ensuring that teaching provides:
 - greater challenge and opportunities for the most-able children to excel
 - a richer variety of mathematical activities and opportunities, so that children can make accelerated progress
 - more opportunities for child-chosen activities to allow children time to develop their skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher understands early years provision and practice extremely well. She continually improves the standard and quality of provision, and ensures a team approach across the three areas of the Nursery, day care and the children's centre. As a result, the development and achievement of the children is the focus.
- Leaders ensure that children are safe and well cared for. Staff and parents agree. All necessary risk assessments are fully in place; adults carefully consider potential dangers and ensure that they mitigate against them. For example, the new outdoor area is undergoing extensive refurbishment. The staff have adapted their planning to ensure that the children are adequately provided for outdoors, with enhanced adult supervision as part of their risk assessment. As a result, the children can still benefit from stimulating outdoor learning during a potentially limiting time.
- The curriculum is interesting, broad and balanced. Children enjoy subjects such as music and dance provided by external staff, developing their skills and abilities in these subjects quickly and well. Leaders ensure that planning for teaching and learning takes into account the interests of the children. The topics for the project work start from the interests of the child. Children quickly become motivated and active participants.
- The learning opportunities provided give children a good understanding of the principles behind British values, such as choosing topics for their projects and the importance of listening and respecting others' views and opinions. As a result, they gain an early appreciation of the responsibilities of life in modern Britain.
- Leaders provide a good transition programme for the children at the start of their school year. Parents commented on how much they appreciated the home visits to help their children become familiar with the adults in the setting. This same careful approach is used when children begin their time at the infants' school, with the result that children are well prepared to get off to a flying start in their Reception Year.
- The local authority has given a light-touch support that they consider usual for a secure and established school. Staff attend courses run by the local authority and these are of good quality.
- A small number of children are eligible for the new early years pupil premium funding, which provides additional funding for children known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority. Plans are underway to use this additional money to enhance the opportunities for these children during their time in the Nursery. It is too early to show the impact of the decisions that have been taken.
- Leaders do not yet monitor the quality of teaching and learning closely enough to ensure that the impact of teaching is at least consistently good and moving rapidly to outstanding. They encourage a peer coaching approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and improve staff performance through performance management targets and a wide range of continuous professional development.
- Most parents are very happy with the school, finding staff approachable and helpful. However, a small minority have lost confidence because some of the communication systems and processes are not as clear as they could be. This is because the website is not updated regularly enough. As a result, these parents have become frustrated.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are effective because they are knowledgeable about the school's work and provide an increasing amount of challenge and support to the headteacher, ensuring that effective provision is sustained. They set targets for the headteacher's performance management in line with statutory expectations.
 - Governors are aware of the strengths and areas that need to improve. They are evaluating assessment information regarding children's progress but recognise that they now need to track progress more closely for groups of children so that they can even more robustly hold the Nursery's leadership to account for children's achievement.
 - Some policies and procedures lack clarity and robustness. As a result, governors do not check that parents have all of the relevant information they require in a timely way. Governors do not ensure that the school keeps the website fully compliant at all times.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The focus of the teaching is on developing the whole child. Adults are skilled at taking account of the children's interests and planning exciting project work to develop the children's understanding and deepen their thinking. For example, in the project on water some children were thinking about how water flows over rocks and the shapes that the bubbles made. They then translated this into observational drawings with great effect.
- Boys and girls achieve equally well because adults are skilled in making sure that everyone joins in the small group teaching. When sharing books with children, the teachers ensure that there are puppets and other engaging resources so that every child is an active participant.
- All staff are consistently positive in their dealing with the children – leading to a very calm and peaceful atmosphere in the setting. Classical music is played at lunchtimes, and adults use this time well to assist children with their own decisions regarding the food they eat. Children are given adult knives and forks to use independently, with good outcomes.
- The teaching of early literacy is good and children make good progress in developing these skills. Adults frequently read familiar stories to the children, taking every opportunity to encourage repetition and supporting children in spotting well-known words. Children are keen to show their writing skills and many are already experts at writing their names clearly.
- Although there is great emphasis placed on acquiring vocabulary and developing speech and language skills, not the same attention is given to the creative exploration of mathematics. As a result, children who are very interested in mathematics have fewer opportunities to develop their perseverance in problem-solving appropriate to their age. The evidence seen in previous floor books and learning journeys suggest that this is the norm.
- At times, adults do not observe children enough to extend their skills in child-chosen activities. This sometimes prevents a child from showing how well they persevere with a task or an activity. While adults are very well organised and activities flow very well from one to another, assessment opportunities are occasionally missed.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote children's personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The children are self-confident and have settled extremely well into their Nursery Year. They are fully aware of the routines and willingly respond to adults, so learning activities flow well and children can make the most of every opportunity.
- When having their snacks, the children practise their social skills and discuss their likes and dislikes happily and well. They understand which foods and drinks are healthy, and are able to articulate their opinions very well for their age. For example, one child told the inspector that 'milk is healthy because it helps you grow bigger'.
- Parents and children are warmly welcomed at the start of each session. Parents frequently stay to talk with staff about their child's progress as children demonstrate their independence choosing their name and finding a coat peg for their belongings.
- Staff keep detailed risk assessments for the indoor and outdoor area and for when adults take children around the local area.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is outstanding.
- The children have already established very good friendships and play well together, either in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. There are no recorded incidents of bullying or racial discrimination. Parents spoken to confirmed that their children have made friends easily.
- Although attendance is not statutory for children of this age, staff work effectively with parents so that children attend regularly and are punctual at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

- During lessons such as music, the children listen and follow instructions extremely well, concentrating and participating with great enthusiasm. They choose the songs they wish to sing and use resources, such as shakers and scarves, with skill. Consequently, they make good progress learning rhythm and rhymes.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Children start the Nursery Year with skills that vary, but for most children their skills are broadly typical for their age. Children make good progress and most leave attaining at least the standards expected for a successful start to their Reception Year.
- Children's progress in reading is good. They enjoy working with adults in small groups, reading books and practising their phonics (letters and the sounds they make) to help them read simple words. These skills are reinforced by the use of interesting books.
- Children learn well as they play inside and outside. In one outdoor lesson, they greatly enjoyed themselves when taking turns being the traffic lights as their friends peddled bikes and scooters on the path.
- Adults encourage children to develop their thinking and language skills through project work which is recorded in whole-school floor books. The production of these floor books to demonstrate the outcomes for children is a strength. As a result, most children leave the Nursery with skills in language that is above that expected for their age.
- There are too few disabled children and those who have special educational needs to comment on their current progress and achievement without identifying them. This is also the case for those eligible for the early years pupil premium. Available in-school information shows that adults meet the needs of these children well.
- Although the children achieve well in acquiring mathematical knowledge and skills overall, they do not have as many exciting and rich experiences to explore and develop their mathematical problem-solving skills. As a result, they could achieve even more.
- At times, the settling period at the start of the year extends too long, especially for the most-able children. These children are not identified quickly enough so that adults can plan and provide more targeted challenge and alternative activities which could accelerate their progress.

School details

Unique reference number	110595
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10001471

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jacqueline Wade
Headteacher	Lee Robertson
Telephone number	01223 712075
Website	www.histon.cambs.sch.uk
Email address	office@histon.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 September 2012

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most nursery schools.
- Children are taught in two connecting classes, with an additional room for further activities.
- Children receive their 15 hours per week as either morning or afternoon sessions or for two-and-a-half days each week.
- The proportion known to be eligible for the early years pupil premium funding is less than average.
- The majority of children are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs, together with those who have education, health and care plans, is below average.
- The head of the centre also runs the education and child care facility and the children's centre located on the same site as the nursery school. These are subject to separate inspections. These settings share the same governing body.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching. This included observing children's learning in nine parts of lessons, four of which were jointly seen with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke with children, evaluated their learning journeys and a number of floor books to take account of the work that has been done and the progress that children make.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and other school leaders.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation around safeguarding and scrutinised the single central register. The inspector considered the arrangements for children with disabilities and those who have special educational needs.
- Parents were spoken to informally at the start and the end of the school day. The inspector responded to telephone conversations from parents during the course of the inspection and evaluated letters. The views of 22 parents were considered from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Staff views were considered through a questionnaire.

Inspection team

Kim Hall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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



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 and as part of the inspection.

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.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

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 and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, 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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2015

