



Kendal Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112091
LEA Cumbria
Inspection number 278846
Inspection dates 30 November 2005 to 1 December 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Jennie Platt

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Brantfield
School category	Maintained		Queens Road
Age range of pupils	3 to 4		Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4PH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01539 773626
Number on roll	66	Fax number	01539 773626
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Dave Willis
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Veronica Broyd

Age group 3 to 4	Inspection dates 30 November 2005 - 1 December 2005	Inspection number 278846
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Kendal Nursery School is a 104 place nursery and currently has 66 children on roll. There are three intakes during the year and children attend part-time, for either the morning or the afternoon sessions. The school serves a wide socio-economic area, with children coming from the town of Kendal and the surrounding rural areas. Attainment on entry varies but is broadly typical of 3 year olds. A few children have additional learning difficulties. No pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school is seeking Children Centre status to secure funding to make more use of the building and extend the services offered to children and their families. The school has had an acting headteacher since September 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection agrees with both school and parents that this is a very happy community that provides a good quality of education and care. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are exciting and based on practical activities. Teachers plan a good variety of activity, but their planning does not always make it clear on a daily basis what children are to learn. All children make good progress in all areas of their development, and standards are higher than is usual for this age. Children enjoy school because it looks after them well and provides a rich and stimulating curriculum. The outside environment is outstanding and used extremely well in all areas of learning. Leadership and management are good and are moving the school forward by extending provision to support families and the community. The only weakness identified at the time of the last inspection has been dealt with. Assessment procedures are now more manageable, but the school sees the need to do more with the assessment information available. Staff are a very committed team, eager to try out new ideas to sustain the school's many strengths. It has a good capacity to improve and gives good value for money.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning still further by making clear what children are to learn.
- Use assessment information more effectively to check on the school's overall performance and to involve children more in their own learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children start nursery with a wide variety of early skills but, taken overall, their attainment is average. They make good progress in all areas of learning and are on course to exceed the learning goals set nationally for the end of the Foundation Stage. This is particularly the case for children's personal and social skills. Their ability to sustain interest in a task is very good and aids learning in all areas of the curriculum. Children learn to use their imagination very well because of the amazing opportunities inside and out to take part in different creative activities. The school's records show that calculation skills in mathematical development are not as high as other aspects of the curriculum. Teachers are therefore starting to focus more on number activities in all areas of learning. The good teaching enables children of differing abilities to learn well. This is especially true for the children with additional learning needs. The school very promptly assesses the needs of these children and they make good progress. Careful assessment also identifies the higher attaining children and, by careful planning and well focused tasks in small groups, these children also extend their learning in a most effective way.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Parents justifiably believe that personal development is good. Children enjoy school, attend regularly and are eager to extend their stay through lunchtime. On arrival children quickly opt for an activity and keep busy for a good length of time considering their age. Staff patiently and sensitively help those who find it difficult to cooperate. Consequently, pupils feel secure and behave well. A few are still learning the importance of sharing and taking turns, but most do this very well. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The very good relationships between all the adults, and the respect they show the children, set a good example. As a result, the children are kind to each other and quickly offer help if someone is unhappy. The chance for children to peep at animals through a hole in the hide is just one way the school fosters a real appreciation of the natural world. The school's resources promote positive images of a multi-cultural society. Children have a good early understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. They enjoy learning in the fresh air. Through learning how to belong to the nursery community, children learn how they can contribute to the local and wider community. For example, they raise funds and send Christmas gifts abroad. The enthusiasm for learning that children gain provides a firm foundation for their future schooling and well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of these young children and of the importance of learning through practical activities. Staff are watchful and know when to encourage independence and when to step in with a helping hand. As a result, children grow in confidence and are willing to take risks. Children are eager to please because staff use plenty of praise and encouragement. Support staff play a full part in teaching and contribute well to the good achievement of those children who need additional help. Day-to-day planning makes clear what is to be taught, but it is not always explicit, particularly in teacher's delivery about what children are expected to learn. This means that some opportunities are missed to extend learning, for example, by asking pertinent questions as children are investigating in the sand. Assessment is more manageable than at the time of the last inspection and the school continues to refine its systems. Assessment sheets linked to some activities are difficult to complete with information about new skills, because it is unclear what is expected from the task. Assessment on entry is being adjusted so as to make better use of the goals set nationally for the end of the Foundation Stage. This will enable the school to compare progress with other children and schools.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and visitors to the school soon realise how rich it is. Lively and imaginative activities match children's needs effectively and contribute well to their personal development. One parent said, 'I struggle to get my child home'. An outstanding feature is the outside environment, which provides a world of imaginative adventure for children. It is used daily as children become gardeners; make shopping lists in the playhouse, or go exploring on a wheeled vehicle. Imaginative play in the classrooms is good, although some of the resources in the playhouse are getting old. The location away from the main classroom makes it difficult for staff to interact and extend a story line. The use of information and communication technology has improved. The school is looking to make more opportunities for children to use and extend numeracy skills in all areas of the curriculum. Regular visits to places of interest, such as the local allotments and visitors' centre, extend children's understanding of the world. Themed weeks are popular and visiting artists enable children to produce some high quality work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school gives good attention to the care and support of its children. Children are valued and feel secure. The school's close partnership with parents and professionals is most helpful for children with any kind of difficulty. Child protection is firmly in place, with a trained member of staff and governor. A recent audit of the management of health and safety identified little needing attention. The headteacher carries out regular assessments to check that the children learn in a safe environment. Governors could support her by providing an extra pair of eyes, especially in examining the extensive grounds.

A collection of children's work and photographs provides children and parents with a wonderful memory of their time in the nursery. It also guides their choice of the schools the children move to when they leave. As yet, the school does not provide children with targets to improve so that they can be more involved in checking on their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Since her appointment, the acting headteacher has taken many challenges in her stride. She shows great determination to extend provision in order to give more support to children and parents. She values professional development and is allocating management responsibilities to staff to extend their skills and strengthen the school's management team.

The school is self-critical and has an accurate picture of its own strengths and weaknesses. The judgment on achievement is supported by evidence of individual attainment. However, the school does not collate assessment information to gain an

overview of its own performance. It canvasses parents' opinions and their reflections on how their children view the nursery. It also responds to concerns and parents are very happy with the education provided.

Strong leadership gives the school a good capacity to improve. Previously identified strengths have been built upon. Staff willingly take part in local and national initiatives to keep abreast of change.

Governance is good. The considerable energy used in campaigning for the school to become a Children Centre has taken governors away from their monitoring and evaluation role in the school. They have played a full part in financial management as the school has coped effectively with a delegated budget. Governors and staff strongly promote equality of opportunity for all.

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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	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	2	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	2	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	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	2	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?	2	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

Kendal Nursery School

Brantfield

Queens Road

Kendal

Cumbria

LA9 4PH

2 December 2005

Dear Children

Thank you so much for chatting to me when I visited your school. I really enjoyed myself, especially when you took me for a walk in your garden.

I liked these things the most.

You enjoy nursery and told me you are happy there.

I agree with you and your parents that teachers make learning exciting, especially when you go outside.

Your teachers are very kind and help you if you get worried or unhappy.

You are encouraged to be healthy by the opportunities to eat fruit and to run and play in the fresh air.

Your school is organised well and runs smoothly.

I have asked your teachers to look at two things to make your school even better.

To make it a little clearer what they expect when you are doing some activities.

To help you even further by telling you about how you could learn even more.

It was so exciting to be with you as you prepare for Christmas, and I wish you well for this special occasion and also for the future.

With best wishes

Mrs J Platt (Lead inspector)