

Canterbury Nursery School and Centre for Children and Families

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132815
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	294033
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Kath Halifax

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Dale Smith
Headteacher	Ms Sharon Hogan
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2002
School address	Basil Street Bradford West Yorkshire BD5 9HL
Telephone number	01274 574539
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Age group	3–5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The centre serves a culturally diverse urban community that is in one of the most disadvantaged areas in the country. It is open all year round and all the services of a children's centre are available. Children attend from the age of three months. This inspection reports on the Nursery provision for children aged three to five. The length of time children spend in the Nursery varies from three to five terms. Some children attend full time; others attend either morning or afternoon. The centre is funded as a resource for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Almost one third of children have identified difficulties. Of these, a very small proportion has a statement to provide for their special educational need and several others are in the process of being assessed. Over a half of the children are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Southern Asia. Most of these children have little or no understanding of English on entry to the Nursery. The proportion is increasing, reflecting the rise in refugees and migrant families. An above average number leave or join the Nursery at different times during the year.

The centre has been part of a number of government initiatives and has expanded rapidly over the past four years. It is an Early Excellence Centre and part of the Sure Start local programme.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The centre's aim to strengthen families and the community as part of children's learning is central to the work of this outstanding school. Parents especially appreciate the workshops and advice available to help them become involved in their child's education. They say staff go above and beyond what would be expected of them. This is because of the visionary headteacher. Since the last inspection, she has very successfully managed a rapid expansion to the buildings and service. Her enthusiasm is infectious and has enabled her to build an effective team committed to the very best for children and their families.

Children's attainment is well below that expected on entering the Nursery, but all make at least good progress during their time there. The progress of children who attend five terms and those who have been in the centre's day care up to the age of three is outstanding. Children learn at a very good rate because of exceptional teaching and an imaginative, exciting curriculum. Though standards are below average, achievement is excellent. Adults are dedicated and hard-working. Their detailed planning and various forms of assessment quickly identify gaps in learning and allow for challenging 'next steps' to be matched to individual needs. The quality of assessment has been recognised by other settings, which have adopted the school's recording system for children who learn more slowly. All children are included in all activities regardless of their background, gender or capability. Those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit considerably from the additional support they receive. While support overall is of a high quality, and some staff use signing well to help children with speech and language difficulties to communicate, the use of signing is not consistent.

All children make outstanding gains in their personal development. This is because adults recognise every child has talent. Their focus on the creative arts, to support the other areas of learning, gives children confidence, and the ability to express their feelings and emotions and to make 'flights of fancy'. Children are absorbed by all the activities provided; even those with behavioural difficulties are well behaved and determined to do the best they can. Having been a concern in the past, attendance is now satisfactory and on a par with other nurseries.

Exceptionally close work between health professionals, social services and numerous other agencies has resulted in very effective support and guidance for children and families. Parents say because, for example, they get help with managing family finances, they can now concentrate on helping their children. They say they feel a valuable part of their child's education and were thrilled at the publication of the governors' annual report on a tea towel! In addition to work with families, training and support for other nurseries, schools and interested parties have improved the practice in other settings.

Extremely strong leadership by the headteacher and two deputy headteachers has enabled the school to make very good progress since the last inspection. The advisory board has been replaced by a governing body, which wholeheartedly supports the work of the nursery. Together, governors and leaders have a clear understanding of the centre's strengths and areas for improvement, though they have been modest in some of their judgements. The constant challenge to do even better and 'reach for the sky' gives them outstanding capacity to improve further. The school is providing excellent value for money, not just in the education provided for children but also in the difference it is making to the community.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all adults use signing where appropriate to support children with communication needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Taking account of prior attainment, children make extremely good progress in all areas of learning. Detailed recording of progress has enabled teachers to identify weaker areas of learning which then become a focus in lessons. This has resulted, for example, in calculations changing from the weakest element of mathematics to the strongest. Similarly, the focus on language, particularly 'key vocabulary' is ensuring pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening. By the end of Nursery, a few children reach the levels expected for children a year older. This is mostly children who have spent five terms in the Nursery or those who have attended day care. Children who are able are very well supported by the 'group' system and by challenging work. Equally, those who show talent in sport are very well provided for through, for example, the football club and movement sessions in the well-equipped studio. Because the school recognises the need to prepare children for their future, literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology are integral to all areas of learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The remark, 'My son loves nursery so much he doesn't want to come home' is typical of the very positive attitude the children have. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and enables children to make tremendous progress in their personal development. From lacking confidence on arrival, the trusting relationships children have with adults enable them to thrive. They are especially proud of their 'what have I done well awards'. Children respect differences in others. Racial harmony pervades. They love celebrating the rich cultural mix of the Nursery, throwing themselves wholeheartedly into Indian dancing, following a beat with African drummers, or celebrating Diwali. Children get on well with each other because they follow the example of adults and have numerous opportunities to work as part of a team. They recognise they have responsibilities, not just at school, but at home and to people abroad through their links overseas. Their understanding of keeping safe and healthy is exceptionally well developed. They know which foods are healthy, declaring the 'carrots grown in their allotment are really, really, really good for you'. Following lunch, children eagerly brush their teeth before merrily skipping to the newly landscaped outdoor area for play and exercise.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding because adults have a very good understanding of how young children learn. Activities are planned that will fire children's imaginations. The good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities gives children confidence and helps them take responsibility for their learning. Classrooms are well organised and good links are made between the different areas of learning. Mindful of the focus on literacy, teachers grab every opportunity. For example, painting circles in the style of Kandinsky helps children's

emerging writing. Adults work hard to support children with learning difficulties. They have especially good links with the speech and language therapist. Most have followed the advice and use signs well to aid the spoken word but this is not always the case. This means some children with communication needs are not always stretched.

A wealth of assessment data enables adults to keep a check on children's progress and plan the 'next steps' to match individual needs. High quality photographic records of children's achievements aid teachers' planning and are a wonderful reminder for parents of magical moments. Leaders recognise that these would be even more useful if levelled against the Foundation Stage curriculum on a more regular basis.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The thrilling, imaginative and outstanding curriculum meets the needs of all children extremely well and reflects the diverse nature and geography of the community. In addition to very good provision for all areas of learning, projects in music, for example, excite children and prompt comments such as 'Ding dong, I do that, I like it!' Considerable gains are made in personal development through activities such as the environmental day 'tents and dens'. As well as having tremendous fun exploring the natural world, children worked cooperatively, solved problems and improved their physical skills as they designed and made wigwams. Children gain a greater understanding of their knowledge of the world through frequent stimulating visits and visitors. Parents get a look in too. They contribute to their child's education by participating in events, for example, the 'dads' and kids' day' in York and 'walking for health' in the Yorkshire Dales.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents are extremely appreciative of the high quality care, support and guidance they and their children receive. They particularly appreciate the termly guidance leaflets on topics such as writing, enabling them to help their children at home. Furthermore, workshops for parents ensure they are in a good position to help children learn. The integration of education and care services is extremely effective. This is evident in the improved health and well-being of children and their families. The work of the family and community team has been instrumental in improving attendance. Bilingual workers in each classroom contribute to the progress of children with English as a second language as well as helping them celebrate their own culture.

The arrangements for safeguarding children are known to all staff. Frequent checks are made of potential risks. Very close links with a number of primary and special schools prepare children very well for the next stage of their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

It is outstanding leadership and management that makes this school the success it is. Meticulous planning and careful monitoring have been crucial as the centre has expanded and roles have changed. Staff have responded well to their changed responsibilities and say they feel valued and part of a team. Leaders are not content to sit on their laurels and are constantly considering how the provision can be enhanced to raise standards further. Governors are a crucial part of

the discussions, carefully monitoring the quality of all the different services and questioning in depth what the school does well and what can be improved. They are keen to know, for example, why some parents choose not to use the services available and have commissioned a group to find out the reasons.

The collection and use of data have improved considerably since the last inspection. Training for staff has raised their awareness of children's progress, resulting in more precise assessment and leading to challenging targets being set for individuals. The centre development plan accurately identifies where further improvements can be made. Very effective channels of communication between staff in all areas of the centre's work have resulted in a high quality integrated provision and a school that is the centre of the community.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<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

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

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

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	3
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

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

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**

First, may I say a big thank you to you all for looking after me and helping me with my work. I really enjoyed my short time with you and had so much fun, especially in the outdoor area watching you dig for worms and millipedes. Your nursery is remarkable in all it does for you, your families and the neighbourhood. It would take me far too long to list all the very good things that go on at Canterbury so here are the ones I found especially pleasing.

- You are so well behaved and very enthusiastic about all the exciting things your teachers provide.
- You make very good progress in your learning because your teachers plan work to make you think hard.
- You have a very good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe; you even reminded me to clean my teeth after lunch.
- Your teachers spend a lot of time talking to other professionals to make sure you are well cared for.
- I could see from the photographs and from talking to you how much you enjoyed your creative days, like the time you designed and built wigwams.
- Your mums and dads think your school is the best in the world; they really enjoy joining in with all the activities, especially the visits to interesting places.

All this is because you have an outstanding headteacher, deputy headteachers and governors who work extremely hard to provide the best they can for you.

One thing I have asked of your teachers is that they sign more for the benefit of those of you who have communication difficulties.

I do hope you will continue to work hard and help your teachers keep up these very high standards. I wish you well for the future.