

Ronald Tree Nursery School and Children's Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121782
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	340009
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Densham
Headteacher	Rosalind Parker
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2007
School address	Laburnum Crescent Kettering NN16 9PH
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Age group	3–4
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2010
Inspection number	340009

**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. One inspector focused mainly on safeguarding. About two thirds of the inspection time was spent looking at children's learning. All members of the teaching staff were observed and 16 learning sessions or part-sessions were seen. Inspectors observed the school's work and examined its policies, children's assessments, teachers' plans, communication to parents and school improvement planning. Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff and governors. Informal discussions were held with parents. The inspection team analysed 26 questionnaires from parents and carers, and others from staff.

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

- children's language and social development
- provision and children's progress in knowledge and understanding of the world
- how well teachers use assessments to plan children's learning
- the contribution the children's centre makes to families and children's development.

Information about the school

Ronald Tree Nursery School and Children's Centre is located in the northern part of Kettering. The nursery provides 30 full-time equivalent places for three- to four-year-olds. The children's centre offers day care for 30 children from three to four and a wide range of extended services to families. There is before- and after-school care for children and workshops for parents. All the children learn together. The extended services are managed by the headteacher and the governing body. The nursery and the centre serve children and families from a wide range of backgrounds; many families face challenging circumstances. Most children are White British. Very few children are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The nature of these difficulties lies mainly in the areas of communication, emotional development and speech. There is specialist provision for up to five children with hearing impairment.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Ronald Tree Nursery and Children's Centre has built on the strengths identified at the last inspection. Its overall effectiveness is now outstanding. Children make outstanding progress because of high-quality teaching and the exciting learning activities. Parents are particularly pleased with the excellent care and education provided and typically commented, 'I cannot praise the atmosphere, ethos and activities highly enough,' and, 'My child has made amazing progress'. The school operates as a harmonious community in which all children are equally valued.

Outstanding leadership and strong teamwork among the staff are at the heart of the organisation's success. An experienced headteacher provides exceptional leadership and is extremely well supported by the leadership team. Her vision of providing excellence in learning through a seamless partnership with other services is embraced by all staff and governors. There is a powerful commitment from staff to do the very best for children and their families. Self-evaluation is systematic and accurate, and highly effective action is taken to bring about improvements. Since the last inspection, provision and children's progress have improved from good to outstanding. The range of services to families has been extended. The school is very well placed to sustain its impressive track record of improvements. Governors have contributed very well to the organisation's development and success. The school has identified the need to train new governors and extend their involvement in monitoring the effectiveness of the wider services.

Children enter the setting with knowledge and skills below those expected for their age. A considerable proportion enter with low language and social skills. Teachers, practitioners and assistants work very well together for the benefit of all children. Great emphasis is placed on developing language skills and children make rapid gains in this area as a result. Children make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of outstanding attention to welfare and the high quality relationships between adults and pupils. They grow in confidence and feel extremely safe and secure. Assessment information is used very well to tailor activities to children's different needs and so all groups of children thrive. Provision for developing knowledge and understanding of the world and children's progress in this area have improved since the last inspection and are now outstanding. The children's centre successfully supports families. Strong partnerships with other agencies are used to great effect in support of children's learning and development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide training for new governors and extend the governors' involvement in the

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monitoring of the wider services.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

Children's achievement is outstanding and they thoroughly enjoy their learning. They make exceptionally good progress from their starting points and by the end of the Nursery, attainment is above that expected for their age.

Children make rapid progress in communication and language skills because adults promote speaking and listening through all activities. They love books and listen to stories attentively and with interest. They identify letters and their sounds. During the inspection, children bought fresh fruit and vegetables in the 'role play' shop. They knew items such as carrots, potatoes and peppers and acquired new knowledge about avocados, parsnips and mangoes. In constructing a large puzzle, children named their favourite fruits such as oranges, pineapple and bananas. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very well to support learning. For example, using a computer program, children identified two-dimensional shapes such as triangles, squares and circles. Mouse skills were used well to create attractive patterns using the different coloured shapes. Children confidently used digital cameras to record their work. A small group had great fun in constructing and gluing model houses from a range of reclaimed materials. Others made simple models from a number of appealing construction kits.

Children with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties receive well targeted support and make rapid progress. The strong emphasis on language work enables children who are learning English as a new language to make exceptional progress. The exciting activities on offer and the high-quality teaching enable both boys and girls to perform exceptionally well. Effective planning and imaginative teaching ensure that more-able children are challenged and extended.

Children feel extremely safe and secure because of the high-quality relationships established with very caring staff. They enjoy healthy snacks and lunches. Children know that fresh fruit and vegetables are good for you and participate enthusiastically in regular exercise. Inspectors found the children considerate and friendly as they learnt and played together. The youngest children have settled very well into daily routines and are already taking considerable responsibility for their learning. High expectations from adults and excellent relationships lead to exemplary conduct. Through celebrating festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year, children are developing an appreciation and very good understanding of different cultures and faiths. Outstanding progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, and exceptionally well-developed personal and social skills, prepare children extremely well for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers, early years practitioners and assistants from the nursery and the children's centre work extremely well together in planning and providing stimulating learning activities. Assessment has been strengthened since the last inspection to provide a clear overview of each child's attainment and progress. This information is used very effectively to plan the next steps of children's learning. They benefit greatly from the high ratio of adults to children. There is a very good balance between adult-led activities and those chosen by children. Children are given plenty of opportunities to be creative, explore, and work independently. Indoor and outdoor areas and a wide range of high-quality resources are used to promote learning. Children's learning is further enhanced by visits to art galleries, a garden centre, farms, parks and the zoo.

First-rate induction procedures enable children to settle quickly and thrive. Provision for children with special educational needs and/or a disability including hearing impairment is outstanding. The extremely well coordinated support for children and families with particular needs is a real strength of the school. Workshops such as 'positive parenting' and 'language and play for parents' are successfully helping parents to support their children's learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers are successfully promoting excellent provision and outstanding outcomes for children with the full support of a highly committed staff team. Excellence, strong partnerships and continuous improvement are embedded in the school's ambition and aims. The outstanding partnerships forged with parents and carers and a wide range of agencies contribute considerably to the organisation's success. The headteacher, children's centre manager, childcare manager, office manager, nursery teacher and children's centre teacher are all highly effective in their roles. Expertise among the senior leadership team is fully utilised. All children and families are highly valued and have full and equal access to the outstanding provision and services offered. The setting is highly inclusive and rigorously tackles discrimination.

Through regular and focused visits, governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths. They have provided considerable support in the development of the children's centre. Governors hold the nursery and children's centre to account by providing constructive challenge. All statutory requirements are met and considerable emphasis is placed on safeguarding. Policies and practice to protect and safeguard children are robust, simple and highly effective. All staff are very well trained in this area and safe practices are promoted extremely well through the curriculum.

Community cohesion is promoted exceptionally well and the school has a very clear understanding of the community it serves. The setting is at the heart of the local community. The curriculum and learning activities are highly effective in promoting children's knowledge and understanding of different cultures and faiths. Family events such as 'Circus Fun' and the 'Ugly Bug Carnival' make an excellent contribution to community cohesion and parental partnerships.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1 1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1

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	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

About a quarter of the parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. All the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are happy with their child's experience at the school. They are particularly pleased with the sense of enjoyment, how the school keeps children safe, the teaching, leadership and promotion of healthy lifestyles. The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Ronald Tree Nursery School and Children's 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 26 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 90 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	77	6	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	58	11	42	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	8	31	17	65	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	42	15	58	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	50	13	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	38	16	62	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	50	13	50	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)	9	35	14	54	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	35	17	65	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	46	13	50	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	38	15	58	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	58	11	42	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	65	9	35	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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



4 February 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Ronald Tree Nursery School, Kettering, NN16 9PH.

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school - we think it's super! We had a great time and would like to tell you what we found.

These are the things we think your school does really well.

You love learning.

The school is a lovely, welcoming place to learn in.

Brilliant teaching helps you to make excellent progress.

You behave really well and get on extremely well with others.

The activities you do at school are exciting and fun.

You know how to be healthy and fit.

You feel very safe because the adults look after you very carefully.

Your headteacher and the people who help her do a great job of running your school.

The centre provides really good help for your families.

We have asked the headteacher and governors to do just one thing to make the school even better.

Train new governors and make sure they check how well things are working.

Last of all, thank you once again for all your help. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead inspector

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