



Millfield Community Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108745
LEA Sunderland
Inspection number 278038
Inspection dates 16 March 2006 to 17 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Helen Kavanagh

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Bell Street
School category	Maintained		Sunderland
Age range of pupils	3 to 4		Tyne and Wear, SR4 6JR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 5532775
Number on roll	70	Fax number	0191 5532777
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Miss Fiona Barnes
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2000	Headteacher	Miss Carol Thompson

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 4	16 March 2006 - 17 March 2006	278038

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is an 80 place nursery providing education and childcare for children aged 0–5 years. It is situated close to Sunderland city centre in an area of high socio-economic deprivation. Attainment on entry is generally below that expected for children of this age nationally, and is well below in mathematics and creative development. Parents can access a breakfast club before school and a teatime club afterwards. There is an above average proportion of children who are from minority ethnic groups, with a range of seven different languages in addition to English. Ten per cent of children, in line with the national average, have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school building is soon to be extended as a designated Children's Centre.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is an effective school providing good value for money. This matches the school's and parents' views. Personal development and care are particular strengths. One parent said, 'The staff know us as people. They really care.' Achievement and progress are good, with most children reaching the level that is usual for this age by the time they leave. Teaching and learning are good. As yet, the headteacher only monitors lessons informally. She plans to formalise this in order to provide more specific guidance to staff. A broad range of indoor activities and a thorough understanding of the needs of the children make learning enjoyable. However, the more narrowly focused outdoor provision limits children's learning opportunities. A new way of working has been phased in since September, with fewer focused activities and more emphasis on continuous provision. The impact of this has, so far, only been monitored informally. The school has a rich curriculum and provides many opportunities for the children to visit places of interest and broaden their experience of the world. The behaviour of the children is outstanding. Provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also excellent. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a strong philosophy of child-centred education. Governors and all staff form an effective team with a shared vision for the school. Progress since the last inspection and capacity to improve are good.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend and enhance outdoor learning opportunities.
- Formalise lesson observations, identifying ways that teaching can further improve children's learning, and evaluate the impact of the new approach to teaching.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children's attainment as they start school is well below average in mathematics and creative development and below average in all other aspects of learning. However, they make good progress and are on course to reach the early learning goals expected nationally at the end of the Foundation Stage. Progress is especially good in mathematics and creative development due to the staff's ability to adapt the curriculum to the needs of the children. Children in the past made slower progress in writing, but this has now improved. They use a variety of media, including the interactive white board, to practice their 'writing' skills, which sometimes results in legible strings of letters. In mathematical development, children have a good knowledge of shape, size and pattern and understand 'more' and 'less'. The school is providing well for the higher attaining children by teaching to their individual needs. This enables these children to make good progress. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress because, again, activities are adapted to their needs. Caring support leads to outstanding progress in some areas; for example,

physical development. The progress of children learning English as an additional language is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The children's personal development and well-being are good, with outstanding features. This is a busy and exciting place to learn. Children thoroughly enjoy school. Attendance is satisfactory. The focus on independence prepares them very well for the future. Staff teach important messages about safety and healthy lifestyles in an imaginative way. After cutting fruit, the children washed and dried the utensils themselves. They happily, and safely, hammered nails into wood. Children listen attentively and behaviour is outstanding. Children know they have a responsibility to be kind and helpful. They are taught about their local community – visiting the shops, the library, the dentist and other local schools. They have links with a nursery in Kenya and raise funds for charities at home and abroad.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The children are taught to value the different cultures in school; for example, by learning about Eid, Christmas and Chinese New Year. Parents and visitors share their different traditions so that children understand and respect each other.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. A new way of working has been phased in since September with fewer focused activities and more emphasis on continuous provision. However, the impact of the new approach to learning has yet to be evaluated in a formal, systematic manner.

All adults have a thorough understanding of how young children learn. They know when to offer help and when to stand back and observe. As a result, children become very independent and confidently test out new ideas. Staff ask probing questions that extend learning and encourage discussion. Higher attaining children are supported well and teachers effectively challenge them to extend their skills. An exciting variety of activities makes learning fun. Children eagerly made traffic lights, vehicles and houses to produce a model of a local street. Planning identifies what is to be taught and the expected learning outcomes. The quality of assessment for individual children is good. Staff make informal notes of their daily observations which effectively guide the weekly planning session. The experienced and competent support staff play a significant role in this. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are especially well taught and make outstanding progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with many strengths. Every day children arrive to a rich variety of indoor activities which have often been inspired by the children themselves. The emphasis is on learning through first-hand experiences. Children have the freedom to develop skills such as cutting, hammering and climbing whilst adults keep a watchful but not over intrusive eye. Visitors make learning interesting and convey important health and safety information. The many visits arranged for the children, such as those to local theatres, are an excellent springboard for learning. The outdoor area is not used so effectively. Here, the children's experiences are mainly concerned with physical and personal development. The school has plans to develop the outdoor area, but even without this, a broader range of activities could be provided to enhance the children's learning.

Provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent. Children and staff make sure they play a full part in all the activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care offered by the school is outstanding. One parent said the staff 'bend over backwards' to meet the needs of the children. Efficient procedures are in place to check on children's safety and well-being. An excellent partnership with a wide range of support agencies enables staff to offer informed guidance to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school provides a broad range of extended care from birth to five years. The children who enter the nursery from The Rainbow Room (0–3 Years) do so with ease, demonstrating high levels of personal development for their age.

Staff involve children in their learning. Examples of work and photographs are shared with children to show the progress they have made and what they need to do to make their work better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is very experienced and has built up excellent relationships with staff, parents and governors. The school has a clear and accurate picture of what to do to improve further.

The newly formed senior management team are working well together. They share a common philosophy and are clear about their areas of responsibility. They know that though staff are enthusiastic about the new approach to learning, a thorough evaluation of its impact on children's development needs to take place to make sure they are on the right track. The overall monitoring of performance is not as productive as it could be because there are no formal observations. This restricts professional dialogue and means the headteacher is unable to give specific guidance and support.

Governance is good. Governors have continued to play an important role in developing the school despite the fact that they have been depleted in number since September. Management of the provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent. Capacity to move forward is good. The school has a strong team that are determined to sustain and build on existing strengths.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Alexandra House

33 Kingsway

London

WC2B 6SE

T 0207 421 6800

F 0207 421 6707

Ofsted helpline

08456 404045

The Children

Millfield Nursery School

Bell Street

Sunderland

Tyne and Wear

SR4 6JR

20 March 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for welcoming me to your nursery to see how you work and play. I enjoyed my visit very much. I found out a lot of things and these are some of my special memories.

Millfield is a good nursery. It was lovely to see you all come into school smiling and ready to work and learn together. The grown ups are very friendly and they plan so many exciting things for you to do that I know why you are so happy.

You are all learning very quickly and getting ready for the big school. You enjoy many visits and do some super follow-up work. I was very impressed with the way you treat each other and how sensible you are when using tools.

To make your nursery even better, your teachers are going to find ways to make learning outside as good as it is indoors. Also, Miss Thompson is going to watch you when you are learning. Then she is going to talk to your teachers about how to help you learn even more. Lastly, your teachers are going to check how much you have learnt to see if they have helped you as much as they could.

Thank you again for making me so welcome.

Yours faithfully

Helen Kavanagh

Lead inspector