

Colleges Nursery School

Campkin Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB4 2LD

Inspection dates

6–7 December 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders and all staff put children at the heart of everything they do at Colleges Nursery School. They establish caring and nurturing relationships with the children and make sure that every individual child feels safe, happy and secure. As a result, children settle very quickly into school life.
- The executive headteacher provides inspirational leadership for the school and has high aspirations for all families and children. She works tirelessly and determinedly to promote the importance of early years education.
- Governors are diligent and skilled in their roles. They have an insightful understanding about the school's strengths and monitor its performance closely. They support and challenge leaders to ensure that children receive exceptional care and education.
- Provision made for the care and education of two-year-old children is of a high quality. Staff work very skilfully to provide guidance and support. As a result, two-year-old children thrive at Colleges Nursery School.
- Leaders organise, oversee and plan the curriculum to meet individual children's needs. Within all of the early years areas of learning adults make full use of children's interests and personal experiences to offer activities that encourage children to explore and learn productively.
- The teaching staff have high expectations of all children. Consistently strong teaching ensures that children make substantial progress from their starting points. Consequently, children are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Children are inquisitive, confident and eager learners. They love school and always try hard. All children, including those who are disadvantaged, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the most able, achieve very well.
- Support for children who speak English as an additional language is excellent. This ensures that children develop their speech, language and communication abilities very quickly.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school's work. They typically comment on how well children settle, how much they enjoy school and how well they achieve.
- Careful scrutiny of the quality of teaching is undertaken. However, leaders identify that, occasionally, adults miss the opportunity to guide, support and challenge children sufficiently in their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all adults are equally well equipped with the skills to know when to intervene appropriately while children are learning to secure even more opportunities for children's outstanding progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The executive headteacher is extremely knowledgeable about young children's learning and development. She is passionate about the importance and impact of early years education on children's lives. Her commitment and expertise underpin the nursery's positive ethos and children's high achievement.
- The executive headteacher and governors know the school very well. Self-evaluation is reflective and accurate. Priorities for development are set out in the school development plan, with clear lines of responsibility and regular monitoring arrangements. This provides a focal point for further improvement and is successfully improving provision across the school.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and governors have successfully continued to strengthen the work of the federation of Colleges Nursery and Brunswick Nursery. This is resulting in more consistent practice across both schools. While both schools are maintaining their own unique identity, they have increased their capacity to sustain consistently high-quality provision. For example, governors' restructure of the leadership team has resulted in appointing one deputy headteacher who has strategic oversight of both schools. Consequently, shared practice is resulting in staff developing and improving their own performance.
- Shrewd, careful use of the early years pupil premium funding ensures that disadvantaged children achieve and personally flourish during their time at the Nursery. Leaders have a very good understanding of the challenges that this group of children face that may have an impact on their learning. Children's vulnerabilities are well identified and, additionally, support put in place demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- The leader of special educational needs is very knowledgeable and undertakes her role effectively. She meticulously ensures that SEND funding is well spent to meet the very diverse needs of children who attend the school. Her work contributes towards the nursery being fully inclusive. This results in high-quality support for children with SEND.
- The leadership of provision for two-year-olds is exemplary because leaders are skilled, knowledgeable and resolute about developing high-quality care and learning for the youngest and, often, most vulnerable children. Provision to meet children's academic personal, social and emotional needs is planned, delivered and reviewed extremely sensitively and skilfully.
- Leaders have implemented a well-developed curriculum based on leaders' passion to ensure that all children can access learning opportunities and subsequently achieve well. An exciting range of trips in the local area broaden children's experiences further and enthuse their enjoyment for learning. For example, children visit the library, post office and local shops.
- The curriculum develops children's experiences and interests, and successfully promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children learn that we live in a very diverse world through a varied range of meaningful experiences. Parents specifically commented upon the Nursery's success in 'ensuring children understand

how they are different' and appreciate that their children are being taught to be aware of and respect each other for who they are.

- Fundamental British values are carefully considered and included in all the Nursery's work. Opportunities are taken to ensure that children develop an age-appropriate understanding of respect, tolerance and democracy. For example, 'mini elections' are held through role play and story. This enables children to gain an early understanding through familiar contexts and experiences.
- Parents think very highly of the school. They are effusive about the quality of care and education their children receive. One parent reflected the views of many, saying: 'We recommend the school to everyone. You can watch with a growing sense of delight how it is enhancing children's lives through its encouragement of friendship, independence and curiosity.' Furthermore, parents are overwhelmingly positive about leaders and staff. Parents appreciate the work they do. They collectively say, 'The headteacher and her team exceed expectations and go beyond their duty of care.'

Governance of the school

- All governors share the executive headteacher's and staff's commitment to providing the best quality education for children. Governors provide strong, effective support and challenge for the Nursery's leaders.
- Governors make good use of a wide range of information, including the school development plan and all assessment information, to check improvements in the Nursery. Their regular visits give them a first-hand view of how developments are making a difference to children's learning.
- The challenges governors make are consistently based on an in-depth analysis of children's progress information, as well as knowledge gained from their monitoring of the Nursery provision. Consequently, governors are successfully holding leaders to account to ensure that children get off to the best start in the early education.
- Governors carefully review and keep a close eye on school finances. They work with the executive headteacher to manage the strategic challenges facing the school to ensure that high-quality provision is sustainable.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A well-developed safeguarding ethos and culture are evident throughout the school. The Nursery's focal place in the community ensures that all adults know the children very well and are alert to their needs. All members of staff play their part in the smooth, orderly running of the Nursery. Well-established routines and caring relationships ensure that children are safe and secure.
- There are comprehensive processes in place for the recruitment and selection of staff. Leaders are careful to check all adults are suitable to work with children and are rigorous in undertaking appropriate checks to meet statutory requirements.
- All staff receive regular training in safeguarding practice and procedures including Prevent, the process of identifying signs of extremism and radical views. Staff know

exactly what to do if they have any concerns about children in their care. They unequivocally understand that safeguarding children is the responsibility of each and every one of them.

- Children feel safe when they are in school. As a result, children are happy, enjoy their learning, 'have a go' and approach all adults for help with no reservations. The allocation of key workers to children further contributes to them having a sense of belonging and feeling secure.
- Leaders work effectively with external agencies to ensure that they access appropriate support for children and families when it is required. Positive working relationships with organisations such as, for example, the on-site children's centre, further increase the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.
- As with all other aspects of the school's work, parents firmly believe their children are safe and well looked after.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Fundamental to the outstanding provision at Colleges Nursery are the warm, nurturing and special relationships adults develop with all children. Every child is known and respected as an individual. This ensures that adults can knowledgeably apply their teaching skills to ensure that children achieve well in all areas of learning.
- Teachers have a secure understanding of effective early years education and the balanced approach they need to guide children's learning through work and play. They are very reflective in their practice and tailor planning to suit best the individual needs of each child to help them make exceptional progress.
- Planning of teaching and assessment of learning are rigorous. Staff effectively use daily assessment of children's learning and other opportunities for observations to plan for individual children. This means that teaching effectively leads to substantial and sustained progress in all areas of learning from very low starting points.
- The quality of the provision for two-year-olds is excellent. The youngest children are cared for and educated very well. Children receive an excellent start to their learning at nursery school. The selection and arrangement of resources set out around the Nursery rooms are planned extremely effectively to meet the needs of all ages. Staff plan the routine of each day very carefully. Children benefit from excellent support from staff to help them play cooperatively with others.
- Provision for three- and four-year-olds is equally effective. Children revisit learned skills while new learning is introduced and taught progressively over time. Consequently, children develop knowledge and understanding securely before moving on to their next steps. Staff check children's learning as they are teaching so they are assured of progress being made.
- Children listen to stories avidly and demonstrate they are developing a real love of books and reading. Children make good attempts to read simple words and use pictures, rhyme and actions to help them show their understanding of what is being read. Children build words using the letter sounds that they regularly rehearse. For example, a group of children were enthralled listening to 'The beaver and the echo' being read to them. They thoughtfully applied their knowledge of sounds and used

known strategies to understand what the words meant. They confidently joined in with reading familiar words.

- Phonics is taught well. Children acquire a very good knowledge of letter names and sounds. Children use this knowledge effectively in both their reading and writing activities. Consequently, children's early reading skills are well developed.
- Throughout the Nursery there are many opportunities for children to 'mark make' and participate in early-letter formation. Children are eager writers. They are keen to write their names and routinely choose activities where they can write. For example, children were keen to write letters to post on their visit to the post office. One child in the role-play area proudly read out the letter she'd written to a sick child telling them to 'get better soon, we love you'.
- Children's numeracy skills are developed well. A consistent feature in the classroom and outside learning environment is the opportunities children have to apply their mathematical skills. Adults skilfully plan for children to demonstrate and extend their number skills in a variety of activities. For example, adults used very effective strategies to get children to count forwards and backwards using magic tricks as a stimulus.
- Children have free-flow access to both inside and outdoor provision. They love being outdoors and show they know how to dress appropriately if it is cold or wet. Indeed, one child was anxious that her cuddly snowman did not get cold and so requested that while she was putting on her coat, the adult found a hat and scarf for the snowman. This triggered much conversation, as the adult encouraged the child to explain why she had made this request. Consequently, children show they are very aware of their surroundings and others.
- A high proportion of children are at the early stages of learning English. Staff respond to this, ensuring that there is an emphasis on children's language acquisition. Staff are highly skilled at teaching them to become confident in their speech, language and communication. For all children, staff model language very clearly, listen to children carefully and use questions precisely.
- All staff encourage children to be as independent as possible. Effective continuous provision enables children to explore and investigate following their own lines of enquiry. Adults skilfully intervene to help children to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding using appropriately challenging questioning and support to ensure that children make the best possible progress. Leaders continue to check this provision is of high quality. They are aware that in a few instances, some adults are not as confident to support children in the more independent play opportunities. This can result in children not making the progress that they are capable of.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Children are happy and proactive learners. They are eager to get started when they arrive at the beginning of each session and promptly join in with the wide range of

activities on offer. All staff provide comforting reassurance for any children who are a little unsure, so any initial anxieties are soon forgotten.

- The children listen carefully to each other's contributions in discussions and respond appropriately. They clearly enjoy taking part and confidently share their ideas. All children feel comfortable talking about their ideas. This is because they are positively encouraged by adults so that children show adults they value their input.
- Children feel very secure with all staff and form close relationships with their key workers, whom they seek out when not sure of themselves or if wanting attention. These close relationships are a crucial contributor to supporting children's excellent personal development.
- Excellent individualised personal development and welfare underpin the ethos of Colleges Nursery. Adults treat every child as a unique individual. They consider it of paramount importance to develop children's confidence, self-esteem and happiness upon which their academic achievement is based.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Staff know the children and their needs extremely well. They share responsibility for children's behaviour and learning and follow the school's behaviour policy consistently. As a result, children are clear about how they are expected to behave and are very keen to do well.
- The children conduct themselves impeccably both inside and outdoors. They show consideration for others and are kind and gentle towards each other.
- Children are exceptionally well prepared with the personal and social skills needed to achieve well in the next stage of their education.
- Leaders routinely check and follow up children's absences thoroughly and promptly. Persistent absence from school is rare. Clear messages are shared with parents about the importance of attendance as helpful preparation for primary school. Consequently, parents understand the importance of attending nursery and work in partnership with the school leaders to make sure that their children attend regularly.
- Children enjoy attending school. During the inspection, some children who attend half days currently were upset about having to leave at lunchtime. One parent gently reassured her child, 'Don't worry, you will come back tomorrow.'

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- From their different starting points, children make excellent progress. A high proportion of children leave the Nursery with knowledge and skills that exceed those typical for their age, especially in their communication, language and literacy and numeracy understanding. This represents outstanding progress.
- Two-year-old children have a wonderful start to their learning. Their abilities grow quickly because of the well-planned and skilful support of staff. This is enabling the youngest children who move onto the three- to four-year-old provision to participate in

activities with a highly developed confidence and eagerness. Parents report that this is helping their children to settle quickly when moving classes at Colleges Nursery.

- The children are inquisitive and curious about their surroundings and participate eagerly in learning. Adults nurture children's interests, helping children to develop the skills needed to explore the environment around them. This contributes towards the children making exceptional progress across all areas of learning.
- Adults give the development of language and speech skills a high priority. Typically, children are observed talking about their ideas and experiences. Children learn how to use a rapidly increasing range of vocabulary as they play, explore and learn.
- Differences in the attainment of disadvantaged children quickly diminish because the additional funding for these children is effectively targeted and used to help secure their achievement. This means that by the time they leave the Nursery the attainment of these children is at least the same as, or better than, that of their peers.
- The small proportion of children with SEND are effectively supported, because staff identify exactly what children need and ensure that they review provision regularly. Staff work in close partnership with other professionals and parents, so staff plan activities which precisely meet these children's needs. As a result, children with SEND make very good progress from their starting points.
- Staff successfully meet the needs of the children who speak English as an additional language. Children and their families receive additional support to help them to improve their understanding and speaking skills while still maintaining their home language. Consequently, these children make excellent progress in all areas of learning.
- The most able children achieve well in all areas of learning. Staff identify who these children are and plan opportunities for children to think, reflect and explain their learning. Consequently, the most able children achieve well and make very good progress when accessing more complex tasks.
- After starting nursery with limited confidence, children quickly become independent and self-assured learners. They are keen to investigate and 'have a go'. They succeed because of the relentless efforts of adults to ensure that the provision children receive is of the highest quality.

School details

Unique reference number	110597
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10056190

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 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-chairs	Carolyn Purser/Chris Willis Pickup
Executive Headteacher	Amanda Bannister
Telephone number	01223 712168
Website	www.colleges.cambs.sch.uk
Email address	office@colleges.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 June 2018

Information about this school

- All children in this school are in the early years foundation stage.
- Children's patterns of attendance at Colleges Nursery School varies. Many children attend the Nursery for five half-day sessions each week. In addition, the school provides for two- to three-year-olds in the Daisy Room from 8.45am to 3.45pm each day for up to 24 children at any one time. Furthermore, running alongside funded nursery places is Colleges' 'wraparound care' provision from 8.00am to 4.00pm.
- There has been an increase in the percentage of children of minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of children who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of children with SEND is below the national average.
- Since the previous section 5 inspection, the school has federated with Brunswick Nursery School. The leadership structure has changed. There is an executive headteacher who took up post in January 2016, a deputy headteacher who works

across both schools and an assistant headteacher who is at Colleges. There have been some changes in governors since the previous inspection, including the appointment of two co-chairs.

- The children's centre shares the school site but is subject to a separate inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Over the two days, learning was jointly observed in all classrooms, including the Daisy Room, the provision for two-year-olds, and in the outdoor environment by the lead inspector and the executive headteacher. The lead inspector looked at examples of children's learning and spoke to children as they undertook their tasks and during group time.
- The lead inspector met with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher in her role as deputy and special educational needs leader and the assistant headteacher. The lead inspector also met with three governors including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body.
- Telephone conversations were held with two local authority representatives and a representative from the local teaching school. In addition, the lead inspector met with a representative from the children's centre to discuss partnership working.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's website and a range of documentation, including the school's records of assessment and children's progress, school development plan, monitoring of teaching and learning, governors' meetings and paperwork relating to attendance and safeguarding.
- The lead inspector spoke with parents at the end of the morning session on the second day of the inspection. The lead inspector took account of 26 responses to the Ofsted free-text system and 10 responses to the Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The lead inspector also took account of the school's most recent Parent View survey and the two letters received from parents.
- The 16 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire were scrutinised and the lead inspector spoke to members of staff during the inspection, including meeting with a nursery nurse following a request to discuss her work.

Inspection team

Tracy Fielding, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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