

Everton Early Childhood Centre

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 104505 |
| Local Authority | Liverpool |
| Inspection number | 308619 |
| Inspection dates | 14–15 May 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Frank Carruthers |

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 | |
| School | 134 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Joyce Humphreys |
| Headteacher | Mrs Lesley Curtis |
| Date of previous school inspection | 25 May 2004 |
| School address | Spencer Street Liverpool Merseyside L6 2WF |
| Telephone number | 0151 2331969 |
| Fax number | 0151 2331960 |

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|--------------------------|----------------|
| Age group | 3–5 |
| Inspection dates | 14–15 May 2008 |
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The centre provides integrated education and care to support families and their young children in an inner city area of Liverpool where levels of social deprivation are high. It is open for 50 weeks of the year from 08.00 to 18.00 providing Education and care for 214 children from birth to five years. The inspection focused on the Nursery school provision for children aged three to five years at the centre. Most of the Nursery aged children are White British: about 16% are from minority ethnic backgrounds and learning to speak English as an additional language. Around 25% of the children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The centre has gained the Advanced Inclusion Charter Mark, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Becta information and communication technology Mark, the Healthy Schools Award and the Green Flag Eco Award.

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

The centre provides an outstanding education for its children, who achieve exceptionally well from low starting points in all areas of learning. All aspects of the provision are outstanding. Leadership, management and governance are excellent. Inspirational leadership by the head of centre means the centre is always striving to improve what it can offer the children and their parents. The centre has made excellent progress since the last inspection and fully deserves the praise of parents in comments such as, 'It's a lovely Nursery.', 'My son loves coming.' and 'My daughter's come out of her shell and is keen to do other things now.'

Because of the high quality of teaching and learning, and care, guidance and support provided by the staff, children make excellent progress, especially in their personal, social and emotional development. By the time they are ready to go to Reception classes in nearby schools, the attainment of the great majority is at least at expected levels in the other five areas of learning. Children become confident, independent learners, willing to have a go at everything. They gain a real love of stories and books and enjoy making marks with pencils, crayons and brushes. All this helps them in the early steps of reading and writing. The staff provide a range of interesting activities to enhance the children's learning. Indoors, the children learn to use the interactive whiteboards well and enjoy the many opportunities for imaginative play. Outdoors, they have wonderful opportunities to explore, investigate and create their own imaginary worlds. Staff interact with the children exceptionally well, asking questions, giving praise and encouraging the children to think for themselves and talk about what they are doing. They plan activities so well that the children themselves get the opportunity to follow their own interests, which takes their learning to another level.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at the very early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language also make excellent progress. Thanks to outstanding links with specialist agencies both at the centre and from further afield, such as social services, family link workers, health visitors and speech and language specialists, the children and their families are provided with immediate, high quality support. This helps the children's progress immensely.

The centre has developed from a Nursery school to a multi-agency provider of intensive support and services for children and families, because of the outstanding leadership of the head of centre and the excellent support of the local authority. Together they have fashioned a model of best practice and provide excellent opportunities for the training and professional development of early years educators. The centre attracts visitors from across the country and around the world. It commands the respect of professionals from many disciplines. The centre has an outstanding capacity to maintain and improve its provision, which was formally acknowledged when it was asked to advise and assist other nursery settings and schools. It gives excellent value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

As a nursery school, the Foundation Stage is completely covered by the overall effectiveness section of this report.

What the school should do to improve further

There are no areas for improvement that the centre has not already identified.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Many children have speech and language difficulties when they start in the Nursery classes and most have extremely limited vocabulary. Progress is excellent because the staff encourage the children so well to join in and answer questions and to take part in the many role-play activities indoors and outside. By the time they move on to Reception classes the great majority can carry on a full conversation, for instance, when they play at being doctor and patient. They gain a good awareness of numbers through rhymes and counting songs and use simple computer programs effectively. The children make great strides in their knowledge and understanding of the world because of the many opportunities they have to explore and investigate. For example, the children enjoyed planning a route and writing a list of what they might need to go on a camping trip. They learned that a compass helps them to find their way. The children's physical development is excellent, thanks to the many opportunities outdoors and in the hall to develop skills of coordination and balance. The children produce a vast range of good artwork and models that arise from their own ideas.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. Children feel safe and know what to do if they are unhappy with anything. They are encouraged to stand up for themselves and are heard saying, 'Stop. I don't like that.' if they get anxious about another child's actions. Overall, their behaviour is good. The great majority behave very well but some display challenging behaviour and staff have excellent procedures in place to reduce conflict, praise good behaviour and set the limits of what is acceptable and what is not. Children learn about healthy foods at snack-time and when they help to cook and bake. The arrangements for taking lunch provide excellent opportunities for them to sit together with an adult to talk to and help serve the food. These are enjoyable social occasions. Attendance is good because the children do not want to miss a single day. They gain excellent skills of independence, for example, in selecting what they want to do and choosing their best work to save.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Children are always motivated and busy from the moment they enter the classrooms because the staff provide many interesting activities for them to do. Classrooms are vibrant places for learning. Staff plan the children's activities exceptionally well, observing how the children learn and then adapting their plans to support or challenge them. A key improvement of the teaching since the last inspection is how well adults engage with the children to promote their learning. Good routines are established and the children are always stimulated to explore and find out. For example, children enjoyed a well-resourced Washing Day outdoors: washing clothes with

soapy water, hanging them out to dry and ironing them. Throughout, the teacher promoted the children's understanding by skilful questioning and suggestions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

All areas of learning are covered exceptionally well. Staff are continually trying to improve upon the excellent learning opportunities already available for the children. The school has gained a number of awards, such as the Healthy Schools Award and the Green Flag Eco Award, that celebrate this drive. Recently, they have begun to extend the quality of children's imaginative and investigative play by using large equipment, such as wooden blocks, cardboard tubes, gutters and drainpipes, so that the children explore and investigate their potential. For example, a group created a water channel with pipes and gutters to see how water would drain way across the play area. With string and bamboo sticks they went fishing too. Innovative work such as this has received national publicity in education journals and is regularly shared with the many professionals who visit the centre. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by several links with specialists who provide valuable opportunities for the children such as learning to speak German and exploring music and the natural environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

These aspects are key strengths, which have been acknowledged, for example, in the centre gaining the Advanced Inclusion Charter Mark. All procedures to ensure the safety and welfare of children, including the safe recruitment of staff, are in place. Links within the centre provide excellent assistance for families, particularly the most vulnerable, so that the children can have the best chance to thrive during their early years. Consequently, carers of looked-after children are full of praise for the work of the staff. In addition, there are great opportunities for dads to be involved in their children's education through special events and regular clubs. Procedures to assess and track the progress of the children are excellent. Children have the opportunity to reflect on how well they are doing when they choose their best work to keep for their parents to see. Staff use digital photography very well to record the children's activities but have recognised that they do not take full advantage of computer technology to allow the children themselves to access, store and reflect on what they have accomplished.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Since the last inspection the leadership team and the governing body/management board have been extended to create a very effective strategic planning group. Senior leaders and governors, representing all aspects of the wider aspects of the centre, work together very well to develop high quality facilities and opportunities for families and their children. The centre operates as a one-stop-shop of services. The deputy head of centre responsible for the day-to-day management of the Nursery classes is highly effective and provides excellent support for the head of centre. Procedures to evaluate the work of the centre and support the professional development of staff are excellent and lead to an accurate assessment of the centre's strengths. The governing body/management board includes a wide range of specialists who have a superb grasp of how the centre is performing. The work of the chairperson and external consultants acting as critical friends of the centre is outstanding.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | 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 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |

Achievement and standards

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| 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

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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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 |
| 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 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 |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I enjoyed my inspection of your Nursery classes so much! You were having a wonderful time outside in the sunshine playing in the sand and exploring the gardens. I really enjoyed going camping with some of you and then, what a surprise when we found Monkey up the tree! You have so many things to do! It is no wonder you all love coming to Nursery every day.

I came to the Nursery to see how well everyone helps you to learn and grow and I was very impressed! Yours is one of the best Nurseries I have ever visited. In fact, it is outstanding! Your headteacher and all the staff are fantastic, aren't they? They look after you so well and help you learn so much.

So enjoy your time in Nursery and learn as much as you can.