



The Castle Childrens Centre (& Nursery School)

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 132014
LEA Wakefield
Inspection number 282280
Inspection dates 16 January 2006 to 17 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Robert Robinson CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	255 Barnsley Road
School category	Community		Wakefield
Age range of pupils	3 to 5		West Yorkshire WF1 5NU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01924 303 213
Number on roll	76	Fax number	01924 303 211
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ann Anderson
Date of previous inspection	15 January 2001	Headteacher	Kathy Stevens

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

The nursery is part of the Castle Children's Centre. The Centre provides education and care for children from three months to five years. It gained Early Excellence status in 2001. The Centre is an Investor in People and received School Achievement Awards in 2003 and 2004.

This inspection concentrates on the provision for three to five year olds in the nursery funded by the local authority. The provision for children from three months to three years is the focus of a separate inspection. Seventy-six children attend the nursery, which serves a mixed social and economic community. On entry to the nursery, children's level of attainment is broad though overall below average. Most children come from white, British backgrounds with a few children from Asian, Indian or Pakistani backgrounds. Very few children have identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The overall effectiveness of the nursery is outstanding. This judgement agrees with the school's view. It benefits extremely well from partnership with other areas of the provision at the Children's Centre. Parental comments such as 'I cannot praise the staff enough for their hard work, enthusiasm and commitment', and, 'Home visits are excellent and good fun,' are fully justified. The nursery is led and managed exceptionally well. Children make rapid progress in their learning and by the time they move to their next school most are working at or above the level expected of their age. This is because of the high quality of teaching, the effectiveness of family workers and the extremely well planned curriculum. The assessment and tracking of individual children's progress is very good; however, the leadership has decided to computerise the data about children's progress to enable even more efficient monitoring of individuals and groups. The care, guidance and support of children and the standards of their personal development are outstanding. Children of all backgrounds work and play together harmoniously. They enjoy coming to the nursery and their behaviour is exemplary. The nursery has improved very well since the last inspection. The school has identified the need to extend the roles and responsibilities of the family workers and governors. It is extremely well placed to continue to improve even further and provides outstanding value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

This outstanding school knows what needs to be done. In particular it should focus on the following areas it has already identified:

- develop the roles and responsibilities of family workers and governors to benefit children's learning
- use an electronic system to collate the wealth of information it has about individual children's achievements so that it can monitor even more efficiently the progress and standards of different groups of children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement and standards are outstanding. From a broadly below average starting point, children make rapid progress during their short time in the nursery because of the high quality of teaching and learning. By the time they leave the nursery most children are at the level expected of their age in all the areas of learning and a few achieve more. This is supported by parental views; for example a parent stated, 'My child has progressed tremendously since joining the nursery. She is happy, sociable and confident and always happy to go to nursery'.

Excellent support is given to those children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to help them make similar progress to other children. Children who are learning English as an additional language make fast progress because their needs are catered for

extremely well by staff and the bi-lingual family worker. As a result, they learn quickly to speak and understand English.

The nursery provides a very successful and inclusive learning environment for all children. It prepares them extremely well for the next stage of education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The children's personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. The school's very effective induction procedures, including home visits, help children to settle very quickly into school-life. Children make outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Relationships between staff and children are excellent. The grouping of children into small groups with a teacher or a family worker helps the children to feel safe and secure. Children enjoy school and are happy to attend. This is reflected in their good attendance and punctuality. The exciting range of interesting activities encourages children to work independently or with others. They develop excellent attitudes to learning.

The children are very supportive of one another, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and this is demonstrated in their excellent behaviour. They enjoy finding out about the traditions of different cultures; for example, when they learn about the festivals of the Chinese New Year, Christmas, Divali and Eid. They are beginning to understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyles and healthy food at snack time and lunch. As one child commented, 'Broccoli and cauliflower are good for you'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and leads to the children making rapid progress. The school's view that teaching is good, is too modest. Teachers, including the family workers, really understand how children of this age learn. The planning of lessons is matched very well to children's needs. The organisation of teaching and learning is exemplary resulting in exciting learning in whole class groups and small groups both indoors and outdoors. Staff encourage children exceptionally well to push on with their learning. Teachers and family workers work together as a most effective team. Staff have very high expectations of children's work and behaviour, resulting in children working productively in all situations. Relationships between staff and children are very good. Children respond well to challenges set by the teaching. Staff work hard and knowledgably with children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Staff know the children well and make thorough assessments of

individual children's progress in lessons. This information is used very effectively to plan future learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding because it meets all children's needs fully. It is extremely well planned and thought out. Children access a wide range of exciting activities that allow them to follow their own interests indoors and outdoors. Excellent accommodation and resources are used extremely well, to motivate and interest children. Generous staffing levels mean that children have plenty of opportunities to work alongside adults which benefit their basic skills. The individual educational plans for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are used successfully to ensure best possible progress. Visitors enrich learning opportunities, such as when two African musicians worked with children to help them perform for their parents. Regular visits, such as to local parks and farms, enliven and add purpose to learning. The school's vision statement is met exceptionally well, that is: 'To provide a continuous learning experience for all children in an environment which values equality of opportunity, celebrates diversity and promotes the joy of learning'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care guidance and support given to children are outstanding. The school values all its community. Child protection procedures are secure. School policies are thorough and understood by staff. Arrangements for monitoring children's personal development and academic progress are very good. Parents are full of praise for the way the school cares for their children. This was summed up by a parent who commented, 'We know we are leaving our child in a happy friendly, caring, safe and secure environment where our child can continue to learn and develop in a positive, progressive way'.

Staff know the children very well and their health and safety are planned for carefully; for example, in snack time children are encouraged to eat fruit with their drink of water or milk; staff take care to ensure they know how to use a knife correctly to cut their fruit. Lunchtimes are supervised very well and children eat the healthy meal options as well as develop good social skills and eating habits.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the headteacher and deputy headteacher of the centre are outstanding. They complement each other's strengths with diverse expertise. Other staff assist them very well. Governance is sound. The governors have only relatively recently received full powers of management. In the short time they have been fully responsible for the nursery they have ensured that all statutory requirements are met and made good progress in meeting their roles.

The monitoring systems are very good based on a thorough database of children's attainments. However, the paper-based system is rather cumbersome and the analysis of the progress of different groups of children, such as by gender, ethnicity and point of entry, is time-consuming. The school has identified the development of an electronic system as an area for improvement.

Continual professional development of all staff is very well established in the nursery. The school does not rest on its laurels but actively seeks to make improvements, which impact positively on children's progress; for example, it has well advanced plans to involve the family workers in the management of the nursery.

Parents are extremely supportive of all the opportunities that the nursery provides for their children. Parents' views are sought and acted upon. The excellent parent and children courses held such as 'Mathematics is magic' develop parents' understanding of areas of learning and provide them with skills to become actively involved in their children's learning. A comment received encapsulated the feeling of parents, 'I couldn't have chosen a better nursery'.

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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	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	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	3	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 welcoming me to your nursery. I enjoyed the two days I spent with you.

What I particularly liked about your nursery

- I am pleased that you behave extremely well and work hard in lessons and all get on so well together.
- I noticed that your attendance was good and you arrived at nursery on time.
- I think that the teachers and other staff look after you exceptionally well.
- I am glad that you are taught so well and make extremely good progress in your learning.
- I could tell that you really enjoy school.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this nursery.

What I have asked your school to do now

- I want the family workers and the governors to help the headteacher and deputy headteacher more in the running of the nursery.
- I would like the staff to use computers to record your achievements so they can see quickly how well you are doing.

I appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn, I wish you well for the future.