

Rawmarsh Childrens Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106827
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	309239
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Jane Hughes

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	Boys
Number on roll	
School	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Robert Bird
Headteacher	Mrs Judith Shelley
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2004
School address	Barbers Crescent Rawmarsh Rotherham South Yorkshire S62 6AD
Telephone number	01709 3368681
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Age group	3–5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This large Children's Centre draws children from a wide area. Almost all children are of White British heritage and speak English at home. Families, many of them fragmented, from disadvantaged social and economic circumstances draw on its services. The centre provides outreach support for families as well as a training venue for the private, maintained and voluntary sectors. In 2006, the Nursery governing body and the Surestart local programme board amalgamated into one governing body for the centre. Designated in 2003, the centre provides a wide range of services for children from birth to five years. This includes breakfast club, additional nursery sessions, lunchtime, teatime and holiday care. The centre is open for 49 weeks each year from 08.00 to 18.00. There is one point September entry Nursery education provision for up to 65 children in the morning and afternoon sessions. Children's attendance patterns vary, with the majority attending part-time for five sessions per week. The centre has an eight place full time equivalent enhanced resource for children with special educational needs (SEN) and autism. The resource is managed by the deputy headteacher who is also Head of Centre designate. Three staff are trained and registered with the National Autistic Society to deliver the 'Early Bird' programme to families of children with autistic spectrum disorder. The centre has achieved Healthy School status, a School Achievement Award, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Leading Aspect Award for Inclusion and Beacon School status. The deputy headteacher is the Teaching Awards Regional Winner for SEN Teacher of the Year 2007. Children arrive in the Nursery with skills well below those typical for their age, particularly their speech and language skills.

This inspection is of the Nursery education for three- and four-year-olds. The report from the inspection of day care in January 2008 is available on the Ofsted website as is a 2007 report about the centre, conducted by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and a Childcare Inspector as part of a programme to evaluate the impact of children's centres on children and their families.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Rawmarsh Children's Centre provides outstanding Nursery education for all its children, regardless of their individual needs and abilities. Parents and carers typically recognise that, 'It's a great place to be'. The headteacher has sustained excellent leadership and vision for many years. She is the Nursery's sternest critic and this accounts for the more modest elements of the school's self-evaluation which do not reflect the first-class outcomes identified during the inspection. Minor issues from the previous inspection have been carefully addressed. Outstanding achievement, high quality teaching, care and support combine with exemplary leadership and management to demonstrate an undeniably outstanding capacity to improve.

The school is known widely for the importance it places on offering every child, whatever their individual need, a highly stimulating daily curriculum, full of inventive activities to challenge children and stretch their capabilities. Provision is especially noteworthy for children on the autistic spectrum as they become increasingly adept at social interaction and communication. Highly skilled teachers and teaching assistants squeeze every possible learning opportunity from activities and so enable all children to become increasingly independent learners, confident in their ability to find things out for themselves. These are important skills for their future success. As a result, children achieve exceptionally well and reach the standards typical for their age. Exemplary academic support and guidance, along with the highest quality of pastoral care combine to nurture happy and relaxed learners. Parents express the view that, 'Children are all clearly so valued here.' First-class partnerships with other schools and organisations ensure that all children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, receive high quality support and are very well prepared for life in either mainstream or specialist schools when they move on. Indeed, parents and carers of children with additional needs confirm that the staff, 'have worked absolute wonders'. Many parents attend workshops to help them to support better their children's learning and development. They agree that the centre provides, 'absolutely outstanding practical help'. Even so, there is still more work to be done to encourage harder to reach parents and carers to become more involved in their children's learning.

The centre runs smoothly day-to-day because of highly efficient administrative staff and conscientious ancillary and lunchtime support. The pristine learning environment is a huge asset and children revel in the extensive grounds. Previous attendance at well established Surestart groups helps children to settle with minimum disruption and anxiety. Children's attitudes and behaviour are exemplary because they model themselves on the adults working with them. Supportive relationships enhance all aspects of the centre's provision and ensure children make the most of every minute. Children embrace opportunities to take responsibility for their own well-being and for aspects of nursery life and this helps them to become increasingly effective members of the community.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

As a Nursery school, the Foundation Stage is completely covered by the Overall Effectiveness section.

What the school should do to improve further

- Introduce further strategies to involve even more parents and carers in children's learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

From their low starting points, children's achievement is outstanding. By the time they leave the centre for Reception classes elsewhere, children are very well prepared for the new academic and social challenges they face. Their skills in all areas of learning are in line with those typical for their age and they are on track to reach the goals set for children by the end of Reception. Their achievement is particularly impressive in terms of their communication and language skills which develop apace. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified speedily, often while they attend the day care provision. They do as well as all other groups of children because they receive just the right levels of challenge and support from highly skilled adults. Children on the autistic spectrum make sustained, small step progress as a result of the expert help they receive. Exemplary relationships forged between adults and children support children's rapid personal, social and emotional development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Parents say that their children relish the thought of coming to school and confirm that children, 'beam if it's a school day'. Children delight in the wide range of stimulating and imaginative activities. Children's confidence levels soar as a result of the time they spend in nurture groups, following detailed assessments to establish their 'well-being and involvement' levels. Children's outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is founded on awe and wonder of the world around them, creativity and natural curiosity. Children's behaviour is impressive and they show great consideration for others. They realise that simple rules help the nursery to remain a calm and happy place. They are increasingly aware of the differences between cultures and make regular use of high quality multicultural resources. They know that people look, feel and think differently. Children are keen to eat the healthy vegetables they help to grow in the extensive grounds. They are learning to seek healthy food, drink and exercise options. Children learn about safe practices and know what it means to be a responsible member of the school community. They are developing secure basic skills to support their future success and well-being. Most parents bring their children to school regularly and attendance levels are satisfactory for children this age.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Key characteristics of the excellent teaching are the highly supportive relationships between adults and children along with the very skilful questioning techniques adults use with children. Staff extend seamlessly children's knowledge and understanding during activities. For instance, two children were encouraged to use a digital camera to record colourful designs made by their peers. They learned through making mistakes, as one ended up with a picture of his finger rather than the tray of patterns. Following the teacher's painstaking guidance, he eventually managed to hold the camera properly and not obscure the lens. Unprompted, he then passed this information on to another child in the group who was about to make the same mistake. Provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is of the highest order and parents say how happy they are with the quality of teaching and the progress their children

make. All staff use a language system with signs and symbols to teach communication, language and literacy skills to children who need this specialist support. Parents and carers whose children have already left the Nursery make comments such as, 'We were all so lucky to meet and learn with such lovely people.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

High quality resources both indoors and outside ensure that the first-class learning environment is replicated throughout the centre. Children embark on a daily 'magical mystery tour' as they follow their interests in every area of learning. Supportive adults make sure children solve any problems for themselves, often diverting them to different curriculum areas in search of answers. For instance, one boy noticed that his marble turned green as he 'painted' with it in a tray. When he asked why this was, the adult sent him off to experiment with colour mixing at the easel. He, along with other interested children, worked out that it was because he had been painting with blue and yellow paints that, when mixed in the tray, had made a green coating on the marble. Parents are increasingly familiar with the curriculum their children follow. 'Playdays' for adults give parents and carers the opportunity to develop this familiarity along with the requisite skills to support their children's learning at home, although not everyone takes advantage of these. The wide ranging curriculum is enriched by community specialists such as musicians, artists and performers who help to bring learning to life for children.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Staff use their detailed observations of children's achievement to inform the individual learning objectives that they draw up for them. These are very challenging and ensure that the needs of each child are carefully met so all are able to make the best possible progress. Expert support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly those with autism, is of the very highest quality. Separate resource areas, nurture groups and carefully prepared, individual learning programmes ensure each child blossoms at their own pace. Representatives from outside agencies meet regularly with staff and parents in the centre's calm environment. They ensure that parents are fully aware of their children's needs and how best to address these alongside the centre's own provision. Parents typically say of the staff, 'We trust them utterly', and agree that all the adults are, 'very pro-active and provide creative solutions', to some very complex issues. Staff provide parents with a rich compilation of photographic and written records to illustrate the excellent progress their children make during the year. The school meets current requirements for safeguarding learners. Extensive support programmes deliver peace of mind to parents and children alike as they settle in or prepare to move on to new schools.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Sustained leadership and management of the highest quality over many years make the centre the success that it is. There is no shred of complacency here as leaders continue to raise the bar in terms of expectation and outcome. Well ordered priorities provide a clear focus for staff on how to improve current provision. Senior leaders recognise that there are still further avenues to explore to involve some harder to reach parents and carers in children's learning. Well

informed and highly motivated governors provide excellent levels of challenge and clarity of vision to mirror that of the headteacher and other senior staff. They monitor closely the work of the school and the outcomes for children, parents and the wider community. The deputy headteacher ensures that staff benefit from high quality professional development, particularly in relation to the centre's special focus on autism. Middle managers play an equally important role, providing outreach support for families and a well received family learning programme. Staff support and train colleagues across the local authority. There is excellent communication throughout the centre, with Surestart colleagues and programmes now fully integrated. Families recognise that the centre sits at the heart of the community. They comment appreciatively, 'This place is like a beacon.'

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Rawmarsh Children's Centre, Rotherham, S62 6AD

Thank you for telling me about all the things you like at your nursery when I came to see you. I've written you a little rhyme like some of the ones you enjoy joining in with on the interactive whiteboard. (My favourite is 'Twinkle, Twinkle', so that's the one I've used).

Rawmarsh, Rawmarsh, what a school,

Inside, outside, it's a jewel,

Children happy, mums all smile, J

Dads come too and stay a while,

At Rawmarsh, Rawmarsh children star,

Please just stay the way you are!

Your school is a very, very good school. I use a long word to describe it in my report. The word is 'outstanding'. I'm sure you can count how many letters are in that word and sound out the word because you are such clever children! Your mums and dads told me how much you like school. They are very pleased that you come here. All the adults take excellent care of you, even if you have a problem. You all have such a good time and do very well because you learn lots of new things every day. You are very good at listening to the adults and trying your best. I saw how well you solve problems for yourselves - well done! That's something you have to do every day when you're bigger.

I have asked your headteacher and all the adults to help your mums and dads to be even more involved in what you learn at school so they can help you lots and lots.

I hope the turnips and carrots you planted when I visited grow well and that they make delicious soup for your dinners. Have a good time this summer.