

# Atherstone Early Years Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125484
<b>Local Authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	328341
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Hazel Callaghan

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	83
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Brian Allen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Hurst
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 May 2006
<b>School address</b>	kings Avenue Atherstone CV9 1LF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01827 713116
<b>Fax number</b>	01827 713116

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- whether teaching and the curriculum enable all children to make good progress in all areas of the curriculum, especially those children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those in the early stages of learning English
- the extent to which the Nursery is at the heart of the community and the quality of its provision for community cohesion.

Evidence was gathered from the school's assessments of children's attainment from when they start in the Nursery until they leave. There were observations of teaching, and discussions with senior leaders, staff, governors and children. Parents' responses to the Ofsted questionnaire were also analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Atherstone Nursery is at the heart of the Atherstone Early Years Centre which opened in 2006. Most children are White British. The proportion of children from minority ethnic groups is small but appears to be growing. Unemployment is below average but there is a significant proportion of low income families living in the area. A few children have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The Nursery currently operates two sessions a day.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Atherstone Early Years Centre has an extremely effective Nursery which provides an outstanding education for the children. Parents are very positive about the quality of welfare and support provided by all the staff. One parent commented, 'Atherstone Early Years is a wonderful place for children to be and play and grow.' Another wrote, 'The Nursery staff take great care of the well-being of all the children, both emotionally and physically', whilst another parent simply wrote, 'Inspirational care'. These comments are typical of a great many. It is under these qualities of excellent care and support that children settle quickly, adore coming to school and develop outstanding attitudes to their activities. As soon as they arrive and have said 'Good Morning' to their key worker, children confidently set to work. There is a buzz of busy children extremely focused on their chosen task who delight in their activities and share toys and resources with pleasure. This is especially evident down in the 'Meadow', a wild area which the children have transformed into a mass of secret pathways and hideouts. Their imagination expands with all the possibilities of adventurous play. They explore new ideas and extend their physical and social skills as they share their games and activities with others. Children's confidence, levels of concentration and their language skills all develop rapidly with the many opportunities for independent play.

In the Nursery's stimulating and exciting environment, where children feel safe and secure, they make excellent progress. Many children start in the Nursery with a narrower range of knowledge and skills than is usual for their age, especially in their language skills and personal and social development. The nurturing care of all staff gives them time to settle, to develop an awareness and interest in their surroundings, and then stimulates their motivation to learn. As a result, the large majority reach the expected levels of attainment by the time children leave to go to their next school. The personal development of many is higher than expected for their age.

Children are helped to learn and develop exceedingly well. Staff are highly effective in their teaching, knowing when to intervene, support and extend children's learning by providing a wide range of opportunities from which children can choose. Teachers and key workers are very experienced and have a good understanding of how young children learn. Skilled questioning, the modelling of new vocabulary and high levels of support encourage children's rapid development. A fantastic range of resources and a rich curriculum also extend children's opportunities for learning. The children's progress is carefully monitored and next steps planned so children naturally make good progress through their involvement in activities that engage their interest and curiosity. There is an effective balance of adult-led activities provided alongside the children's independent play that extend their enjoyment of stories, for example and a growing awareness of the purpose of writing and the natural desire to write. Each child is taught as an individual and levels of support are adapted according to their needs. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are extremely well supported. Staff work closely with all parents and each child's personal and learning needs are discussed so that careful consideration is given to how best this support and guidance is developed. The staff have identified a few children who are gifted and talented and are now rightly exploring how these children can be further extended.

Promoting children's personal, social and emotional development is the prime focus for staff. Relationships are particularly strong and staff sensitively guide children into the expected modes of behaviour and awareness of the needs of others. Children recognise that they must

respect each other's feelings and they recognise right from wrong and what is fair. They show an extremely good understanding of how to keep safe, showing an awareness of sharp edges and unsafe practices. They make positive choices when selecting their snacks and, for their age, show a very good understanding of healthy eating and the need to wash their hands regularly, especially when cooking and eating. Children are confident to make choices in their activities and by the time they leave to go on to their Reception class, children are independent autonomous learners and, as such, well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The leadership and management of the Nursery are outstanding. The excellent provision which was evident at the previous two inspections is still securely in place and exemplifies the philosophy behind the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff are not complacent and evaluate their practice, looking for ways to improve. They have continued to make improvements under the excellent leadership of the headteacher so that standards continue to rise. The headteacher is further developing the process of tracking children's attainment so that she is able to analyse overall achievement and to look for trends so that any weaknesses can be identified. The head has identified, for example, that children make relatively less progress in learning how to link sounds and letters and this is an area for further development. She has also compared the relative standards of the boys and girls, but the system in use does not easily support analysis of other groups. The governors were highly engaged in school improvement during the time of the creation of the Children's Centre but, although still well informed, are now less involved in supporting the school's work on planning for the future.

The Nursery and the Children's Centre are at the heart of the local community and provide many opportunities for families from different backgrounds to meet and work together. This is recognised by parents who appreciate the way staff go out of their way to give additional time and support. One parent commented, 'An excellent Nursery with kind, considerate and lovely staff who are supportive and helpful to both children and parents.' Children are encouraged to recognise each other's differences as well as their similarities and to respect both. They are provided with opportunities to learn about their community and make various visits such as those to the library and the fire station. In these ways, the Nursery promotes community cohesion well but it looks to do more. Based on the continuing success and development of the Nursery, it is clear that the capacity for improvement is good.

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

- Develop a system of recording children's attainment and progress that is sufficiently flexible to enable analysis of different groups of children so that staff are fully informed about their relative achievement and able to respond quickly if needed.

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## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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**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	2

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do children in the EYFS achieve?</b>	1
The standards[1] reached by learners	2
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	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	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	2
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?	2
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	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



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

7 May 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Atherstone Early Years Centre, Atherstone, CV9 1JZ

Thank you for making us so welcome and sharing your activities with us and for answering our questions when we visited you recently. We could see you were very happy at the Nursery and extremely pleased to be there. Your parents are correct in thinking that you go to a really excellent Nursery. Here are some of the things we found out.

- You make excellent progress, especially in learning how to play together happily and explaining what you think. As a result, you reach the standards that are expected of you, and sometimes better.
- You behave really well. You are polite, friendly and helpful to everyone. You have an exceptional understanding of how to keep yourselves safe and healthy. You want to do well in your work and you are prepared very well for your next school.
- You are taught extremely well and all your teachers and key workers work hard to make sure that your activities are lots of fun.
- The headteacher and all the grown-ups want you to do very well and make sure that everything in the Nursery is helping you to learn and develop successfully.
- There is an excellent partnership with your mums and dads and others who look after you. The staff look after you extremely well so you feel safe and happy.

Even though your Nursery at Atherstone Early Years Centre is excellent, there is something it can do to make it even better. We have asked the headteacher and governors to:

- keep all the information about how well you are doing in a way that it is easy to understand if anyone new needs a bit more help.

Thank you again for helping us and remember you can help to ensure your Nursery continues to be really special by continuing to work hard and helping one another.

Yours faithfully

Hazel Callaghan

Lead inspector