



Colleges Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110597
LEA CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278464
Inspection dates 16 March 2006 to 17 March 2006
Reporting inspector Ms. Linda Murgatroyd LI

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Campkin Road
School category	Community		CB4 2LD
Age range of pupils	3 to 4		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01223712168
Number on roll	80	Fax number	01223712168
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.Gary Clift
Date of previous inspection	11 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Sue Bainbridge

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Colleges Nursery School serves an area of mixed housing in Cambridge. It has 80 children on roll with attendance being 40 in the mornings and 40 in the afternoons. A significant number of families are socially and economically disadvantaged, and many children enter the nursery with low levels of skill across the areas of learning for children of their age. Approximately 70 % of children come from White British backgrounds, but there is a rising proportion of children from other ethnic groups. Approximately one quarter of children are learning English as an additional language and about one in five has learning difficulties. There are currently no children with a statement of special educational need, although this varies from year to year. The school works closely with a range of services to meet the needs of the children. It will soon become a Children's Centre to develop these partnerships further. At the time of the inspection, considerable building work was taking place and space in the nursery, and its garden, was restricted.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Colleges Nursery is an outstanding school, and parents are confident that their children are receiving a high quality education. This view is shared by the inspection and the school itself. Teaching is good overall, and all children are in contact with outstanding teaching for much of their time in nursery. Because of this, children's achievement is excellent in most areas of learning, and good in the more complex areas of calculation and linking sounds and letters. The curriculum is rich and varied, and children are usually fully absorbed in their learning. The school works closely with parents, who appreciate the outstanding care taken of their children. Assessment is thorough but, although staff know children very well, the school is only beginning to use this assessment in its planning for individual children. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior teacher are outstanding, and are well supported in this by the governors. They have built a highly effective staff team, who are constantly striving to improve children's learning. There is a wide range of systems for checking the school's work, but the school is still developing formal systems for observing teaching and learning and giving feedback. The headteacher and senior teacher have an exceedingly accurate picture of the school's effectiveness, and areas in which it might develop further. Parents' views are regularly sought as part of this process. The school's capacity to improve further is excellent, as is the value for money it gives.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue the work to improve progress in calculation and linking sounds and letters.
- Develop effective formal systems for the monitoring of teaching and learning in order to bring all practice up to the standard of the best teaching.
- Use assessments to plan the next steps for individual children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children enter the nursery with a range of experience and capability, but many have lower than expected levels of skill across the areas of learning. In their one year in the nursery, children make outstanding progress across all of the areas of learning for children of this age. Girls and boys of all capabilities, including those learning English as an additional language, achieve very well. They leave the nursery to go on to the reception class only half way through the Foundation Stage, but many are already well on the way to meeting the nationally expected standards for 5 year olds by the time they go on to primary school. In the more complex skills of linking sounds and letters and calculation, progress, although still good, is not so marked, and standards are not quite so high. Over the past two terms, the school has been working hard to improve opportunities for learning in mathematics, and this is beginning to raise standards. The school does not set particular targets for children, but has high expectations of what they can achieve.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. The calm atmosphere and the high expectations help children to settle quickly and enjoy their learning. Their behaviour is excellent because most of the time they are totally absorbed in what they are doing. Children spontaneously offer to help each other; for example, one child was taught how to print his digital photographs and, later in the session, showed another child how to do this. Although there are occasional small conflicts between children, these are dealt with very well, and are rightly seen by staff as examples of children learning to get along together. The development of independence is a high priority, and children learn quickly to choose activities and persevere with them, to tidy up and to dress themselves. Children are happy and confident, and show obvious pleasure in what they achieve. They are delighted to come to school and absences other than for illness are very rare. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Building on the exceptionally positive relationships between adults and children, the school is particularly successful in helping children to have respect for others. Through involvement in visits to the local day centre for the elderly, festivals, and special projects like Travelling Ted (a toy bear who is taken on holiday by children and staff to a range of countries, after which books are made of his travels), they are helped to understand the wider world in which they live. Because the nursery is run on the principle of making best use of every opportunity to explore and enjoy what is happening, children learn about the magic of nature and growth in visits to wild areas to look at birds and to enjoy the changing seasons. Children have a good understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle, for example, through regular exercise, eating a range of good food and staying safe. They are very well prepared for later life by being helped to work and play well together, to sustain interest and take initiative.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good, with some outstanding features. The teamwork among staff is excellent, with the interests of the children at the forefront of their thinking. All staff form positive relationships with children, establishing the basis of respect which permeates the nursery, and show enormous pleasure in children's achievements. They have a real understanding of the way that young children learn, and use this to plan a wide range of activities inside and outside the classroom. A strong feature of the best teaching is the way that staff seize opportunities to develop children's ideas by playing and exploring alongside them and using open-ended questions to extend their thinking, although not all staff are equally adept at this. On some occasions, staff have difficulty in holding children's attention in larger or more formal groups, and children become restless. There is excellent provision for children with additional needs, and these children achieve very well. Although not all teaching is outstanding, children benefit from contact with a range of adults during their nursery sessions, and

so all regularly experience excellent teaching. Assessment of children's progress is thorough, and the excellent knowledge staff have of children is highly praised by parents. Although this knowledge is used well to guide children's learning, it is not fully used to plan formally for the next steps for individual children. The nursery provides an excellent range of support to parents.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides a rich, stimulating curriculum, firmly based on an understanding of how young children learn. Staff achieve an excellent balance between following and developing children's interests and ensuring that, over time, all areas are covered by all children. Excellent use is made of the environment for learning; for example, the current building work is being used to promote children's interest in technology, and their own building of structures has become more sophisticated as a result. Special projects such as an artist in residence or trips to Edgcombe Flats wildlife area add to the richness of the experiences for children. Teaching about health and personal safety is fully integrated into the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Staff care exceptionally well for the children and support families very effectively. Adults are sensitive and friendly and this helps to create an atmosphere in which children feel secure and are keen to learn. Parents are unanimous in their praise for the deep knowledge staff have of their children, and in the confidence they feel in handing them over. This confidence is built up by a range of strategies, starting with sensitive arrangements for admission. Staff make time for parents at the beginning of each session to discuss their children, provide a slideshow of nursery activities in the entrance hall and encourage parents to look at and contribute to 'Special Books' with photographs and text showing their children in a range of activities. In this way, parents can be assured that their children are happy in nursery. The nursery is a very safe place for children to play and develop emotionally. Staff are aware of the procedures for child protection and those to ensure health and safety. The nursery works closely with a wide range of support agencies to provide for children with special educational needs, including having support from a speech and language therapist on site. Children are gently guided in their work by skilled staff who know how to help them to make progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher and senior teacher are ambitious for the school and constantly seeking to develop it further. They provide a clear direction for the school's work, which they very successfully share with all staff so that there is a willingness to adopt new ideas to improve children's

learning. The school's good track record and the commitment of staff and governors mean that the capacity for further improvement is very good. As an example, the school is in the middle of a period of transition into a Children's Centre, a development which has been actively pursued by staff and governors. All staff and governors are involved in reviewing the school's work and parents' views are sought and acted upon. There are effective systems in place to monitor key aspects of the school's work. However, although senior staff know the strengths and areas for development of staff very well through their work in the teaching areas and there is constant discussion about improving practice, there is not yet a formal system for observing teaching and learning and giving feedback. Governance is excellent. The governing body is well led by a knowledgeable and energetic chair of governors who, in turn, is well supported by a core of active and committed governors. Many governors have first-hand knowledge of the school alongside the effective systems to review its work of the school. Governors provide support and challenge, and have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

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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	2	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	1	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?	2	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	2	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	1	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	NA
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

You might remember that I visited your school recently. I enjoyed my time with you very much, and would like to thank you for talking to me and showing me what you were doing. I was there to see how well your nursery helps you to learn, and what I saw and heard helped me to decide that it is doing an excellent job. I was very impressed by how well you all behave and how much you enjoy being at nursery. I want you to know that these are the things I liked best about Colleges Nursery: - You have lots of really interesting things to do, and I could see how much fun you have. - The staff are always there to help you to learn while you play. Their teaching makes sure that you learn very well. - While you are at nursery you learn to work and play well together and to look after yourselves. - Everyone at the nursery takes very good care of you, so that you are safe and happy, and your parents are very pleased. - All the staff and the governors know what they want the nursery to be like, and work hard together to make it a good place to learn and play. There are some things that the staff want to do to make your nursery even better, and I think they are good ideas: - The staff are going to try to make sure that you learn even more to help you to read, write and do maths. - To help you to do this, they will write down more about what they want each of you to learn when you are doing your activities. - Mrs Bainbridge and Mrs Lesik are going to help all the staff to go on getting better and better at helping you to learn. I think that all the staff at Colleges Nursery can work together to do these things. I hope that you go on enjoying all the exciting activities that you do there which help you to learn and play.