

Comper Foundation Stage School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122967
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	327821
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Susan Thomas-Pounce

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 (total)	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Rosemary Knagg
Headteacher	Mrs Trish Sangwine
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2006
School address	Hertford Street Oxford OX4 3AJ
Telephone number	01865 245768
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Age group	3–5
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a large Foundation Stage school and day care centre situated in East Oxford. The setting offers Early Years Foundation Stage education on a full- and part-time basis, with extended provision of day care for children (aged 2-5). The childcare includes breakfast, after school care and holiday play schemes, attended by some of the children who attend the Nursery during the school day. The school leads East Oxford Children's Centre in partnership with East Oxford Primary School, delivering extended/family services on three main sites. The Children's Centre is also managed by the headteacher of Comper School. The Nursery school and day care were inspected, although the other aspects of children's centre provision were not. Reception-aged children in the Early Years Foundation Stage of the partner primary school, SS Mary and John, are taught on the Nursery school site. Two primary school staff are led and managed by the headteacher of Comper school. Reception provision was not inspected on this occasion, but was included in the partner school's inspection. Children attending come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. A high proportion of the children attending speak English as their second language. A small proportion of the children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These are wide-ranging, and include autistic spectrum disorders and speech and language problems.

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 Nursery school and day care centre. The robust emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development makes a very strong contribution to their outstanding personal development. Children in the day care unit also make very good progress in their personal development because of the high-quality provision for their welfare.

Many parents of children in the Nursery are delighted with the welcoming surroundings, which they say provide an effective environment for security and learning. Children make good progress because of good teaching and a well-balanced and varied curriculum. They are developing a very good appreciation of a healthy lifestyle and make the most of the freedom of space the excellent indoor and outdoor areas provide. Good hygiene routines are well established. Children behave extremely well. They cooperate very successfully with each other, taking turns. This is a very good preparation for later life. The majority are equipped with the appropriate skills for their age by the time they leave the Nursery. The children's learning in the under-3 day care unit is consistently good. Throughout the setting, children clearly enjoy coming to school. They love the welcoming and inclusive atmosphere in which they play and learn. They treat each other with respect and help each other. Attendance is good. The staff take every opportunity to reflect the wide cultural backgrounds of the children in activities, displays and visits. Children relate very well to all adults, but particularly their key worker, so they feel confident, safe and secure. Children eat and drink healthily and understand how to keep themselves safe. Children develop extremely positive attitudes to their learning and this prepares them well for the future.

Staff carry out extremely useful home visits as part of the admission process for every child. Where necessary, skilled bilingual members of staff take part in these visits, so that the fullest possible picture of each individual is put together before the child's first session. Children with learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities are identified at a very early stage, and provision matched to their needs so they achieve well. The school has excellent links with other professionals and seeks specialist advice for individuals when needed.

The headteacher has sensitively and skilfully managed changes to provision since the previous inspection. She has worked hard with the governors to coordinate the range of services to maximise the benefits for the children. She has successfully drawn together a wide range of services on two sites and formed several very successful partnerships with both local schools and those in other parts of the county. Systems for assessing and tracking children's progress are in place and adults know children's needs well. Although information about individual children's 'next steps' in their learning is shared verbally, this information is not always disseminated formally and systematically, as the school has recognised. Consequently, valuable information on children's previous learning is not always reflected in teachers' plans, and expectations of children at different levels of development are often not made clear.

The headteacher and governors lead and manage well. However, other members of the newly formed leadership team have not had the opportunity to develop their role in monitoring and evaluating provision, in order to raise achievement further. Leaders are not complacent and have identified this as a priority. The improvements made since the last inspection show that the capacity to make any necessary changes is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of assessment to consistently inform the planning of what children need to do next in their learning.
- Develop the monitoring and evaluation role of the new leadership team.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with a wide range of skills. Many enter the school with standards that are below what is expected for their age because language and social skills are weak. One of the school's successes is the way it meets children's diverse needs so that all make good progress. Well-focused support by all adults on developing children's language and social skills enables children to achieve particularly well in these areas. As a result, most children attain the standards expected for their age in all areas of learning by the time they leave the Nursery. This represents good achievement. An important factor in this good progress is the emphasis placed by staff on helping children to settle, learn how to manage themselves, and to develop their personal, social and emotional skills very well. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are not familiar with English, are identified at an early stage, sometimes in the childcare provision before they join Nursery. They make good progress because of the well-targeted extra support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Strong links with the local community reinforce children's excellent social, moral and cultural development. Children of all ages are encouraged to try and use a variety of languages. For example, a group were observed learning to say 'good morning' in Urdu and others were singing a welcome in all the home languages of the group. Qualities such as independence and the ability to work together to solve problems are preparing these children very well for the future. This is especially so in the stimulating role play areas in which they develop confidence, such as when dressing up. They choose activities sensibly, and are successfully encouraged to initiate aspects of their own learning. Children of all ages value and benefit from numerous opportunities to engage in the wide range of activities indoors and in the extensive outdoor area. They know that enjoying themselves in the fresh air and being active are good for their health. They confidently choose and organise their own activities indoors and outdoors and tidy up at the end of a session. They also contribute very well to the local community by raising funds for charity.

Quality of provision

Effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development

Grade: 2

Children's learning and development are promoted well as staff provide a wide range of well-planned, purposeful, stimulating activities. There is a good balance between those that are led by an adult and those that children choose for themselves. These activities really capture their imagination and enable them to work with sustained interest. As a result, learning is fun and so children enjoy coming to the setting. Relationships between children and staff are positive and help children to develop strong social and emotional skills. The activities in the

role play areas effectively develop children's speaking and listening skills. Key workers in the Nursery use the daily small group sessions well to foster skills across all areas of learning. However, there is inconsistency in making use of detailed assessments of children's progress to adapt daily planning and tailor activities to individual needs. Provision for children who are learning English as an additional language, and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is a particular strength. Excellent links with outside agencies provide very high levels of extra support for individual children and their parents, when required. The wealth of activities involving children in exploring local, national and international traditions and events gives them a strong understanding for their age of how other people live their lives and the part they play in their school and local community. Parents particularly value the opportunity to attend a series of language sessions with their children so they can continue the help at home.

Good links between the Nursery and the childcare (Apple and; Bartlemas) rooms encourage continuity in learning and development, leading to the use of similar systems for planning topics and assessing children's progress throughout this integrated setting. For example, in the after school care one of the children made a card and wrote a clear message with great excitement and interest. This achievement was then passed on to his teacher the next day. Children in the under-3 day-care provision and those in the wraparound care make good progress in their personal development because of the high quality of pastoral care. Arrangements for children to have a period of rest during the day reflect the safe and caring environment provided.

Effectiveness in promoting children's welfare

Grade: 1

Children's welfare is promoted very effectively and children are taught to manage themselves safely. This leads to children's outstanding personal development and well-being. Strong links with healthcare professionals ensure that families and children are helped to overcome any difficulties they may encounter. All required safeguarding procedures are in place. Relationships between adults and children are excellent and children relate particularly well to their key worker who oversees their progress and needs. Children respond well to the high expectations of good behaviour. They develop a very good level of independence, as they are encouraged to make choices about their activities. Parents and carers have regular updates about their child's learning. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are particularly well included in learning and the life of the school. Parents are most complimentary about this aspect of provision. The Peach room is very well equipped to provide a more intensive nurturing environment for children in need of additional support and care. There are excellent procedures for introducing children to the Nursery, including home visits. These help children to settle quickly and make a good start to their education. The extensive range of additional services on offer, such as the family learning group, makes an excellent contribution to children's welfare.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The well-respected headteacher has successfully led the school through an extended period of significant changes. Governors are a regular presence in school and have supported the headteacher very effectively through recent challenges. With the governors, the headteacher has worked successfully to move the Nursery and day-care provision forward since the last inspection. Self-evaluation is accurate and enables the setting to identify and prioritise areas

for development, and then to address them well. The developmental issues of assessment and the monitoring role of the leadership team have been clearly identified, and are being tackled. The inclusion of the childcare manager in the senior management team is helping to promote a consistent approach to planning and assessment and so children are well prepared when they start in the Nursery. The school's emphasis on developing social and language skills, which are identified as an area of weakness as children start school, has helped children to achieve particularly well in these areas. The school promotes community cohesion very well because it is carefully planned for and its strengths and areas for development are evaluated in depth. The diversity of cultures and ethnicity of its pupils, parents and local community are respected and valued. For example, in the Family Learning Class observed, parents learnt more about what and how their children are taught, as they sang the welcome to each other in the home languages of the group. Through these very popular sessions, parents gain a strong awareness of how best to play a part in their children's learning. The school takes every opportunity to enrich the children's understanding of different ways of life and to become accepting and tolerant of difference. Learning about the locality and places further afield, based on families' countries of origin, helps to provide outstanding community cohesion.

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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 is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do children in the EYFS 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/or disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?	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	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 effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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 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	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

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

19 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Comper Foundation Stage School, Oxford, OX4 3AJ

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. Comper Foundation Stage School is a good school and in fact some things about it are excellent. Everyone at Nursery is very keen to make it as good as it can be.

I can see why you love coming to school. There are so many fun things for you to do. I enjoyed watching you work and was very impressed by how well you behave and join in with each other. I saw you all working and playing hard in your workspaces, having lunch together quietly and sensibly, as well as playing and working hard outside. I especially enjoyed watching your activities in the huge exciting outdoor area, which is full of exciting but safe equipment. It was so kind of some of you to offer me a turn on the bars.

I agree with your parents that you go to a good school, as all the adults take excellent care of you. You already do well while you are at the Nursery but those who lead the Nursery agree with me that they could get even better at helping you. I suggested ways in which they could be even better, and the school was already thinking about them.

The teachers are going to do two things. Involve more adults in checking how well you learn and how you could improve. Even though they know each one of you very well, I have asked them to get even better at using all the things that they know about how each one of you is doing.

These will help them make sure that everyone always does as well as they can. I am sure that all the staff will continue to work hard to make the school an exciting and interesting place for you. You can do your bit by continuing with your excellent behaviour, hard work and coming to Nursery every day.

Yours faithfully

Susan Thomas-Pounce

Lead Inspector