



Earlham Early Years Centre

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120767
LEA NORFOLK LEA
Inspection number 280886
Inspection dates 8 May 2006 to 9 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Jill Bavin LI

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Cadge Road
School category	Maintained		NR5 8DB
Age range of pupils	3 to 5		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01603 454271
Number on roll	134	Fax number	01603 454271
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. John Sheridan
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Felicity Thomas

Age group 3 to 5	Inspection dates 8 May 2006 - 9 May 2006	Inspection number 280886
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Earlham Nursery School is part of a children's centre which provides integrated care and education for children between 1 and 5 years. This centre also offers child and family health services; family support services and a childminder network. The school is in an area of social deprivation. On entry to the nursery many children are at a very early stage of development and have poor language skills. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is high. Their needs mostly concern the development of language skills and social development.

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 a good school providing effective education and integrated care for children under five. The inspection findings confirm the school's view of itself as being good overall but also identify outstanding aspects to its work. Most children make good progress during their time in the nursery. From a low starting point; especially in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development, children do well and by the time they leave most are working close to expected levels in all areas of learning. Children enjoy nursery school enormously because the adults are consistently supportive and because opportunities for them to learn outside are excellent. This makes a huge and positive contribution to children's enjoyment and self-confidence, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Provision for children's personal development and well-being is exceptional. Parents are delighted with the school, are keen for their children to attend and appreciate the good progress their children make. They rightly recognise that the quality of teaching and care, support and guidance is good. The headteacher provides highly skilled leadership and has ensured that the school has improved well since the previous inspection. She is sensitively steering staff through the considerable changes taking place as the school develops within the newly established children's centre. She is ably supported by senior staff and governors. She has a very astute understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Inspection findings confirm her view that staff have more to do to ensure they always plan to meet differing individual needs. Similarly, she is accurate in identifying that while robust systems gather much information about children's achievements, greater analysis of this information is needed to help raise standards even further. She is aware that evaluations of teaching do not always balance strengths with clear pointers for staff development. The school gives good value for money and is well placed to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use outcomes of observations of children's behaviour and knowledge of their progress to guide individual learning programmes more consistently and effectively. - Ensure feedback to staff is based on robust analysis of children's achievements and which teaching methods work best so that all staff have very clear points to guide them in their quest for improved performance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most children join the nursery school with levels of skill, knowledge and understanding below that expected, especially in relation to communication skills. Most make good progress, and some achieve particularly well, during their time at the nursery because good teaching and an extremely stimulating curriculum motivates children and encourage them to learn. Consequently most children are working at levels close to those expected for their age by the time they leave the nursery. Key workers know

their children very well and children benefit from this in all the recommended areas of learning. The school has ambitious expectations of children. These are sensitively conveyed to children encouraging them to do their best. Parents rate teaching highly and appreciate the positive relationships between children and adults, knowing that this helps their children to do well. Parents recognise that all staff value each child regardless of their background or their needs. This is evident in the exceptional way that nursery staff consider each child's personal development needs and use them as a starting point when planning for their continued development. This approach makes a significant contribution to children feeling good about themselves and being ready to learn. Nevertheless, the headteacher has rightly identified the need for staff to specify even more clearly in some cases exactly what they want children to learn so that children can make even better progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school's focus on personal development and well-being is exceptional. Attendance is good and children behave impressively in school. They have extremely positive attitudes to learning and enjoy themselves enormously. They relish sharing new knowledge, skills and understanding with adults and make particularly good gains in confidence. This was exemplified when one child confided, 'I've got a strong brain'. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because it underpins every exchange and every activity. Opportunities for decision making are very good overall and staff set children very good examples in co-operation, courtesy and negotiation. As a result they make impressive gains in security, independence and perseverance. Their care for each other and their safe way of working outside are impressive. The regular use of this exceptionally stimulating outside area means that children have extremely good opportunities for physical exercise. Fruit snacks effectively foster their understanding of healthy eating. They develop key social skills and a good sense of community by raising funds for charities with their teachers and parents.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. All adults work well together and share consistently high expectations of children. Relationships between children and adults are very good throughout the school, helping children to learn effectively. There are examples of outstanding teaching. In these sessions, teachers are highly skilled at sensitively extending children's ideas, skills and understanding. They use strategies such as always asking questions with more than one answer and constantly encouraging children to make their own decisions. When teaching is satisfactory children make reasonable progress but there are some missed opportunities to use children's ideas. The headteacher has rightly identified that teachers and nursery nurses need to improve the way in which they use their considerable knowledge of each child's progress to

meet very specific individual needs even more effectively. Teachers observe each other while teaching and provide valuable feedback on what went well and what didn't. However, the lack of constructive critical feedback on some occasions limits the school in its ability to use the considerable expertise within the team to ensure that all teachers learn effectively from each.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding because the school provides an exceptionally good range of experiences and activities to help children learn. The use made of the nursery's outside areas and outdoor activities to promote learning is particularly noteworthy. These support the school's strong emphasis on developing social, emotional and communication skills and make a significant contribution to children's personal development. Staff share an extremely high and consistent commitment to ensuring equally good provision for all children regardless of their capabilities or background. Children enjoy stimulating activities with their key workers in small groups focusing on key skills. Staff select and use interesting resources designed to capture children's imaginations and hold their interest. The school's perceptive self-evaluation and commitment to high standards mean that the curriculum is regularly reviewed and is being constantly improved. Areas for further development, currently mathematical development, have been well chosen.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is a happy welcoming place in which children enjoy learning and are calm and purposeful. Parents feel welcome and well informed. Systems for safeguarding children are good and child protection arrangements are firmly established. Procedures for monitoring children's emotional well-being are unusually comprehensive and are used exceptionally carefully to support children. Children flourish in this safe and supportive environment. The school is currently grappling with how to best use the information recorded about children's achievements. They are rightly seeking to ensure that the children always receive equally helpful and precise guidance in acquiring key skills. Care is taken to encourage children to settle in quickly when they first join and older children are sensitively prepared for their move up to the next school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides strong, highly principled leadership ensuring good teamwork throughout the staff. This is particularly important as the nursery is working within a rapidly developing children's centre. She manages the school efficiently and is supported well by governors and all members of staff. Her strong commitment to integrating the nursery with the children's centre is contributing to good quality provision for children and their families. The school has

vigorous self-evaluation procedures that give an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. These help to keep governors well informed and involved in making decisions. However, the school recognises that evaluating teaching more robustly and analysing assessment information need to be even sharper to raise standards further. The school has made good improvements since the previous inspection. The school improvement plan now includes financial information and closer communication with parents means they are better informed. These strengths mean that the school is in a good position to go on improving.

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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	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	2	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	2	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	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?	1	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	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	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	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

I really enjoyed meeting you recently. Thank you for being so friendly and talking to me. Here are some of the things I found out about your school: I think that you really enjoy your good school where everyone is kind and friendly. Grown-ups make sure that you have fun so you learn a lot. I think your outside area is really unusual and very interesting. I saw some of you having a really good time watching frogs, finding snails, and using the wind to blow streamers. I think the teachers take good care of you and care about you a lot. The grown-ups work hard so that you can learn in a happy, welcoming place. They agree about what is best for you. Because grown-ups need to keep learning too, I have asked them to do a bit more to help each other and to keep helping you all the time. I hope that you carry on enjoying your time in the nursery and do well in your next school. With good wishes,