

Warwick Children's Centre and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125490
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	328344
Inspection dates	11 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.
The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Children's centre and nursery school
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	75
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to under 3 years	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Hodgetts
Acting headteacher	Trudy Lindsay
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2006
Date of previous childcare inspection	28 September 2006
School address	Coventry road Warwick CV34 4LJ
Telephone number	01926 492701
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Email address	admin1022@we-learn.com

Age group	2–4
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 sessions, and held meetings with governors, staff, children and parents. They observed the setting's work, and looked at policies, records of meetings, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 38 questionnaires from parents at the nursery school were received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the setting's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how effectively the setting is working to improve children's skills, particularly in reading and writing
- how well assessment information is used to plan work to meet children's individual needs
- the quality of provision for children who are vulnerable
- the impact of recent initiatives to improve the setting
- how effectively the new leadership team is promoting improvement.

Information about the school

The setting provides 80 part-time places for children aged three to four, who attend the morning or afternoon sessions in the Nursery. It provides 16 places for children aged two to three in the Nurture Playgroup for three mornings per week. A variety of family support sessions are offered on site, in a local community centre and through outreach work. Most children are from White British backgrounds. The acting headteacher was appointed in January 2009.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory children's centre and nursery school. It is improving and provides a caring and friendly environment in which to learn and play. Its main strengths are:

- the good leadership of the acting headteacher is inspiring staff and children to aim high and take the setting forward
- improved procedures for checking children's progress are leading to an increase in their rate of learning
- children's personal, social and emotional development is good and means they behave well, are polite and considerate to others
- a good range of enrichment activities enliven the curriculum and extend children's learning
- the pastoral care and support of children is good, especially for those who are vulnerable, and ensures their safety and well-being in the setting
- the setting provides a stimulating environment to develop children's learning, particularly the outdoor areas
- improved relationships with parents and carers mean they are becoming more involved in their children's learning.

The setting's self-evaluation is accurate and enables it to identify and prioritise key areas for development. This is exemplified in the way improved procedures for checking children's progress have been recently introduced. As a result, staff have a clearer picture of the skill levels of the children and this is leading to their planning being more focused on meeting their individual needs. Leadership responsibilities have been more evenly shared amongst staff, with the creation of a senior leadership team. This has improved the setting's capacity to make any necessary changes and this is now satisfactory. Leaders are working on the identified key areas to improve, which are:

- raising children's skills in reading and writing
- improving the use of assessment information to better meet the needs of individual children
- developing the skills of leaders new to their roles
- ensuring that statutory requirements in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage are met.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall performance is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate children's progress in linking sounds and letters to improve their reading and writing skills.
- Use information about children's learning to plan effectively to meet their individual needs.
- Develop the skills of senior leaders, new to their roles, to better monitor and evaluate provision and influence the setting's development.
- To fully meet the specific requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the registered person must inform OFSTED of any changes to the person(s) who is managing the early years provision (W2 Suitable People). Date for completion 19 June 2009.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

3

Children enter the setting with skills, levels and abilities that are broadly as expected for their age, though an increasing number are entering with low skills. They make satisfactory progress and, by the time they leave, work within the age expected levels across all areas of learning. This represents satisfactory achievement. Children's attainment in reading and writing has been a weaker element of their performance. This stems from them not being as adept as they might be in linking sounds and letters to identify and use words in their work. Recently introduced initiatives are beginning to increase the rate at which children make progress. However, leaders rightly acknowledge there is more to do in this aspect of children's learning to accelerate progress more quickly and raise attainment further. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable make the same progress as their peers because of the extra support they receive. During the inspection, there was no identifiable difference in the progress made by different groups of children.

Throughout the setting, children enjoy their learning. They show positive attitudes, being keen to learn and showing enthusiasm in all they do. This is particularly so in the well resourced and stimulating outdoor areas. Nursery children cooperated effectively in the role play area set out as 'Bed and Breakfast Accommodation'. They were lost in a world of their own as they tended to the needs of the 'guests' by preparing their meals and tidying the room. Nurture Playgroup children happily used a variety of wheeled toys, tunnels and climbing frames to effectively promote their physical development.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They behave well and are kind and considerate to others. They work well together and with adults, helping one another as a matter of course. They show confidence and are developing independent skills well as they make choices for themselves across the areas of

learning. They have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle, by eating well and taking exercise. They make sensible choices of food and drink water during the day as they need it. Children make a good contribution to the setting's life. They make friends quickly and learn to establish positive relationships with others. Older children help to settle new arrivals by helping them with routine tasks and showing them how to access resources. They contribute well to the wider community, such as by taking part in fundraising events for local charities. Children feel safe and secure and know that adults are there for them if they need help. They are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of their education and their future lives.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Children's attainment ¹	3
The quality of children's learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	3
How well do children achieve and enjoy their learning?	3
To what extent do children feel safe?	2
How well do children behave?	2
To what extent do children adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do children contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Children's attendance ¹	3
How well do children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

How effective is the provision?

Staff have a secure understanding of the needs of children of this age. As a result, they provide activities that are practical and often linked to children's own experiences. This motivates children to do well and they are fully engaged in their learning. There is a good balance between the adult-led activities and the ones that children choose for themselves, both indoors and outdoors. This makes a positive contribution to their development as independent learners. A weaker aspect of staff expertise has been in the promotion of children's skills in linking sounds and letters to raise their attainment in reading and writing. Recent training and the introduction of an improved system for measuring the progress that children make leads to an increase in children's rate of progress. However, this new assessment system is not securely embedded and information gained not fully used by some staff to plan activities that maximise children's progress and achievement.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is planned appropriately so that skills and knowledge can be built systematically and to make good use of the

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

setting's environment. It is enriched well by a wide range of visits that give children a variety of stimulating experiences. This is evident in the work children produced after their visit to Crackley Woods. They wrote with enthusiasm about their experiences and created a variety of maps to show where they had been. There are good links with the county music service that enable specialists to visit the setting and effectively promote children's creative talents.

Good arrangements are in place to guide and support all children in their personal development and their learning. Staff manage children extremely sensitively, particularly those who are vulnerable. A number of parents and carers said they really appreciated the kindness and support given to their children who find learning and positive emotional responses challenging.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of teaching	3
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff, governors and parents acknowledge that the acting headteacher's inspirational leadership has been at the heart of the setting's improvement. In a relatively short time, she has been the driving force behind a variety of initiatives introduced to improve children's learning. These include much clearer procedures for checking children's progress and a range of training to improve the expertise of staff, especially in the area of developing children's skills in linking sounds and letters. Staff morale has been raised and there is now a strong shared commitment and ambition to take the setting forward. Performance management is now in place and effectively links individual staff professional development needs to whole setting priorities. A senior leadership team has been established and members carry out their responsibilities diligently. They are keen to develop their skills in monitoring and evaluating provision in order to more effectively promote improvement of the setting. At the time of the inspection, Ofsted had not been notified of the changes to personnel managing the childcare provision in the recently designated Children's Centre. This is a breach of statutory requirements and requires urgent attention. Governors support the setting well and are increasing their involvement in influencing its future development.

Leaders promote community cohesion in a satisfactory way, especially within the setting and local community in which everyone is treated equally and fairly. This is reflected in the good relations evident throughout the setting and the respect adults and children show to others. Leaders have not carried out an audit of its provision to evaluate how this aspect of the setting's work can be developed further. The setting's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity is evident in the introduction of a much improved assessment system to enable it to better monitor

the progress of different groups of children. Leaders rightly see this as an important step in improving children's progress and raising achievement.

Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. They include comprehensive child protection arrangements that ensure all staff know the steps to take if they have concerns about the well-being of a child. Risk assessments are in place for activities in and around the setting and for visits. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the way their children are cared for while in the setting. They are pleased with recent developments that mean that they are becoming more involved in their children's learning. The setting has secure links with outside agencies, such as the speech and language service, to provide extra help for children with learning difficulties and for those who are vulnerable.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

All the parents and carers who responded to inspection questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive about the setting's work and the efforts of all staff. Many parents made specific comments about the improvements made to the setting since the acting headteacher arrived in January 2009. Here are some examples of the positive comments parents and carers made about the setting.

- 'I feel the school is currently very well managed. I am aware the head is not permanent but feel she has made a big impact and huge improvements.'
- 'It's a secure, friendly and caring environment that I would recommend to any parent for their child.'
- 'Warwick Nursery is a fun loving, happy and fantastic environment for my daughter. She has thoroughly enjoyed her time at the nursery and has definitely become a confident child from her early days when she was quite shy and reserved.'

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Warwick Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 38 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 132 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	2	0	0

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its children's needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the children's work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the children's attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the child; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



12 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Warwick Children's Centre and Nursery School, Warwick,
CV34 4LJ

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do. Your school is satisfactory and getting better. It helps you to make satisfactory progress in your learning.

What we found about your children's centre and nursery school

- You show a lot of enjoyment in coming to school and are keen to learn.
- It is a very friendly place in which to work and play.
- The outdoor areas are really good and provide you with lots of interesting activities to do.
- Adults look after you well and make sure you are safe, in and around school and on visits.
- You are good at making choices for yourselves.
- Your behaviour is good and you work really well with others in pairs and small groups.
- Adults in charge of the school are working hard to make further improvements and help you do even better.

What we have asked your children's centre and nursery school to do now

- Help you improve your reading and writing skills more quickly.
- Use what it knows about how well you do to help you do even better.
- Support those adults who are in charge of the school to help it improve further.

You can help your children's centre and nursery school improve further by continuing to try your best in all you do. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Melvyn Hemmings
Lead inspector

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