

# Hardmoor Early Years Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115831
<b>Local Authority</b>	Southampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	338663
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 January 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Hazel Callaghan

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.  
The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	0–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	99
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Yasmeen Hussain
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Karen Stacey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	0 April 2007
<b>School address</b>	Leaside Way Bassett Green Southampton SO16 3EP
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<b>Age group</b>	0–5
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 January 2010
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**Number of children on roll in the registered  
childcare provision****Date of last inspection of registered  
childcare provision**Not previously inspected

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors made 10 observations of varying lengths of children's learning, observed the quality of provision in the setting for children age 0-3 years as well as in the Nursery, and held meetings with governors, staff and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of reports about the school made by outside agencies, the centre improvement plan, curriculum planning, a selection of children's 'Learning Journey' booklets, records of the staff's observations and assessments, various policies and documents related to procedures for the safeguarding of children. The 87 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were scrutinised.

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

- the extent to which all children make good progress, especially the boys, those in the early stages of learning English and those children of different ethnic groups
- the quality and accuracy of assessment in all areas of the early years curriculum
- the extent to which senior leaders make accurate judgements about the school's provision and its effectiveness.

## Information about the school

Hardmoor Early Years Centre is part of the Swaything Sure Start Children's Centre and provides all-year-round education for children aged 3-5 years. It is also registered as a provider of all-day childcare for children aged 3 months to 3 years and children of 3-5 years. Extended services for families and toddlers are also provided on site each week. All aspects of this provision are managed by the school's governing body. An opportunity playgroup is also held on site each week but it is not managed by the governors and was not inspected by the team.

Children are drawn from across the city of Southampton and come from a wide variety of ethnic groups. The largest group come from White British backgrounds but almost half of the children attending the Early Years Centre do not have English as their home language. In the Nursery, an above average proportion of children have English as an additional language. The most common languages are Urdu, Punjabi and Polish. There is also an above average proportion of children attending the Nursery who have been identified as having special educational needs. The Nursery also provides six places for children identified as having a variety of specific special educational needs. The centre has recently extended its hours so that children in the Nursery can attend 15 hours each week. This has meant that all staff have had their hours and contracts changed to enable this flexible provision to be successfully introduced. The school was awarded the Flying High for Quality in the Early Years accreditation in March 2009.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

### Main findings

Hardmoor Early Years Centre is a good school that provides a stimulating environment in which all its children flourish. It has grown rapidly over the last four years and the good provision identified at the last inspection is still clearly evident. Even though many changes have been made to staff hours and their roles and responsibilities, the good quality provision has been well maintained so that the care and education provided continue to be at least good and in many areas it is outstanding. Innovative practice based on well regarded research has been introduced that is successfully prompting many aspects of children's development. The school has improved the systems for evaluating children's learning well. These now clearly influence the planning of the curriculum so that it meets children's needs very effectively. Attainment and progress have consequently both improved, with progress now judged outstanding. The site has been further improved and all areas are used well to stimulate children's learning and development. Self-evaluation is accurate and the ability of staff to take on many new challenges and to make these work is clear evidence of their excellent capacity for further improvement.

Children of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, including those with English as an additional language and from minority ethnic groups, achieve well. Those children identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities often make significant gains in their learning and development because the highly experienced staff provide very effective support that enables them to achieve particularly well. The large proportion of children with English as an additional language make good progress and their attainment is often higher than expected for their age by the time they leave the centre. These good gains are due to the excellent quality of teaching, the high quality care children receive and to the exciting range of activities provided that stimulate children's interest and desire to learn.

Strong partnerships are built with the parents and carers throughout the centre. Their trust in the staff and the support they are given are integral to children's happiness at the centre whether as babies and toddlers in the childcare facilities or in the Nursery classes. This was well exemplified in many parents' and carers' remarks, of which this was typical, 'All staff are very approachable and friendly, always willing to take the time to talk and discuss things.' Another commented, 'Every staff member I trust and have a positive relationship with. I think it is very special.'

There is a very strong ethos throughout the centre. This is led by the headteacher and espoused by all staff. Together, they are working to adjust the management structure so that it is fully in tune with the new status and opening hours of the centre. Given the many successes in improvement so far, the potential for the development of leaders'

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roles and responsibilities across all elements of the centre's work is very good. However, the changes are new and as yet mostly untried.

Safeguarding of children is of high priority and staff are diligent in their approach, with careful supervision of children at all times. Risk assessment is adequate, although staff accept it could be more probing and recorded in more detail. Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were unanimous in their recognition of the high levels of care.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure procedures for the identification and recording of possible risks and how they can be minimised are sufficiently probing.
- Make sure the effective running of the centre reflects at all times senior and middle managers' joint responsibility for children's progress and development.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

**2**

Children start in the Nursery with the full range of abilities but many have a more limited scope of experiences and knowledge than is expected for their age, especially in English and in language development. They make excellent progress, however, under the sensitive and knowledgeable skills of the key workers and the vast majority achieve extremely well from their different starting points. The staff have accurately identified, however, that children's progress in developing an awareness of sounds and letters is not as strong as other areas of development and this is a focus for improvement.

Children love coming to the Nursery and attend very regularly. They are eager to start their activities and often show exceptional levels of concentration when working alone and with the support of their key workers. All children have developed exceptional levels of independence and an ability to organise their own activities. One little boy was fully absorbed in writing letters, for example. He selected stamps he needed then made appropriate marks on the envelopes to show who they were for. Three little girls were equally absorbed by the changes in the snow as they stirred it, watching how its colour changed and how it eventually disappeared. They chatted excitedly about what was happening, making suggestions about where the snow had gone. Even though children are excited and absorbed by their own activities, they are equally positive about the adult-led tasks. One boy said, 'Oh good, small group time', as his group settled around his key worker to explore the comparative sizes of their model bears.

Children develop strong relationships with their key workers but also feel exceptionally safe and well cared for by all the adults. They know that support and help is always close by. They consequently grow in self-confidence and understand how to keep themselves safe. Children behave well and this supports their ability to concentrate. They share resources sensibly and often show spontaneous acts of kindness to each other such as helping to put on aprons for painting. Their very positive attitudes to school and the activities provided prepare them well for their next stage of learning.

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*These are the grades for children's outcomes*

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Children's attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of children's learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which children feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Children's behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Children's attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The provision across all aspects of the centre is outstanding. Pastoral care for all children is excellent and welfare arrangements extremely thorough in the Nursery, in the care sessions before and after school, and in the 0-3 care provision. Wherever the children are in the centre, they are well supervised and supported as they pursue their activities. Staff are experienced and very knowledgeable, having a very good understanding of how children of all ages develop and learn. In the babies' room, it was very evident that children were happy and well stimulated by their surroundings. Staff ensure that their needs are very well met and all routines reflect as much as is possible the routines the children have at home. Excellent communications with parents and carers, which often start in the 'Parent and Toddlers' groups, are enhanced by the home visits before children start to attend full time. In the Nursery, the range of activities is extremely well matched to children's interests and used to provide activities that stimulate their curiosity and involvement. A good range of resources in both the babies'

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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room and in the Nursery, along with daily use of the well developed outside areas, stimulate children's desire to experiment and explore, so extending their development well. Beaming faces and delight are typical responses throughout the centre.

Teachers in the Nursery are skilled at assessing where children are in their learning and, with the key workers, successfully identify their important next steps. Staff know the right moment to ask questions and suggest ways of working so that children's understanding and skills are extended. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given additional support to meet their specific learning or developmental needs. Those who are quick to learn and have particular gifts and talents are also provided with additional support that effectively extends their learning. The progress of boys has been identified as a potential concern, especially in handwriting. So, a variety of strategies have been employed that are having a very positive impact on their physical development and consequently on their dexterity and interest in writing. Many staff speak a variety of languages and this supports children in the early stages of learning English well, extending their vocabulary and understanding so they succeed in their activities.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>1</b>
	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has a very clear philosophy, which provides the drive for improvement across all aspects of the centre. Teamwork is strong and new staff are quickly part of the effective team. Continuing professional development and training is regularly completed. All staff put the children's welfare at the centre of their work and they build very strong partnerships with the families and with outside agencies. Children of all backgrounds and abilities are treated as individuals and their diverse needs met well. The community is consequently a happy and calm environment where children and families work together harmoniously. Comprehensive procedures to formally monitor all aspects of the work of the centre are carried out primarily by the headteacher.

Governors also play an important part in the monitoring of the school's effectiveness and planning for the future. As with all aspects of the school's work, the staff and governors have evaluated their provision for further promoting community cohesion and have identified aspects that can be improved. All requirements for safeguarding children are in place and at the time of the inspection carried out appropriately.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	3
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	2
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	2

## Views of parents and carers

The parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were unanimous in their support of the school. The very few concerns shown on the questionnaire were significantly outweighed by the strong positive responses. Many parents wrote in praise of the centre. Typical of many responses, both written and shared verbally by parents, were "Excellent feedback and support for me and my child, I was supported in all the developmental steps of my small child"; 'We particularly like the integrated mix of all the age groups at the day care nursery making it a more of a family environment' and 'My child is stimulated and challenged and his key worker is always very helpful with suggestions for how to encourage and help him as well as feedback on how he is doing'.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Hardmoor Early Years Centre to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 131 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	74	23	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	80	17	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	56	64	29	33	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	67	26	30	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	69	79	16	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	57	66	28	32	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	53	61	34	39	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	50	57	35	40	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	58	67	27	31	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	64	29	33	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	66	26	30	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	69	79	15	17	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	72	83	14	16	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
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

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
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.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



18 January 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Hardmoor Early Years Centre, Southampton, SO16 3EP.

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited you recently with one of my friends. I really enjoyed watching you at work and play, and chatting to you. I learned a lot about your Nursery and can see why you really enjoy coming.

I could see that you were very happy at the Nursery and do lots of exciting things in the classrooms, in the outside areas and in the woods. I was delighted to see how well you get on with each other and how well you concentrated on your activities so you make very good progress in learning lots of new things. I could also see how well all the adults look after you and the little children in Base 3.

Even though I can see that you have a good Nursery and there are many very special things about it, I have asked the adults to do two things to make it even better.

I have asked the adults to be even more careful about spotting anything that might need to be made a little safer, and for all the adults to work together and help make all the parts of the Early Years Centre even more effective and special.

Thank you again for helping me and making my time at the Nursery so enjoyable.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Callaghan.

Lead inspector.

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