

Moorlands Centre Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126565
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	315588
Inspection date	7 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Sean O'Toole

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3-5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	33
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs C Dyson
Headteacher	Mrs J Winter
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2001
School address	54-56 Wastel Beanhill Milton Keynes MK6 4LW
Telephone number	01908 679819
Fax number	01908 607100

Age group	3-5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is located in an area of socio-economic deprivation. It is closely linked with other providers and has recently been designated as a children's centre. The school admits children shortly after their third birthday. Most are White British but about a fifth have other backgrounds. One in ten is at an early stage of speaking English when starting school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parents are delighted by the good quality of education provided by the school. As one said, 'The staff should be commended for all their hard work.' Many children start school lacking confidence and have limited skills. The open and friendly nature of the staff helps the children to settle in quickly and to make good gains in their learning. High standards of care and support ensure that even the least confident child is happy and at ease. Because of this, children of all abilities achieve well and are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their education. When they leave the school almost all are working at the levels expected for their age because they have been taught well and nurtured individually.

The children's excellent personal qualities spring from the ways in which staff attend to the needs of individuals by checking on their progress and encouraging them to have a go at new activities. Teachers plan sessions well, leaving opportunities for children to follow their interests. They intervene effectively and offer much advice and encouragement. Excellent relationships between the staff and children ensure that the atmosphere is calm and purposeful and that children learn to respect everyone. The children are good at making choices, concentrate for long periods and clearly enjoy themselves. They are sociable, friendly and behave very well.

The school benefits from good leadership and well-organised management which promote high standards of care. The headteacher keeps a careful check on the children's progress and uses the information to challenge the teachers and to encourage improvement. The staff have a good mix of skills and are keen to learn from each other. They also draw on the expertise of outside agencies and are committed to the values and opportunities provided through family and community learning. Governors provide much support and encouragement and are justifiably proud of the school's work and its involvement in the community. However, they are not quite as good at checking on how well the school is working.

Teaching is good and staff make thoughtful use of the good resources to capture the children's interest. Sometimes introductions to sessions are too long and the pace of learning dips. Staff know the children well and draw them into learning through well-focused questions. They encourage the children to join in stories and rhymes but occasionally they do not give the children sufficient opportunity to answer questions in detail. Nonetheless, they are sensitive and often intervene in an activity at just the right point to extend learning. The way that staff put the children at the centre of the school's work and involve parents and the community are hallmarks of its success.

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 pace of some lessons and provide more opportunities for the children to express their ideas and extend their vocabulary.
- Extend the involvement of governors in making decisions about and checking on the school's work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When they start school most children's skills, knowledge and understanding are low when compared with those of a similar age. The good range of activities, much individual attention and good quality of the teaching enable children to make good progress. Children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They achieve well and, by the time they leave the school, most are working at the levels expected for their age. Boys and girls are equally successful learners because the school works hard to provide a range of activities which interests both groups. Those with learning difficulties receive exceptional support and because their targets are short, sharp and well focused they make excellent progress. The increasing proportion of children starting school with little or no English are included very well in all activities and they improve their skills rapidly. The daily focus on learning new letter sounds and listening to stories does much to enhance children's positive attitudes to early reading and writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The staff regard personal, social and emotional development as one of the most successful aspects of the children's achievement. Children very quickly adjust to the routines, respond with enthusiasm to new challenges and take great delight in all they do. They manage their own learning, cooperate with others and readily make friends. They know that they are a part of the school and have a sense of pride in coming here. The children enjoy the opportunities to learn about different cultures and traditions which enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They love working with the interactive whiteboard and giggle with excitement as it responds to their commands.

Children thoroughly enjoy school. As one parent wrote, 'My child looks forward to going to school everyday.' They like to experiment and find out new things. When cooking they learn about healthy eating and become aware of the need for personal hygiene and keeping safe. Because the children feel secure and well cared for they are confident in taking risks. The children enjoy the outdoor challenges and take plenty of energetic exercise. They are curious and become absorbed in activities for long periods. These qualities together with their good achievement in basic skills prepare them well for the next school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The children learn effectively because most of the teaching is well focused and successfully motivates and enthuses the children. The staff relate exceptionally well to each child. Because of their focused observations and knowledge of how young children learn, the staff plan thoroughly and often make use of the children's ideas to enhance learning. These approaches stimulate a love of learning in the children who become inquisitive and able to maintain concentration for long periods. Staff have a good understanding of how to promote children's early reading and writing through poems, songs, rhymes and learning the sounds that letters make. On some occasions, introductions to lessons are rather long and this leads to a drop in the pace of learning. Staff work hard to engage all children and are good at asking questions

but sometimes they do not give the children sufficient time to answer. Throughout each session staff are busy about the Nursery giving encouragement and, where appropriate, intervening to move learning on. They make detailed and accurate observations which they then use to plan the next steps in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school works successfully to meet the needs of the children through an interesting and varied curriculum. Excellent links with outside agencies and the ways in which the school involves parents contribute much to the children's learning. Currently the children are enjoying listening to live music from visiting instrumentalists. Those with English as an additional language are given much support. The many and varied practical opportunities do much to build the confidence in these children in taking the first steps in communicating in English. Staff plan thoroughly and take account of the different ways in which boys and girls learn and use the outdoor area well to give children the freedom to explore in a safe but challenging environment. The focus on developing children's personal qualities is outstanding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides high quality care and support for the children who consequently thrive. Parents are delighted by the excellent support given to them and their children and many commented on the open and friendly atmosphere which contributes to their children's happiness. Part of this is due to the very good systems used by the staff to track how well the children make progress. They make detailed observations, discuss individual successes and problems and ensure that activities are planned to excite and interest the children. This is especially the case for those with learning difficulties who benefit from high quality guidance and support. The school makes sure that the Nursery is safe and secure and all staff are fully up to date regarding safeguarding children. As one parent said, 'I know that my child is always well cared for and happy at school because the staff love him.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

This is a well-organised school where the needs of the children are the first consideration. All staff work together as a team to ensure that each individual is included and valued. The headteacher leads by example and has a good understanding of the school's work. The school's accurate self-evaluation highlights successes and is used to guide improvement. Strategic plans centre on ways to maintain the good quality of provision and identify areas for development. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection in developing curriculum plans and achieving a balance between adult directed and child chosen activities. Because the staff are committed to providing high quality education for the children they are well placed to improve further. Governors are very supportive of the school but have too few formal ways of checking on its work. This school is good at listening and responding to the views of the parents and wider community.

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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	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	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	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	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?	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

15 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Moorlands Centre Nursery School, Milton Keynes, MK6 4LW

Please see attached.



15 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Moorlands Centre Nursery School/Milton Keynes/MK6 4LW

What a lovely day I had at your Nursery! I really enjoyed watching you working and playing with you. Thank you for talking to me and making me feel welcome. I enjoyed helping you to find spiders and butterflies in the leaves and looking at them in your microscopes. All of you said how much you like coming to the Nursery. It made me happy to see how much you help each other and how good you are at sharing and being kind.

Your school is good for lots of reasons.

- ☺ All of your teachers care about you and look after you very well.
- ☺ You are good at playing together and sharing.
- ☺ You are kind to everyone and make the school a very happy place.
- ☺ The adults are good at helping you to learn.
- ☺ You know lots about keeping healthy.
- ☺ You are good at listening and learning.

I have asked your teachers to find ways of helping you to learn a little quicker in some lessons and for you to have more opportunities to talk about your ideas. I have also asked the governors to find new ways of helping the school. I know that you love coming to school and you can help to make it an even better place by always doing your best.

I hope that you will always enjoy school as much as you like coming to Moorlands.

Best wishes

Sean O'Toole
Lead inspector