



Pennywell Early Years Centre

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108753
LEA Sunderland
Inspection number 278041
Inspection dates 13 July 2006 to 14 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mr John Heap

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Portsmouth Road
School category	Maintained		Pennywell
Age range of pupils	3 to 4		Sunderland, Tyne and Wear
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 5536820
Number on roll	93	Fax number	0191 5536822
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Kay Dodd
Date of previous inspection	1 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Judith Donnelly

Age group 3 to 4	Inspection dates 13 July 2006 - 14 July 2006	Inspection number 278041
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Since March 2006, the school is part of a newly formed Children's Centre. It serves an area of high disadvantage. Levels of attainment on entry to the school are well below average overall. Almost all of the children are White British and there are very small groups of refugees and children in the care of the local authority. An above average proportion of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school had previously achieved Beacon and Early Excellence Centre status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school very cautiously judges itself as good with many excellent features. The inspection judges the school to be outstanding and providing excellent value for money. This is a further improvement on the very effective judgement of the previous inspections. It also confirms the school's previous Beacon and Early Excellence Centre status. This school does not allow itself to be complacent because the excellent leadership and management continually seek improvement. Consequently, the school is well placed to improve further and manage well the transition to a Children's Centre. Very good indicators for this are the excellent links with outside agencies that foster the exemplary provision for all the children, such as the high quality teaching, curriculum and care. All children benefit equally from all that the school offers. Children make excellent progress from the well below average attainment they start with. Gains in knowledge, skills and understanding mean that standards improve to a below average picture when they move to the reception class. Personal development is exemplary and children make the most progress in personal, social and emotional development. Parents and children are clear that school is very enjoyable, but a small minority are poor attenders and this affects their progress. The school has robust systems in place to monitor attendance and follow-up any difficulties that arise. However, there is still this small number of cases where the school's best efforts are not being successful.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the attendance of the few children whose standards are affected by periods of absence.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children enter the Nursery with a wide range of ability, but overall their attainment is well below typical expectations. A particular challenge is the very low level of communication, language and literacy skills. This leads to high levels of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has very detailed evidence that shows attainment is still below national expectations when they leave the Nursery. However, most children make excellent progress because:

- their needs are identified early
- provision is matched very accurately to individual and group needs
- targets are challenging.

Children settle quickly to school routines and clearly enjoy learning in this rich and stimulating learning environment. Achievement is best in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. In these areas of learning, most children are on course to reach the nationally expected learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception)

in the next school. Progress is at least good in communication, language and literacy, physical development and creative development.

Children with extra learning and social needs benefit greatly from the exemplary provision and support and make excellent progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. This is because staff provide them with interesting and inspiring activities. Eyes widened and all the children went 'wow' when the potato tub was tipped over and the vegetables appeared from the soil. Children know that healthy eating is important and that there is a difference between right and wrong. They play safely and take part vigorously in exercise sessions. Parents and children are extremely happy with all that the school provides and one child spoke for many when he said that he 'loved' the staff. Children thoroughly enjoy school and demonstrate high levels of concentration for ones so young. They are extremely proud of their achievements and show them with confidence and courtesy. This high level of confidence and pride is also matched by some parents, as when a small group of parents and children produced multimedia presentations together. Children know that there may be differences between themselves and those from other cultures, but that there are more importantly a range of similarities. Children contribute to wider society through their donations to charity. Attendance is satisfactory, with a small minority attending infrequently. Children are very well placed to prosper in their future education because of the excellent progress in personal, social and emotional development and their very strongly developing basic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is excellent. This judgement is even better than the previous inspection when it was very good. Practitioners have excellent knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the way that young children learn. They know their children really well because of the exhaustive and excellent assessment and recording of children's achievements. As a result, interesting and challenging tasks are devised for individuals and groups. Learning is promoted by the very strong balance between teacher-led activities and the choices that children make for themselves. Areas for learning are very well resourced and staff make challenging interventions at the right time. Every opportunity to develop basic skills is taken, most particularly the development of speaking, listening, reading, writing and number skills. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used extensively to stimulate children's curiosity and develop their basic skills. Children are managed superbly and there is little disruption around the excellent indoor and outdoor areas for learning.

A significant strength of the school is the excellent teaching and learning of children with extra needs. These include the speech and language group, the nurture group and the more able group. Evidence in lessons and from records shows that these children progress really well. Parents are rightly delighted with the support for these children.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an excellent curriculum. All requirements of the national guidelines for the Foundation Stage are fully met. An outstanding range of activities is provided in a very interesting and thought-provoking way. A particular example is the way that the superb outdoor environment has the same range of activities as indoors and the more traditional outdoor activities. Borders are packed with a range of plants, including vegetables. Children use these facilities exceptionally well to develop observation, searching and descriptive skills. Resources are excellent and the superb ratio of staff to children means that the youngsters work happily in small groups, engage in quality conversation and make rapid progress. A major strength is the use of group discussion to explore feelings and raise self-esteem. The curriculum is extensively enriched by a wide range of visits, visitors and activities planned to enhance personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. A significant strength is the way that the school reaches out to parents and helps them. One parent talked about the way the school's guidance on discipline had significantly improved the quality of life for her and her son at home. The school knows children and families really well. Child protection and health and safety procedures are robust. Assessment systems are excellent and a major factor in children's outstanding learning. Staff are vigilant and assessment notes go into incredible detail, particularly in relation to the recording of the development of children's language and literacy skills. Links with outside agencies are excellent. Other professionals praise the school staff for the way they most willingly seek advice, take notice and then use the guidance to support children. Procedures for monitoring attendance are robust and the school does all that it can to ensure that all children are regular attenders.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The highly motivated headteacher has a very clear vision for the school. Self-evaluation is very focused and owes much to the exhaustive monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school. All activities are evaluated for effectiveness. All staff know that the primary focus is the progress made by all the children in the school. To this end the headteacher has evolved systems that very efficiently promote excellent progress and the school is well placed to improve

further. Other schools have benefited from this exemplary practice through the school's Beacon and Centre of Excellence status. Key staff provide very strong leadership in a range of roles related to curricular, care and academic support. These colleagues appreciate the enlightened way that leadership and management roles have been delegated. They like leading and form a strong, cohesive team. This is extremely important given the gradual change in the school's character in its transition to a Children's Centre. Highly effective improvement planning benefits from:

- the gathering of evidence from all in the school
- meticulous planning and evaluation.

The governing body is very supportive and has very useful educational expertise in its ranks. Its hard work means that legal requirements are met and monitoring activities are regular and helpful. The school has only had a governing body since 2003 and its progress is good. Currently, governors rely too much on the headteacher for the monitoring and evaluation of the school rather than setting their own systems for monitoring and evaluation. Financial management is very prudent and the large budget surplus is earmarked for appropriate expenditure.

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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
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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	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	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	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	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	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?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	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	NA
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

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To the children of:

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Sunderland

Tyne and Wear

SR4 9AX

13 July 2006

Dear Children

I had a lovely time in your excellent school this week. Thank you for the warm welcome and help you gave to me. I have returned home with lots of memories and I shall try to share some of them with you in this letter.

Your behaviour is excellent and you find lots of ways to help each other when working or playing together. You use the excellent facilities really well, including the outside areas. I did enjoy the looks on the faces of some of you when the potatoes appeared, almost like magic, from the soil!

The adults in the school are very friendly and work hard. Some of you told me that you 'love' them. They give you a fantastic number of exciting things to learn. Around the school were lots of good paintings and I looked at photographs of you working hard and enjoying your lessons. The staff are really good at showing you and your parents the best way to do things. I thought the way that some of you and your parents did splendid presentations in the 'click and play' session was a great credit to all. You will be ready to go successfully and happily to your next school.

The staff and governors work very hard to support you and your parents and make sure you have everything that you need and deserve. They are rightly proud of your achievements and are always looking for ways to make things even better for you.

Sometimes, a few children miss a lot of school and I have asked the school to try and improve on this.

Finally, keep working hard and enjoy your summer holiday.

Very best wishes

John Heap

(Lead inspector)