

Caversham Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109750
Local Authority	Reading
Inspection number	310082
Inspection date	22 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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	58
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Amanda Martin
Headteacher	Mrs Ruth Parker
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2004
School address	82 Gosbrook Road Caversham Reading RG4 8BH
Telephone number	0118 9015429
Fax number	0118 9015231

Age group	3-5
Inspection date	22 May 2008
Inspection number	310082

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects: provision for children's mathematical development and the progress made by the school in improving assessment procedures.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Caversham is a small Nursery school providing for children mainly from the Caversham and the Emmer Green area of Reading. About half of the children are of White British heritage. The remainder come from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. A significant number of these are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of children with learning difficulties is about average. The school has also been planning and preparing for the move to a new Children's Centre scheduled for Spring 2009.

The school has experienced staffing difficulties this academic year with the absence of the headteacher and another experienced teacher for several months. During this period, the school had a visiting acting headteacher, who has remained with the school to support the substantive headteacher's return.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Caversham Nursery is a good school. Children achieve well because of good teaching and an interesting curriculum. Effective care guidance and support leads to good personal development and well-being for children. Parents hold very positive views about the school and are clearly pleased with both the care and education provided. A strong partnership has been established with parents, who give the school good support in return. They are particularly pleased with the friendly and approachable staff, the good care and the progress their children are making. They found a recent workshop on the teaching of letter sounds (phonics) useful and readily joined in with the sessions on the singing of nursery rhymes. Typical comments from the parents' questionnaires included, 'All staff are helpful and caring', 'The teachers are particularly good', and, 'A well run Nursery'.

Leadership and management effectively promote good educational provision, which leads to positive outcomes for the children. A good atmosphere in which children want to learn has been created and this is much appreciated by the parents. The school has managed the recent staffing difficulties well. During this difficult period, the school has received good support from the local authority. The acting headteacher has initiated good improvements to the curriculum and to assessment procedures. The curriculum is more enjoyable for children and the improved assessment procedures enable teachers to plan activities to meet children's needs more effectively. Governors are supportive and have a sound understanding of how the school is doing. Governance is not always sufficiently challenging about the school's performance. Improvements to assessment arrangements and to provision and progress in mathematical development demonstrate a good capacity to improve.

Children progress well as a consequence of good quality teaching and a curriculum that promotes enjoyment and engages children. Stimulating indoor and outdoor activities are planned around interesting topics or themes such as 'Traditional stories and tales' or 'Ourselves'. These inspire and motivate the children. As a parent remarked, 'I'm amazed at the variety of activities offered'. Teachers and nursery nurses provide a good blend of adult-led activities but also allow children to explore, work creatively and independently. Adults have formed very good relationships with the children. Teachers provide clear instructions and good questioning promotes learning well. Children who need extra help with their learning receive good individual or small group support. Provision for children at an early stage of learning English is good. As a result, children make good gains in acquiring English. The school is improving its assessment of children's attainment and this area is developing well. For example, in all areas of learning, regular assessments are made using direct observations of children's learning and development. These are carefully recorded and the information is used effectively to plan the next stages of children's learning.

Children's overall attainment on entry is below expectations for their age and a significant number have limited communication and language skills. Children make good gains in their learning. By the time they leave, standards are overall in line with those expected in most areas of learning. However, in some aspects of language and literacy the children, because of lower starting points, do not reach the expected levels. These include linking letters to sounds and basic writing skills. The school is taking positive action to improve these areas, such as using traditional nursery rhymes, whilst speaking and listening is promoted well through all activities. Children have sound opportunities to acquire and practise basic writing skills with chalk, paints and pencils. The school recognises that there is scope to further extend activities which promote

children's skills in letter sounds and writing. Since the last inspection, provision for mathematical development has improved and children are making good progress in this area. Through good training, staff provide wider range of mathematical activities particularly mathematical calculations. A wider range of activities enable children to apply and use their number skills in new situations.

Care, guidance and support are contributing well to children's learning and to their personal development. Well-planned induction arrangements enable children to settle quickly. Early toddler groups in the school and home visits contribute significantly to this process. There are effective systems to safeguard the children. A parent wrote, 'I'm happy knowing that my child is in safe hands and well looked after'. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. All children thrive in the school's positive and supportive atmosphere. They are considerate, friendly and kind to others, and thoroughly enjoy the range of activities provided. Attendance is satisfactory. Behaviour is often exemplary because of the consistent expectations of all staff and the strong relationships between adults and children. As one parent remarked, 'My child has slight behaviour problems and the teacher has looked after him with kindness and understanding'. Children adopt healthy lifestyles and show a good understanding of the importance of healthy foods such as fruit. They participate well in a variety of activities, which provide good, regular exercise. They work safely, collaboratively and share learning resources. The partnership with local schools and the community has been strengthened since the last inspection. This enables a smooth transfer from the Nursery to primary school. Partnerships with the community and other agencies are good, and being further developed in preparation for the school's new role as a 'Children's Centre'. At Caversham Nursery, children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

As a Nursery School, the Foundation stage is completely covered by the Overall Effectiveness section.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the opportunities for children to link letters to sounds and to develop writing skills so that they attain standards in line with other areas of learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

10 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Caversham Nursery School, Reading, RG4 8BH

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school and showing me your work. I enjoyed my visit and would like to tell you what I found. Caversham Nursery is a good school.

These are the good things in the school.

- You thoroughly enjoy your time at Nursery and the activities offered.
- The school is a very caring and pleasant place to be.
- Your behaviour is really good.
- Teaching is good, which is why you are learning so much.
- A good range of activities is provided for you.
- You work and play very well with other children.
- You show a good understanding of keeping healthy and keeping safe.
- The school is well run by senior staff.
- Staff take good care of you and give you lots of support.
- Your parents support the school well and are very pleased with the care and education provided.

There are a few points that would make the school even better.

- Some of you could make even more progress in knowing your letter sounds and in your writing. I have asked that the school provides more opportunities for you to practice your sounds and writing.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Derek Watts

Lead Inspector