

Kingswood Early Years Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117076
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	312479
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Sheelagh Barnes

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	56
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Mackenzie
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Randall
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2001
School address	Briar Road Watford WD25 0DX
Telephone number	01923 672531
Fax number	01923 672531

Age group	3–4
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized nursery school and early years centre. The majority of the children who attend are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly the same as in most schools. There are some variations in the levels of attainment of successive cohorts, but overall, attainment on entry is in line with that expected for the children's ages. The school has an Achievement Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides good value for money. There has been a good level of improvement since the school's previous inspection. Inspection judgements agree with the school's own evaluation of its current overall effectiveness. Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher is good and she has a good understanding of what needs to be improved. Governors fulfil their roles well and are strong supporters of the school. The school has a good capacity to continue to improve further.

Teaching and learning are good and lead to children from all groups making good progress and achieving well in all the six areas of learning for children of this age. Standards are on track to be higher than expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. Relationships are good and teachers plan interesting and exciting activities for children. Assessment is good and used effectively to monitor the progress of individuals and groups. Assessment data has been analysed by the school and in response to this there has been a strong recent focus on developing children's social and communication skills. Teachers know the children well and tailor their questioning to the needs of each individual child. The curriculum is good and is enriched effectively by a good range of activities outdoors and in the garden area, as well as visits out and visitors to school. Teachers' planning is often for activities suitable for all age groups and modified depending upon which children select the task. However, daily planning does not always take information from assessment about different groups sufficiently into consideration and tailor activities accordingly. The school has identified this and, consequently, greater use of information from assessment has been highlighted as an area of focus for improvement.

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as is behaviour, and children learn to take turns and share. Attendance is good and parents say their children ask to come to school, even at the weekends. Children enjoy lessons, they are enthusiastic and apply themselves well to their learning, concentrating for significant amounts of time. They make good progress in learning to be healthy and stay safe. They learn to develop positive relationships and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Opportunities for children to take initiative and develop independence are satisfactory. The school has identified the need for older children, in particular, to become more involved in the evaluation of their work, such as indicating what they have done and how much they enjoyed the activity. This is still in an early stage.

Care and welfare are good and children are taught well about the importance of healthy life-style and diet. Parents are supportive of the school and appreciative of its work. They are kept well informed about the work their children do and the progress they are making.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Use information from assessment more effectively when planning activities to meet the needs of specific groups.
- Develop older children's responsibility for their learning and involve them more in evaluating of how well they are doing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Children settle well into the Nursery and make good gains in their learning, due to the good quality of the provision. Boys and girls from all groups, including those with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve well and attain the challenging targets the school sets them. Achievement is good in personal and social development, physical development, creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world and speaking, listening and early reading and writing skills and mathematical development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being are good. They have very positive attitudes and behaviour is good. Attendance is good. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall because of the high emphasis the school places on developing social skills and the calm and consistent approach of all staff. Children's knowledge of the lifestyles of different members of British society today is satisfactory. They work and play alongside each other with consideration and help each other thoughtfully. They concentrate well and apply themselves to their learning. Opportunities for older children to take initiative are satisfactory as is the development of their skills of independence. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They take regular exercise and eat healthy snacks. They develop good awareness of personal hygiene. They work and play safely and look after one another well. In this way, the children make a positive contribution to the school community, are building good foundations for later life and learning the skills they need for their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and other adults establish routines effectively and children know what is expected of them. Relationships are good and so children are happy and comfortable to ask questions or to explain what they are doing. Teachers plan effectively, using their knowledge of young children well to make learning interesting and exciting. Assessment is regular and information gathered is analysed effectively. However, at times, opportunities to target the work specifically to the needs of groups of children, based on information from the data collected, are missed. All staff and helpers are well informed and so make a good contribution to the progress children make. Staff are aware of the needs of individuals, such as those with learning difficulties, and meet these well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. A broad and balanced range of activities provides a good range of relevant and interesting learning opportunities for children that stimulate interest and imagination. Topics effectively encourage healthy lifestyles. Visitors and visits, including learning about different musical instruments and a trip to the local fire station, extend and enliven the

curriculum. Good, regular use is made of the interesting outdoor areas to enhance both learning and enjoyment. The provision is rich and varied, but opportunities to provide different levels of challenge for different groups are sometimes missed. For example, in integrated sessions with day care children, where children choose which activities they will take part in staff do not pre-plan to draw specific groups into certain tasks as often as they might.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Children's happiness and safety are promoted effectively. The provision for children with learning difficulties or disabilities is good. The systems the school has developed to monitor children's academic and personal progress are rigorous. Teachers use the information from assessment well to ensure that individual children's needs are met well; for example, to identify any learning difficulties. Good care is also taken to ensure that children know who to turn to if they need help with a problem and this makes them confident and happy. The school has good links with parents. It provides good information for them about the work their children are doing and the progress they are making. Teachers are starting to encourage children to be involved in the evaluation of their work, for example, on occasion asking if they have enjoyed their activities. However this is at an early stage and has been highlighted as an area for development in the school improvement plan.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management is good. This has resulted in a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher has a good knowledge of standards and the quality of learning throughout the school, through regular monitoring. This results in accurate school self-evaluation. She has high expectations of where she intends the school to be and a clear and measurable plan of how to achieve this. Governors are supportive and take their responsibilities seriously. Many are relatively new to their roles but are motivated, well informed and are undertaking training to develop their understanding further.

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?	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	2
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	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	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	2
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

30 November 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Kingswood Early Years Centre, Watford, WD25 0DX

Thank you for welcoming me to your school when I visited recently. I really enjoyed meeting you all and talking to you.

The best things about your school are that:

- you enjoy school
- teachers do a good job and you learn a lot
- your behaviour is good.
- you learn how to stay safe and be healthy
- you have plenty of time in the garden and doing other exciting things
- Margaret knows how well all of you are doing.

There are a few things you could do to make the school even better.

- Help the teachers to plan even more challenging things for some of you to try.
- For some of the older ones amongst you to start to say how well you think you have got on with your tasks.

I really enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn and wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sheelagh Barnes

Lead inspector