



Castle Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112482
LEA City of Derby LEA
Inspection number 278940
Inspection dates 15 June 2006 to 15 June 2006
Reporting inspector Ms. Sheelagh Barnes AI

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Copeland Street
School category	Maintained		DE1 2PU
Age range of pupils	3 to 4		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01332 347388
Number on roll	36	Fax number	
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.Rakesh Marwaha
Date of previous inspection	29 February 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Kathy Mayer

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 4	15 June 2006 - 15 June 2006	278940

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Castle Nursery is a small school affiliated, since 2005, to Cherry Tree Infant School. It is situated in an area designated for rebuilding. There have been several changes to leadership since the previous inspection and for a considerable time closure was thought to be possible. Thirty-six boys and girls attend, some full and some part time. The children come from a wide area. Most parents choose the school due to proximity to work. The children start nursery with average attainments overall. An average proportion of the children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A small number of pupils speak a language other than English at home. Most children transfer to the nearby St Joseph's School. The school has been registered for day care since 2004 and currently runs breakfast and after school clubs. It is not open during school holidays. The site is used by the National Health Service for holiday care provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. The school's own judgement matches that of the inspection. During their time in the school children make good progress and achievement is good. Children enjoy school and behave well. Parents are positive about the school and pleased with the progress their children make. There are good systems in place to ensure safety and children feel safe and well supported. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The curriculum is well planned and there is a good range of exciting extra activities. Since the last inspection the school has been through an unsettled period with several headteachers and was identified for closure. This had an impact on the speed with which it initially responded to the issues raised. Since the appointment of the current headteacher, and a more settled outlook about the school's future, there has been good progress in addressing the issues and raising standards. There is evidence of improvement as a result of recent action taken, for example, in relation to attendance, to the quality of the curriculum and to teaching and learning. The school's self-evaluation demonstrates a good awareness of the main issues facing the school. The recently formed governing body and new headteacher have clearly identified what the school needs to do to improve further and appropriate action is being taken. The school has now highlighted the need to refine the use of assessment systems to track the progress of groups more effectively and to refine monitoring and evaluation systems, including involving the newly re-formed governing body. The school has a good capacity to improve and offers good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the use of assessment information to track the progress of different groups to try to ensure all children are making the optimum progress. - Refine monitoring and evaluation and include the governing body more actively in this.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Nearly all children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities reach the standards expected by the time they leave and a higher than average proportion exceeds them. The progress of boys and girls from all groups is good. The children make particularly good progress in their personal and social development due to the strong emphasis placed upon this by all staff and the high expectations adults have of all children. They have good levels of confidence as a result and concentrate on new tasks for long periods of time. They make good progress in speaking and in early reading and writing skills as well as in mathematical development. This is because they have good, daily opportunities to practise these skills in a variety of interesting ways. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is developed effectively, in particular their skills with computers, which are above those normally found for their ages. Creative and physical development is good due to the

good resources both inside and outdoors which are used effectively and supplemented by a good range of visits and visitors. Children have good daily opportunities to build stamina and to express themselves in a range of ways with enjoyment and confidence.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Children enjoy school very much. They and their parents appreciate the efforts their teachers make to provide lively and stimulating lessons and a rich range of other activities. Good attendance and punctuality are further evidence that children really like being in school. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. As a result, they work together well and relate well to one another and to adults. They are taught effectively on how to stay safe, behave well and are responsive to what their teachers tell them. The school lays good foundations for later life. The children are friendly, outgoing and polite. Preparation for future economic well-being is good and children learn to use computers confidently. They make a good contribution to the community, particularly through charity work, such as raising money for Barnardo's. They are successfully encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and the work towards becoming a health-promoting school contributes well to this. Children's good personal development means they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for their eventual working life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Children with English as an additional language, higher attaining children, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in line with their peers due to the good teaching they receive. Lessons are planned well to match the needs of children of differing abilities and build steadily on their skills and knowledge. Routines are established well and children know what is expected of them. Lessons are fun and make good use of interesting and exciting resources. As a result, children enjoy their learning and apply themselves well. Assessment is good and its use is satisfactory. The school has started to establish good new systems to monitor children's progress. However, the previous system, while containing much detailed information for each child, did not enable the school to track the achievement of groups easily as they move through the school. The school is aware of this and has highlighted the development and use of assessment information as an area of priority for the coming year.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has given the curriculum much thought, and work in all six areas of learning is integrated effectively into daily routines. The school provides good education to

help children stay healthy and to succeed in their later careers. It has also included a good range of extra activities, such as trips and visits and dance lessons from a visiting expert. Parents are enthusiastic about the wide range of exciting activities provided. One said 'I am confident my daughter has had an absolutely fabulous time and a wonderful beginning to her education.' The school makes good provision for those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as for those who are potentially higher attaining.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of all the children who attend and successfully promotes the well-being of all children. Good systems are in place to ensure that children are looked after well. Parents are rightly confident that their children are safe in school and that they are encouraged and guided to adopt healthy lifestyles. The school works well in partnership with parents. Those who responded to the questionnaire were unanimous in their praise and support of the work the school does. The provision for children's personal development is a particular strength of the school. As a result, relationships are good and children are confident and out-going.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a very clear picture of the school and what it needs to do next. Governors are committed and hardworking and the newly formed governing body is committed to improving systems further. Governors have developed an effective plan to extend the range of care services, which has made the school economically viable despite lower numbers of children attending and so enabled the school to stay open. As yet, however, governors are not fully involved in monitoring and evaluation to the extent they need to be or would wish. The effect of the good leadership has been a clear focus on improving the quality of education that the school provides. There has been improvement in the quality of teaching and the curriculum. As a result, in recent years, children's attendance, standards and progress have all improved. Resources and staffing are efficiently and effectively deployed and there is a focus on achieving good value for money. Good regard is paid to the views of parents and children alike. Parents' views are taken into consideration and they are enabled to contribute well to the life and work of the school. Parents feel fully involved in decisions made. The school is well placed to continue to improve. It is aware that while improvements have been made to self-evaluation and development planning, it needs to refine these processes still further.

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	2	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

Thank you for making me feel so welcome and for talking to me about your work. It was nice to see how much you enjoy the things you do at nursery. Your parents also told me they were pleased at how much fun you have. Thank you especially to the children who showed me how to use the computer and how to make numbers come up on the screen of a calculator. I really enjoyed that. Your nursery is good and I know that is why you are so keen to come. Your teachers and headteacher are doing a good job and take great care to make sure you always have exciting things to do. They look after you well and make sure you know what to do. You are doing well because you play well together and are so well behaved. It was really nice to have lunch at your school and to see how you and your teachers chat together. I was particularly impressed with the way you are learning about healthy eating and try food you haven't had before to see how much you like it. Your headteacher and governors work hard to make sure school is a happy place where you can learn a lot. They are doing a good job. I have asked them to carry on with developing the way they check that all of you are able to do your best. I agree with your governors that it would also be good for them to find out even more about how well your teachers teach you and how well you all learn. I know they are keen to do this and that your head teacher will help them. I hope you will carry on having fun and learning so much. I really enjoyed my day with you.