

Ganneys Meadow Early Years Centre

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 104986 |
| Local Authority | Wirral |
| Inspection number | 287082 |
| Inspection dates | 20–21 June 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Graham Martin |

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

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| Type of school | Nursery |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3–5 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | 103 |
| School | |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr H Lloyd |
| Headteacher | Mrs Caroline Roberts |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13 May 2002 |
| School address | New Hey Road Woodchurch Wirral Merseyside CH49 8HB |
| Telephone number | 0151 6779255 |
| Fax number | 0151 5220134 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The provision for nursery education in this Early Years Centre is part of a Children's Centre that provides a range of family and community services. The Centre's registered services for day and sessional care and playgroup and crèche facilities were inspected in September 2006 and a separate report is available. The nursery has its own delegated budget but a single governing body oversees the work of the Children's Centre and its nursery. The head of centre has overall responsibility for all of the services provided, including the nursery provision. The nursery offers part-time and full-time places for children from three to five years. Extended services such as childcare for 0 to 3-year-olds, crèche facilities and adult training courses are offered additionally at the Centre. Families also benefit from a wide range of multi-agency links, including those provided by health and social care and the library. The Centre has been awarded Health Promoting status. The nursery mainly serves a large urban estate populated predominantly by White British families. A small number of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This nursery provision is outstanding. Alongside its Children's Centre partners, the nursery makes a very real difference to the lives of children and their families, providing exceptionally good value for money. The judgment is better than the Centre's cautious self-evaluation, which was a reflection of the head of centre's drive for excellence in all areas. Parents commend the nursery highly, saying it has an excellent reputation. They especially value the standard of care, the quality of teaching and the rapid progress that their children make. 'Every child should have the opportunity to go to a school like Ganneys Meadow', was a typical comment. Because the nursery is an integrated part of the Children's Centre, staff and families benefit from the wide range of specialist services available. As a result, the needs of children and their families are met exceptionally well.

Progress is outstanding across all areas of learning. When children start Nursery, their development varies widely. A significant number start with difficulties in social and language skills so, on average, development on entry is below that usually seen. By the end of the year, many children are achieving more than normally found for their age. Their understanding of essential number and communication skills and in using computers is exceptionally well developed. Children achieve a strong foundation of skills and knowledge on which to build future learning. They learn very well because learning opportunities and teaching are outstanding. Significant improvements to assessment, based on accurate checks of what the children know, ensure rapid progress. An exciting and constantly changing range of activities encourages the inquisitive children to explore their world and become independent learners. Progress in creative and physical development, and in understanding the world around them, is outstanding because adults skilfully guide children in their choices of activity, ensuring a balance of experiences at a high level of challenge.

The arrangements for greeting parents and children at the start of sessions and for the secure 'hand-over' at the end are excellent and encourage constant communication. Together with the loan of books and resources and the sharing of each child's targets, outstanding learning opportunities help parents to be active partners in their children's education. Children are very well informed about healthy living; they take advantage of good opportunities for exercise in the outdoor classroom and eat 'healthy snacks'. Personal and social development is a major strength. Children share and cooperate exceptionally well for their age; they thoroughly enjoy their learning and persevere with tasks. This prepares them very well for their future education and results in a very busy, purposeful but enjoyable nursery atmosphere.

Improvement since the previous inspection is excellent. The two recommendations in the previous report have been fully implemented. The outstandingly dedicated and visionary leadership of the head of centre and her deputy has succeeded in developing the scope of the nursery's work, integrating education, social and health services within the Children's Centre. The hard working team of staff is exceptionally well supported by a dedicated body of governors. Attention to safety issues, including checks on the suitability of staff and helpers, is meticulous. There is outstanding capacity for the nursery to sustain its high quality of provision and enjoy continued success, relishing the opportunities and challenges it faces.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no significant areas for improvement that the nursery is not already working on.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

When they join the nursery, children's development is generally below that usually seen for the age group, although it varies widely between individuals. Some have significant difficulties with social and communication skills. Progress is excellent for both boys and girls and attainment is above expectations for their age in all areas of learning by the time the children transfer to their Reception classes. In personal, social and emotional development, children make exceptional progress because this area is seen as a priority and is integrated into all sessions. Consequently, children's attitudes to learning are outstanding and this enables them to succeed in the challenging work that their teachers set for them. Children make a good start in early reading and writing and begin to use a wider vocabulary to share their ideas confidently. Their understanding of number is well advanced for this age group. They develop excellent skills of independent learning as they investigate the well-organised learning environments, exploring the activities and making up their own questions. Physical and creative development progress at a good pace because children have imaginative role play areas and an exciting selection of activities to encourage exercise and dexterity. Children with learning difficulties are very well supported by staff and outside agencies; they make exceptional progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, are emphasised through all the nursery's work and are outstanding. Children thoroughly enjoy coming to nursery; this is evident in their cheerful smiles and the exceptionally confident way in which they leave their parents and carers on arrival. They learn routines quickly and follow them well. They choose their activities carefully and sustain very good concentration. Children show very good care and consideration for each other. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and apologise sincerely when they think they have been 'unkind'. They show great enjoyment in their work and are thrilled when they 'discover' new things. Attendance is good; the expectation of good attendance is reflected in the reporting of sessions missed on annual reports to parents. Children are securely havened within this very safe environment. They understand why sun hats are important when playing outside. Knowledge and understanding of road safety are instilled through the outdoor 'roadway', complete with markings and road signs. Children know very well what constitutes healthy eating and why good exercise is important. They enjoy varied and constant opportunities for enjoyable but challenging physical activity using the climbing frames, wheeled toys and other outdoor facilities. They lodge secure foundations for their future economic well-being through a broad range of learning experiences and the good development of personal and learning skills, such as collaboration and communication. Children develop a good sense of community awareness through their learning themes, such as 'people who help us', through family celebrations and by collecting for local and international charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers and support staff have high expectations and expertise; their excellent knowledge of how children learn is transmitted by making challenging tasks into exciting 'play' activities. Parents describe the staff as 'happy, dedicated and hardworking' and value the way that teachers include them in their children's learning. This is extremely well done through courses and written information, the sharing of children's targets and the loan of books and resources, together with very regular formal and informal discussions. Staff observe and assess children's learning constantly. The information is then used to set work at different levels of difficulty; this promotes learning at a fast rate. Adults lead short, focused learning tasks with small groups and individual children to teach important number, reading and writing skills. They provide a varied diet of activities where children can practise and consolidate what they learn. These activities are frequently changed and enhanced to provide extra challenge where it is needed. Adults constantly engage with children, questioning and encouraging discussions that promote successful language development. The provision for children who have complex needs is outstanding and they take part in the full range of activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and packed with opportunities for children to investigate and find things out for themselves. The 'Daisy' and 'Lavender' rooms are exceptionally well organised to provide the environments needed for active play learning across all aspects of children's early educational needs. Activities are well organised into different areas with children encouraged to choose a balance of tasks; for example, those that focus on language, number or creative learning and 'quiet' or 'active' activities. Together with a range of visits and visitors, this ensures that the children have a wealth of experiences to develop all their skills and talents and to expand their horizons. Resources are very carefully chosen and arranged to capture children's interests and fire their curiosity. Making a tasty apple pie from apples picked in their own orchard was a memorable talking point for the children. Parents have excellent opportunities to enrich their children's learning by using the wide selection of 'Home Learning Packs' which are organised into different levels of difficulty. They include books, with associated games and toys, to help children understand and retell a story or to learn something new.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care and protection of children are seen as core priorities and are outstanding. Parents commend the standard of care and say that 'nothing is too much trouble for the staff'. Key workers are allocated to small groups of children so they get to know them and their families exceptionally well. This, in turn, generates an immense amount of trust between home and school and facilitates the sharing of information. Staff visit children in their playgroup setting before they start nursery as part of the very good settling in arrangements. Children also make frequent visits to the nursery before they are due to start. Some staff work in both the day care and nursery settings so children moving from one to the other have some continuity.

Exceptionally good links with local schools ensure that the transition into full-time education goes smoothly. 'Because of Ganneys Meadow, my child is very ready for primary school and is looking forward to it', was typical of the comments from parents. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place and checks on the suitability of staff are thorough. The purpose of tasks is explained clearly to the children and they are encouraged to review and celebrate their own success, often during snack or 'talktime'. Parents are very well informed about what their children are learning so they can help at home. As well as informal meetings, each child's progress is reported twice annually in formal interviews with parents and in an end-of-year report, accompanied by their child's record of achievement which parents described as 'beautifully presented' and 'a wonderful keepsake'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The head of centre provides outstanding leadership that is held in high esteem by staff, governors and parents. Together with exceptionally staunch support from her deputy, she is instrumental in maintaining the high standard of provision valued by Centre co-workers, parents and the wider community. Very strong teamwork and a shared vision of excellence underpin the success of the nursery provision. The Centre reviews its performance regularly, including using detailed information on children's progress in order to do so. Managers, staff and governors know where the strengths lie and act quickly if a need for improvement is identified. The system works well; the considerable strengths reported at the time of the previous inspection are still evident and, because of continuous improvement work, the nursery now excels in its purpose of preparing young children for primary education. Outstanding forward planning is seen in pivoting the improvement plan around the five Every Child Matters outcomes to form the aspirations of the Centre's integrated services. The strong sense of pride in the school is reflected in the high quality of the learning environment, very efficient administration and good maintenance. The governors support and challenge the work of the centre extremely well and are actively involved in aspects of school life. They are very well known to parents, helping the school to maintain its excellent partnerships within and beyond the Children's Centre and its exceptionally good communication with the community it serves.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 1 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 1 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |

The quality of provision

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|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 1 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 1 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I really enjoyed coming to your outstanding nursery. Thank you for showing me all the exciting things you do. I think you have some outstanding things in your nursery, such as:

- the way you all stay so busy and enjoy the things you do that help you learn
- how you are very happy and get on with each other really well
- how your teachers plan lots of different things for you to do from day to day and that keeps you interested
- how much you enjoyed measuring out the ingredients to bake cheese bread. I liked the way you told me what you liked or didn't like when you tasted it.

You are doing really well with all of your learning. I like the way you learn about healthy fruits and how caterpillars like to eat things from the garden, too. Some of you told me why I must wash the apples from the tree in my garden, in case any flies had put germs on them. You are very good at using the computer keyboard and mouse. You play lots of good games, including on the computers, that help you to learn about matching, reading and numbers.

Your mums, dads and other people who look after you told me how much your nursery helps you and them. They like the way that you are learning many important things to help you when you start 'big school'. They said you also enjoy learning at home, especially using the home learning packs you borrow. What good learners you are! Well done and keep it up!

Thank you for the lovely, friendly smiles you gave me that made me feel welcome. Thank you as well for having some good chats with me and letting me join in with your games and activities. Keep up the hard work and good luck for the future. If you enjoy going to 'big school' half as much as you do coming to the nursery, you will always be good at learning.