

# Castle Vale Nursery School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103144
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	323769
<b>Inspection date</b>	3 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joyce Cox

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	80
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Holloway
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lesley Wiltshire
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 June 2006
<b>School address</b>	Yatesbury Avenue Castle Vale Birmingham B35 6DU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01216757578
<b>Fax number</b>	01217 492074

---

<b>Age group</b>	3–4
<b>Inspection date</b>	3 June 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	323769

---

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 two additional inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the nursery and children's centre and investigated the following issues:

- how well different groups of children attain and achieve in all areas of learning
- the success of the nursery's strategies in accelerating children's progress in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy and linking letters and sounds
- the effectiveness of the nursery/parent partnership.

Evidence was gathered from: the nursery's self-evaluation; assessment records; observation of the nursery at work; discussions with staff, parents and governors; and an analysis of parental questionnaires. Other aspects of the nursery's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the nursery's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, are not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The nursery provides full-time and part-time places for children who live within the locality. Seventeen per cent of the children come from minority ethnic backgrounds with a very small number learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Many children have speech and language difficulties.

The integral children's centre opened in July 2007 and offers a range of extended services. There are various groups for very young children including mother and baby, and toddler stay-and-play sessions. A childminders' support group is based at the centre and a team of family support workers provides a wide variety of services including weaning workshops, dads' groups, behaviour management and paediatric first-aid courses. Local midwives run a weekly tiny new tots session. The centre also provides advice on smoking and drug cessation, domestic violence and victim support, breastfeeding, chlamydia screening and contraception support. There are links with a wide range of extended providers on the Castle Vale estate. These include local schools, a community day nursery, a health centre, playgroups and Homestart, which together provide extensive day and summer holiday care, support groups and activities for young children and their parents and carers. Other partnerships include close links with health visitors, speech and language therapists, Good Hope Hospital Child Development Centre, artists and theatre groups. The school currently holds the nationally accredited Impetus Award for Values Education and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an excellent nursery and children's centre. It provides an outstanding start to children's education and cares for them exceedingly well in a happy, welcoming and friendly atmosphere where parents are highly valued as partners in their children's learning. The headteacher and her staff take excellent account of the needs of families and work very successfully to meet them. Sensitively planned induction and the excellent weekly stay-and-play and mother and baby sessions in the children's centre provide outstanding chances for families to explore a wide range of stimulating activities. Exceptionally high quality learning resources, informative support for parents and welcoming friendly staff ensure that a strong home-school bond is firmly and effectively established. The setting plays a key role in the local community and promotes community cohesion very effectively.

The headteacher is very experienced and is highly regarded by children, parents, staff and governors. She has successfully developed a team of talented teachers and support staff who share her high aspirations and absolute determination to provide the very best early years education. Parents are extremely positive about the education and support given to their children. Over a third of the parents completed the questionnaire and they had no complaints or concerns whatsoever. Their views are summarised in the following comment, 'This efficiently run nursery and children's centre has a friendly atmosphere and helpful staff who make parents and children feel very welcome. We are confident in the knowledge that our children are secure and happy whilst learning essential skills for the future.'

Children in the nursery make excellent progress in a positive, colourful and stunning environment. On entry, children are performing at considerably lower levels than those typically expected. All groups of children benefit from consistently high quality teaching. Hence children's achievement is excellent and when they leave the nursery the majority are generally working within the levels expected for children of this age in all areas of learning. Children love coming to nursery where they and their parents are individually welcomed by a smiling headteacher and staff. Daily assessments of children's learning are very thorough and this information is used effectively to plan the next stage of learning for individual children. The children's 'Records of Achievement' give parents a clear picture of activities over the year. With recent changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum the school has been trialling new systems for tracking children's progress over time. Leaders know they have not yet got this quite right and that current systems, while providing a myriad of information, are unwieldy. Although this does not affect children's learning on a day-to-day basis, it makes it difficult for leaders, governors and parents to easily see children's progress from the time they start to the time they leave.

Children's personal development and well-being are excellent because adults provide warm physical and emotional care so that children feel very safe and thrive. Children work very well with adults and independently. The nursery indoor area is skilfully organised into work areas to cover all the areas of learning. Through the enticing range of high-quality equipment and activities provided, the outstanding teaching ensures children are constantly challenged and motivated. Their excellent behaviour is supported exceptionally well by the nursery's 'Values Education' which helps children gain an understanding of how their behaviour affects others. During the inspection children were very knowledgeable about this week's value: 'Look after each other'. Many children show through small actions, such as handing other children resources without being asked and by saying 'kind words', that they completely understand how to help each other and make the nursery an even happier place. Lunchtimes are calm, social occasions

where children enjoy freshly prepared wholesome food such as salad and fruit. They also grow their own strawberries, broad beans, carrots and potatoes which they love cooking and eating. Children know how to keep safe and sensibly ride their bikes in the designated area without bumping into others. They are happy, well motivated and make amazing gains in self-esteem and confidence. For instance, one child who was extremely shy when starting nursery confidently performed a song in front of other children and adults. More able children are effectively challenged and confidently write their own names and recognise rhyming words and initial sounds. There is excellent, sensitive support for children with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities so they are totally included and able to enjoy all the exciting activities on offer.

An interesting and stimulating curriculum both indoors and outdoors provides endless opportunities for children to learn, explore and investigate. The carefully constructed outdoor learning areas are freely available at most times. Children love being outside and confidently learn to take risks in a safe, supervised environment. For instance, after receiving a letter from Pirate Pete asking for help to find his lost treasure, the children wasted no time in following Pete's clues and collecting their spades and excitedly digging in the sand pit. The excellent staff team, with the children's help and suggestions, construct innovative role-play areas both indoors and outdoors to delight and fascinate and to enhance language development. In response to children's suggestions and also with a desire to accelerate calculating skills, staff have constructed a bowling alley complete with numbered skittles and a ball with hand holes! Consequently, children have tremendous fun bowling and counting, which has a considerable impact on their mathematical and also their physical skills as they calculate and confidently record their scores. There is an excellent emphasis on ensuring children quickly learn to practise their early writing and mark making skills in all activities, such as writing lists of food for outdoor picnics. Children make excellent gains in their speech and language development because staff are very skilled at getting children to express their ideas. For instance, a child who had a triangle without a beater was gently encouraged to say why she could not play the triangle and what she needed to do so.

Excellent welfare contributes very effectively to children's learning and well-being. At the time of the inspection, procedures to ensure that children are safe fully met statutory requirements. There are excellent links with outside agencies to safeguard children and to sensitively support any children and parents who are having difficulties. The family support team provides outside advice and support on a wide range of issues. Outstanding partnerships have been established with all parents and the local community and there is a definite sense of raising aspirations with regard to economic well-being and educational achievement for both children and parents.

The school has made excellent improvements since its last inspection and all staff have worked diligently to link the different strands of the provision together as more and more services have been provided through the children's centre. Leaders at all levels, including governors, have set challenging priorities for future development, based on highly reflective self-evaluation and demonstrate an excellent capacity to improve further. Inspirational, determined leadership from the headteacher continues to drive this highly successful setting onwards and upwards. Inspectors agree completely with a parent who said, 'The headteacher perseveres even when things get tough, she never lets anything beat her.'

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

- Simplify the way children's achievements are recorded so that it is easier to track their progress.

**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](http://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

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do children in the EYFS achieve?</b>	1
The standards[1] reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?</b>	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	IE <sup>2</sup>
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	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?</b>	1
<b>How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?</b>	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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



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

4 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Castle Vale Nursery and Children's Centre, Birmingham, B35 6DU Thank you for the happy day we spent at your nursery. We especially liked the way you were so kind and caring to each other. We also loved seeing how clever you are at bowling, counting and writing. We agree with all your mums and dads that you go to an outstanding nursery.

These are some of the things that we think are excellent.

- You love learning new things and you are very good at sharing nicely, taking turns, and being kind to each other.
- Your teachers are brilliant and plan exciting and fun things for you to do.
- Babies and toddlers have a great time in the children's centre and have fantastic toys and equipment and smiley adults to play with.
- The headteacher is very good at running the nursery and children's centre and makes sure you all have a really good time and do well.
- There are lots of interesting activities in the children's centre for your mums and dads to do so they can learn new things too.
- Like you, we think the outdoor areas are brilliant places to explore and have fun. We are very glad that you found Pirate Pete's treasure in the sand.

The headteacher and staff have many excellent ideas to make the nursery even better. We agree with their ideas and also think it would be good if they can find an easy way to write down all the things you learn to do while you are at nursery.

You can help your teachers by continuing to try your best all of the time and by being kind and caring to each other.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Joyce Cox Lead inspector