

The Kingsdown Nursery School, Lincoln

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126562
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE LA
Inspection number	315587
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Joanne Harvey

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	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sara Thursby
Headteacher	Mrs Valerie Robertson
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2001
School address	Kingsdowne Road Doddington Park Lincoln Lincolnshire LN6 0FB
Telephone number	01522684335
Fax number	01522500741

Age group	3–4
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average size school serving a mixed residential area to the south west of Lincoln. Many families also travel from outside the immediate area. Indicators suggest there is an area of social and economic disadvantage within the school's catchment. Children enter the nursery with a broad range of knowledge and skills though they are similar to those expected for children of this age. However, a significant number enter with particularly poor communication and language skills. The majority of children come from White British backgrounds and only a very small minority are of Eastern European origin and in the early stages of learning English. The number of children with a learning difficulty and/or a disability including those with a statement of educational need is similar to the national average. As a consequence of declining numbers the school takes an early intake for five terms instead of the usual three. Children leave the nursery to attend up to 20 other schools. The school has achieved the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Mark, is an Investor in People and has two Basic Skills Awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspector agrees with the school that this is a good school with some important outstanding features and some areas for further development. It was judged to be a satisfactory and improving school at the time of the last inspection and it has continued to flourish and develop since then, giving confidence that it has a good capacity to continue to improve.

The school's success arises from the effective leadership of the headteacher, supported by committed governors and a hardworking staff team, who take good care to ensure the personal, social, emotional and academic needs of children, are well met. As a result, children thrive and become well rounded individuals in this happy and harmonious environment. They make good progress from their starting points to reach and often surpass the levels of knowledge and skills expected for children of this age. Children who find learning more difficult and those who are in the early stages of learning English get good support so that they also progress well. Because children are encouraged to express their opinions and to accept increasing responsibilities, they grow in confidence and make exceptional progress in their personal skills which are outstanding by the time they leave the nursery. This equips them well for the next stage of their education and the choices they will have to make about their lives.

Teaching and learning are good because teachers, who are excellent role models, conscientiously plan lessons using their good subject knowledge to interest children and involve them in taking their learning forward. These lessons are based on an outstanding curriculum which provides stimulating and enjoyable structured play activities to bring lessons alive, and this develops very positive attitudes to learning. Leaders are aware of the need to bring even more rigour to their systems for checking and ensuring that the best features of teaching are consistently applied in order to further quicken the progress children make.

Leadership and management are good because school leaders know the school well and focus resources where they are needed most. Leaders have recognised that their next step is to further develop systems for the collection and use of information about how well children are doing in order to make sure that everyone always does as well as they can. A particular strength is the way leaders and all staff nurture partnerships with parents and the wider community with lots of opportunities for them to be involved in school life. This helps to ensure the strong and positive family atmosphere which prevails throughout nursery enabling children to feel safe, secure and confident to make the most of the opportunities they are offered. It is no surprise that the parents who responded to the questionnaire were overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work. One wrote, 'This school is fantastic and I couldn't pick a better place for my child to start his school life. I can't praise the teachers enough for all that they do.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Bring more rigour to systems for checking on and improving the quality of teaching and learning in order to ensure that it is consistently good.
- Further develop systems for accurately collecting and effectively using information about how well children are doing in order to ensure they always do as well as they can.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children progress well in all areas of their learning. They make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development which by the time they leave the nursery is outstanding. Though the standards achieved in each area vary from year to year, inspection evidence confirms that children are currently on target to achieve levels of knowledge and skills at least similar to those expected for their age and a significant number to exceed them by the time they leave the nursery. Children who find learning more difficult are supported well to make good progress, as are those of Eastern European origin who are in the early stages of learning English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Immediately on stepping in to the nursery, children's happiness and enjoyment is absolutely clear and reflected in their good levels of attendance. Their love of learning begins from the moment they start at the nursery because it is extremely well promoted by all adults, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is outstanding. Care is taken to help children think positively about themselves and others and as a result, children show respect for themselves, adults and for each other. Their behaviour is outstanding. They learn to share, take turns, and cope well with their emotions. They develop an excellent sense of right and wrong. Early on, children develop independence and confidence to make choices, including about how to keep themselves and each other safe. Their understanding of how to eat healthily develops well and they thoroughly enjoy taking part in the many opportunities they are offered to be physically active. Consequently, they are prepared well for their lives in and out of school both now and in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

All adults promote positive relationships and outstanding behaviour. Planning is done conscientiously using good subject knowledge along with knowledge of how children learn best. This results in lots of practical activities and stimulating lessons so that children thoroughly enjoy their learning. They have so much fun that they do not realise how hard they are working. The best lessons are delivered in a lively style with teachers actively ensuring all children remain engaged and challenged or knowing when to stand back and give them time to explore their ideas in greater depth. In these lessons, teachers use skilful questioning to encourage children to reflect, express their ideas and extend their thinking and speaking skills. Lessons often proceed at a good pace as does the progress children make. Leaders are aware that these best features of teaching and learning are not yet consistently applied. For example, the pace of the lesson is occasionally too slow or features too much teacher talk.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

An exciting range of extremely well resourced activities stimulate, promote and develop children's learning very effectively. The indoor and outdoor activities often inspire a sense of awe and

wonder in the children. The range of activities, led by an adult or based on play, ensures that all areas of learning are covered well and learning is enriched. Topic themes allow the revisiting and reinforcement of learning in different and meaningful ways. Story and role play times extend children's vocabulary and promote a real love of books. Skilful use of the beguiling sensory room helps to promote the outstanding features of children's personal development, their creativity and their confidence to express their ideas. Excellent use is made of the local nature park and links with local partners, such as the fire and health services, to promote a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. Visitors to the school, such as musicians, the 'creepy crawly man' and visitors from other cultures in national dress add creative and real life experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Aspects of pastoral care are outstanding. Staff get to know children and families very well and are extremely quick to respond to worries. From the start, great emphasis is placed on the personal, social and emotional development of each child. Consequently, children settle into nursery life quickly and by the time they leave the nursery, their personal development is outstanding. Child protection and safeguarding arrangements are thorough. Children who find learning more difficult or who are in the early stages of learning English are well supported to make good progress, though as a small minority of their parents say, they would welcome a better insight into this aspect of the school's work.

Academic guidance is not yet as well developed. Leaders recognise that even more could be done to ensure rigour and consistency in the accuracy and use of information about how well children are progressing and the feedback children are given about their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a strong vision and gives clear strategic direction to the work of the school. She is well supported by governors and a hardworking staff team who are united in their focus on continuing school improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and resources are plentiful and used well. Leaders recognise that even more rigour could be brought to the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in order to ensure that this is consistently of the quality of the best in school. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's effectiveness and hold leaders to account for their work. Excellent and successful partnerships are pursued which enhance provision for children and their families, for example with Surestart and local school networks. Parents who responded to the questionnaire value highly the work of the school and many are keen to take advantage of the learning opportunities made available to them such as the family learning courses.

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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?	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?	1
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?	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	2
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	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?	1
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

20 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of The Kingsdown Nursery School, Lincolnshire, LN6 0FB

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to inspect your nursery recently. This letter is to tell you what I thought about it.

I think you go to a good nursery school. There are some important things about your nursery that are outstanding. I saw you having so much fun and doing lots of exciting things. You are extremely well behaved and everyone gets on so very well together. I saw you all working and playing hard in classes, having lunch together quietly and playing and working well outside too. All the grown ups look after you so well that you become very nice people indeed to spend time with. They help you to do well with your learning too, so that by the time you leave nursery you are prepared well for your next school.

Even though you already do well, I think there are things that can be done to help you do even better. Everyone at nursery is very keen to make it as good as it can be too. So, to make the nursery even better I have asked the headteacher and everyone else who leads the nursery to make sure that the teaching is always as good as the very best. Also, that all the information that adults collect about how well you are doing is always spot on and is used very carefully to make sure that all of you do as well as you can.

I am sure Mrs Robertson and the other staff and governors will continue to work hard to make the school an exciting and interesting place for you and you can do your bit by continuing with your excellent behaviour and hard work.

Joanne Harvey

Lead inspector