

Redcliffe Early Years Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108904
Local Authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	309832
Inspection date	30 January 2008
Reporting inspector	David Curtis

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	3-4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marion Britton
Headteacher	Elizabeth Carruthers
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2004
School address	Spencer House Ship Lane Redcliffe Bristol BS1 6RR
Telephone number	01179 030334
Fax number	01173 773323

Age group	3-4
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: • The impact of strategies to raise the achievement of boys • How effectively all children are challenged • The effectiveness of the play-based learning environment • The quality of children's transition to primary education. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, analysis of school tracking and assessment data, scrutiny of planning and children's work and discussions with the headteacher, the vice chair of the governing body, key staff, parents and children. The views of parents were gathered from the returns of the Ofsted questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the findings in the school's self-assessment are not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The part of the Centre inspected is maintained by the local authority and provides for children aged 3 to 4. The non-maintained areas of the Centre's provision for 0 to 5- year-olds, including out-of-school care, were inspected by an Ofsted Child Care Inspector in December 2007 and were judged as outstanding. Children come from a wide range of backgrounds, with 40% from minority ethnic families. Twenty-two children are at the early stage of learning English, but the Centre receives no specialist funding. The majority of children live in flats or housing with little or no garden space. Children enter the Centre with poor language skills. The headteacher was appointed in May 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding Centre. At the heart of its success are excellent leadership and management. The headteacher, together with a highly qualified and experienced team, is dedicated to celebrating and developing the uniqueness of each individual. The Centre has maintained and built upon the significant strengths of its last inspection. The successful transition to a play-based, child-initiated curriculum has been the most significant step forward. The Centre is very accurate in its self-evaluation. There is no complacency. It knows it can never be perfect and there are always elements of practice to be improved. Its capacity for future improvement is outstanding. Parents are fulsome in their praise. Typical of many positive comments is, 'I am extremely happy with the level of care and teaching at the Early Years Centre'.

Excellent teaching and learning, together with a stimulating and vibrant curriculum, underpin children's outstanding achievement. Children make excellent progress in all areas of learning, including those who learn English as an additional language. By the time they leave the Centre, the majority are working well within the blue 'stepping stones' of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children are prepared exceptionally well both socially and academically for the next stage of their education.

As the result of detailed analysis and research into their achievement, boys have made significant progress in the last year and now achieve as well as girls. The Centre has found that boys' interest in mark making as the first stage of writing is greatly enhanced if they can make marks in the outdoor area. Similarly, the Centre found that providing boys with tools that motivate and engage them impacts positively on raising their achievement.

An outstanding feature of excellent teaching is the very high quality questioning of the children. This is a key factor in the Centre being successful in genuinely challenging all children. Children are asked questions to make them think and explore ideas, such as 'Why do we have speed bumps on roads?' Similarly, activities, including creative cookery, really challenge children's imagination. In these sessions, children have the ingredients provided but are then expected to come up with their own recipes. Unfortunately, during the inspection, the children were eating the healthy raw vegetables with such relish that the only ingredient left for their pumpkin soup was water!

Excellent care, guidance and support have a very strong impact on children's outstanding personal development, including their personal, social and emotional development. Staff know their children exceptionally well in their roles as key persons. They keep detailed records of children's progress in all areas of learning, which are shared with and valued by parents. Excellent links with a wide range of outside agencies provide very high levels of support for children and their parents, including counselling.

Children are totally happy, secure and confident in the Centre. Parents say how much their children look forward to the start of each new day there. Children are safe and secure. They know how to handle tools, including kitchen utensils, safely and confidently. They enjoy healthy snacks and ready access to water as and when they need it. Behaviour is exemplary because at no point during their sessions at the Centre is there time to be bored or uninterested because of the exciting activities they engage in.

A visit to the 'Forest School' with a group of children captured concisely the essence of this highly successful Centre. Children knew that in the minibus they must wear their seatbelts to

keep them safe. On the journey, they joined in with great gusto, 'The wheels on the bus go round and round' and showed their love of familiar rhymes and songs. Adults engaged them in conversation about sights and sounds. At the 'Forest School', which each group visits every three weeks, children thrive. These visits make a significant contribution to children's outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through watching the seasons unfold, children's awe and wonder at the natural world is inspirational to watch. At the 'Forest School' under excellent supervision, children are encouraged to run and jump, to make patterns in the mud, play hide and seek, and match 'treasure' they find to coloured stones provided by the teacher.

Governors provide excellent support for children, parents and staff. They are passionate in supporting the many opportunities for children to go on visits out of the Centre, including to the 'Forest School' and swimming. Parents say how important such visits are in helping their children to make the most of their time at the Centre. Governors are anxious to improve the provision for parents to access the Centre more readily by improving the currently very cramped reception area. Additionally, they wish to eliminate the need to use the Centre as a thoroughfare for parents, for example, to reach the headteacher's office. Although staff are vigilant, there are times when people passing through disrupt children's learning.

The success of the Centre is recognised by the local authority, which uses members of staff as advisory teachers to support the development of high quality Foundation Stage practice in other settings and schools. The school's own success in using the 'Forest School' means it is the leading light in this provision and other schools now use it, following training and support from staff at the Centre. Similarly, it is used as a base for supporting teachers in Reception classes to develop best practice.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

As all of the children are under five, this section is covered by the 'Overall effectiveness of the school'.

What the school should do to improve further

Work with all the relevant agencies to secure the next phase of the planned building programme to improve facilities for parents and eliminate the need for the present thoroughfare through the Centre.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	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 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

31 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Redcliffe Early Years Centre, Bristol BS1 6RR

Thank you for the great day I spent with you. I really enjoyed going to the 'Forest School' with you and watching you do all those exciting things. Your singing of 'The wheels on the bus go round and round' was brilliant. I loved watching those of you who were cooking eating all those raw vegetables. Did you ever make the soup? I am so pleased to tell you that your Centre is fantastic, but you and your parents know that already!

These are some of the things that I thought were excellent:

- You enjoy all the things you are given to do.
- You get on really well with each other and behave very well indeed.
- The teachers and adults give you lots of exciting things to do both indoors and outdoors.
- All of the adults look after you and care for you each day.
- You really love the 'Forest School' and going swimming.
- All of the people who run your Centre want to give the very best time they can so that learning and play are great fun for you all.
- The Centre helps you to be really ready to go to your next school.

To make your Centre even better, especially for your parents, but also for you too, I have asked all the adults who run the Centre to:

- Try their hardest to get the next part of the plans to improve your building done as soon as possible.

I know that you will continue to enjoy your time in the Centre. I hope that I will get an invitation to go to the 'Forest School' again!

Yours sincerely

David Curtis Lead inspector