

# Countesthorpe Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119901
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	313438
<b>Inspection date</b>	15 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	42
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gail van Dijk
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janet Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 November 2004
<b>School address</b>	The Drive Countesthorpe Leicester LE8 5PB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01162 773489
<b>Fax number</b>	01162 773489

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the nursery and investigated the following issues: • improvements made since the last inspection in relation to the use of information from assessment to evaluate achievement • the adequacy of systems to record planning of activities for children • the achievement of different groups of children • the provision made for safeguarding children • the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in raising standards. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations and from discussions with the headteacher, staff and Local Authority Advisor and governors. A range of documentation, including teachers' planning, school improvement evaluation, assessment procedures and school policies, was analysed. Other aspects of the nursery's work were not investigated in detail. The lead inspector found no evidence to suggest that the nursery's own assessments of its strengths and areas for development were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

The nursery caters for 25 children who attend part-time, either in the morning or in the afternoon. There are no children identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or with English as an additional language. Attainment on entry is broadly similar to that seen nationally, although one third of children have underdeveloped speaking and listening skills. The headteacher is the only qualified teacher and teaches full-time in addition to her headship responsibilities. The school provides after-school care for children aged three to eight, and a separate report on this provision is available.

The nursery has undergone an unsettling period during the long absence of the headteacher through illness. Because of this, improvement since the last inspection, whilst satisfactory, has been slow because the headteacher was unable to access many aspects of training. The headteacher, staff and governing body are receiving an extensive package of support from the Local Authority to bring them up to speed and move the nursery back into the position of being good, as identified in the previous report.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

'We are delighted with the nursery and we are so pleased to have the headteacher back,' said one parent speaking for many. 'Our children are very happy, and they want to come to nursery every day because they enjoy learning'. In spite of the many recent setbacks, the nursery provides a satisfactory quality of education and is gradually improving, as evidenced by the good tracking systems that are in place to check children's progress. Staff know children and their families well. Good relationships create a supportive atmosphere in which children feel secure, behave well and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Children happily leave their parents at the start of sessions, and some of them are so keen to see their friends that they forget to say goodbye to their parents and carers. The nursery works in close partnership with parents as well as support agencies and the local primary schools.

Children's achievements are satisfactory overall. Standards are above those expected nationally in speaking and listening and physical development. In all other areas of learning, children attain the expected levels and their achievements are satisfactory from average starting points. Children make good progress in speaking and language development because it is given a high priority in the work of the school, and because of the use of good quality resources and skilful questioning by teachers. In physical development, children work with a sports coach and use the outdoor environment very effectively, which contributes to their fast rates of progress. Children who find learning easy make less progress than others because, at times, valuable learning opportunities are missed to develop their writing and number skills, especially in recording what they have learnt. Staff monitor children's engagement in learning and instinctively provide support, but this is usually on a one-to-one basis and opportunities for working with groups of children are missed. As a result of adequate school self-evaluation, staff have already identified this as an area for improvement.

Since the headteacher's return and the implementation of the Local Authority support package, meetings to discuss children's progress have become more focused in planning the next steps of children's learning. However, shortcomings remain in planning by staff and in the academic guidance given to children. As a consequence, children sometimes repeat things that they have already learnt. This is one of the main reasons why teaching is adequate and not good. However, staff are keen to improve and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. The curriculum offers children a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. Children are mindful of what they have learnt about keeping safe, personal cleanliness and fostering good relationships with one another. They enjoy healthy snacks and milk drinks. There is an adequate balance between times when children can choose what they do and when they sit together with an adult to learn. A good range of visits is undertaken, for example, environmental walks and trips to the pantomime; these ensure that children develop a love of learning. The outdoor area is used well. Even in inclement weather, children want to go out to play. Bubble and Squeak (the guinea pigs) provide sound opportunities for children to reflect on the wonders of nature by exploring their behaviour and habitats. The curriculum gives adequate coverage of different religious festivals to support children's satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Sound opportunities are taken to teach children right from wrong, contributing to their emerging skills of citizenship. Children make a satisfactory contribution to the wider community by singing for old age pensioners and supporting a range of charities. Care, guidance and support of children are satisfactory. Appropriately structured routines ensure that children feel safe and secure. All staff are CRB checked and have received Child Protection training from the

headteacher. Children's welfare and well-being is securely provided for, especially their emotional well-being.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. A lot has been accomplished since the headteacher's return. School self-evaluation is accurate, for example, and a well- focused school improvement plan has been put in place which has been acted upon. The nursery has demonstrated satisfactory capacity to improve because the targets set by the headteacher for raising the quality of provision are now starting to improve children's learning. Until recent changes were set in place, staff responsibilities for managing aspects of provision had not been defined clearly enough, resulting in an inequitable distribution of responsibilities and a very heavy load for the headteacher. Governance is satisfactory. The vast majority of governors are newly appointed, but the chair of the governing body is experienced, knows the school's strengths and areas for development, and ensures that statutory requirements are met. However, the governors' roles of monitoring and evaluating the work of the nursery are in the very early stages of implementation. The Local Authority has already put in place a package of training to enable them to be more aware of their roles as critical friends.

### **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

#### **Grade: 3**

As a nursery school, the Foundation Stage is completely covered by the 'Overall Effectiveness' section.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the more able children are always provided with sufficiently challenging activities in writing and mathematics.
- Improve the staff's use of assessment information in their planning of the next steps in children's learning.
- Ensure that the newly appointed governors become more involved in monitoring the work of the school.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.



## 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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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



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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

16 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Countesthorpe Nursery School, Leicester, LE8 5PB

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your nursery a few days ago. I think that your nursery is satisfactory and is improving now that your headteacher has come back. What I liked most about your nursery is:

- you all want to come to nursery and your parents are pleased with your work
- you look after Bubble and Squeak, the guinea pigs, well
- you enjoy learning and behave well especially when playing outdoors
- everyone looks after you and this helps you feel safe and happy
- the staff work hard at providing you with interesting learning opportunities.

All of the staff, led by your headteacher and the chair of governing body, are already making things better for your learning and the nursery is set to continue to improve. I have asked your headteacher and staff to carry on looking at ways in which to help you learn at a faster rate. For example, those of you who find learning easy could be doing more in writing and mathematics. I have asked the staff to make better use of the information they have on how well you are doing to help them plan suitable activities for you. I have also asked your governing body, once they have received their training, to come in more frequently and see how well you are learning.

I hope you carry on enjoying nursery and learning a lot of new things.

Best wishes

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley Lead inspector

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Lead inspector