

Pen Green Nursery School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 131232 |
| Local Authority | Northamptonshire |
| Inspection number | 341115 |
| Inspection dates | 7–8 December 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Ruth Frith |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Nursery |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3–4 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 104 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Councillor Mark Pengelly |
| Headteacher | Mrs Heather Donoyou |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5 July 2007 |
| School address | Pen Green Lane Corby Northamptonshire |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven part sessions, held meetings with parents, governors and staff, and talked to children. They observed the nursery's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation which included the analysis of children's progress, session plans, the nursery's improvement plan, policies and the children's 'celebration of achievement' folders. In addition, the questionnaires returned by 60 parents and 33 members of staff were analysed and their comments taken into account.

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

- How children use information and communication technology to support their learning.
- The effectiveness of partnerships with parents and carers in order to support their children's learning and progress.
- The effectiveness of the nursery in promoting community cohesion and evaluating the impact of its work in this area.

Information about the school

Pen Green Nursery is at the heart of a fully integrated multi-agency children's centre. The nursery provides 80 full-time equivalent places for three-to four-year-olds. The focus for this inspection was for children aged three to four. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above that usually seen. A small minority of pupils are from a growing range of minority ethnic groups. A few children are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. A very small number of children come from the Traveller community. Thirty-eight percent of children are eligible for free school meals. The Nursery has gained the Healthy Schools Standard.

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

This is an outstanding nursery where the excellent care for each child lies at the heart of its work. Children flourish within this friendly and supportive environment in which opportunities and experiences are provided that thoroughly stimulate their interests.. Exceptional relationships are made with parents and carers, which help them to become genuine partners in their children's learning. Comments such as, 'I cannot fault the staff or its services here. It's safe and fun for children and their families. I am a very happy mummy and my child is very happy', reflect this well. It is clear that children, staff, parents and governors thoroughly enjoy being part of the nursery community.

The nursery's success stems from the inspirational leadership and management by senior staff which are clearly focused on promoting children's personal, social and emotional development, and raising standards in all other areas of learning. Senior managers show outstanding commitment to the children, their families and the local community and are instrumental in maintaining the strong family ethos. They make a considerable contribution to promoting community cohesion within the nursery and beyond. An exceptional lead is given to colleagues who, in turn, work as a strong team sharing a sense of purpose and vision. Due to outstanding induction procedures children settle very quickly and develop excellent attitudes to learning. This helps to create a calm and harmonious atmosphere. Children receive outstanding care, guidance and support. The support for those children with special educational needs and/or difficulties is exceptionally good.

Children achieve exceptionally well and make excellent progress across all areas of learning, but particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Since the last inspection, children have been given more opportunities to use information and communication technology. They now confidently work through programs independently, use the interactive whiteboards and take photographs using a computer with a camera. By the time they leave the nursery, children are working at levels generally above those usually seen. They become creative, independent and confident learners and their personal, social and emotional development is well above that usually seen. Whilst children's mathematical development is being extended well across all areas, there is scope to improve further their mathematical problem-solving skills. Successful strategies promote equality of opportunity and meet the learning needs of all children. Staff are particularly effective in accelerating the achievement of boys who frequently start nursery with skills and understanding below that of the girls.

The teaching is excellent and children respond enthusiastically to the challenges set. Staff are particularly effective at creating a relaxed but challenging learning environment where children are expected to do their best. The first-rate systems to check how well

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children are doing and the staff's thorough understanding of children's needs and interests ensure that activities are pitched at the correct level. Because of this, children become confident learners and are proud of what they do. Those learning to speak English as an additional language are supported very well and quickly develop the confidence and skills to talk to others.

The strong ethos creates an environment where children feel happy and safe. They develop a keen spiritual awareness through many areas of play and through thinking about themselves and their place within the world. Children make a strong contribution to the community through their excellent behaviour and respect for others. Their cultural education is developed particularly well as they discover ways of life and beliefs different from their own.

There are effective systems for checking how well the nursery is doing and identifying what it could do better. These reflect the consistent drive for improvement and indicate an excellent capacity for sustained improvement. Those in charge have exceptionally high aspirations and expectations of what children can do. The nursery's self-evaluation is regular, robust and accurate. Support for staff and a regular review of teaching has helped to maintain excellent learning and progress. The governors' work is outstanding. Governors become very knowledgeable through close involvement with the nursery on a day-to-day basis and through taking part in research projects which give them great insight into the development of children and how their needs are met. Staff and governors manage the nursery's resources well to provide outstanding value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress children make in their mathematical development by:
 - providing more opportunities for them to apply their problem-solving skills to a broader range of mathematics tasks
 - improving their investigative and reasoning skills through more challenging problem-solving activities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

Children's starting points are frequently well below those usually seen in children of this age, particularly in the areas of problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy. Their outstanding progress means that by the time they leave, usually they are working above the levels expected of four-year-olds. Children's highly effective personal, social and emotional development helps to form a very good base for their excellent learning. Children display high levels of involvement in activities. They are interested, excited and motivated to learn. They show increasing confidence, feel safe and secure and form good relationships with adults and other children. Children show care and concern for others, living things and the environment.

Staff place a priority on developing children's communication, language and literacy skills through never missing an opportunity to encourage conversation. Children respond

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very well by speaking confidently to others and using language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences. They listen to, and join in with, stories enthusiastically. Children show an interest in numbers, shape and space and are beginning to solve problems, although tasks could sometimes be more varied and demanding. They are keen to investigate and explore, are very successful in using information and communication technology, and show much interest in the world in which they live. Their physical development is encouraged well so that they display good control when running, climbing and balancing. Children's creative skills are high. They use a range of tools and materials with confidence. Due to very effective care and support, children from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, those speaking English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress exceptionally well.

Opportunities are provided for children to reflect on themselves and others so they become very aware of the common set of values and the respect given to them. Consequently, in return, they show respect for others, the nursery resources and the environment. Strengths in children's moral and social development are reflected in their exemplary behaviour and positive and polite attitudes to others. Children are beginning to acknowledge differences between the way people dress and how festivals such as Christmas and Diwali are celebrated. A visit to a local Traveller site to celebrate a child's birthday gave them a glimpse into a different way of living. Children thoroughly enjoy coming to nursery and show much interest and enjoyment in their learning. Children know their views and ideas are taken seriously and make a major contribution to what they will learn and do. They like to take on responsibilities and enjoy working together. Children trust adults and feel very safe in the nursery. They know they will be comforted if they have a bump or feel sad. Children develop excellent personal qualities such as working in groups and taking turns and these make a very effective contribution to the successful transfer of children to school.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

| | |
|--|----------|
| 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 |

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

| 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 | |
| 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 Taking into account: Children's attendance ¹ | 1 |
| | 2 |
| The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is particularly effective in ensuring that children enjoy their time in the nursery and are motivated to learn. The excellent relationships between staff and children, and clear routines and procedures help to create a calm environment where children are ready to have adventures and experiment. Staff have very high levels of understanding in relation to how young children learn and use this well to plan activities which are stimulating and meet children's needs and interests. Expectations are high as staff see no limit to what children can achieve and children develop high levels of independence. All staff work very well together and their consistent approach helps children to feel safe and secure. Because staff know the children so well they are very skilled in providing additional challenge or support at exactly the correct moment. Consequently, children at all levels progress at a similarly high rate. The key worker system works very effectively. It ensures that children have a particularly strong relationship with a member of staff and also provides families with a main point of contact.

The curriculum is exceptionally well-organised and provides a wide range of learning opportunities which sustain children's interests and ensure their well-being. A key strength is the way in which staff identify the children's interests and skills through observations, talking with the children and their parents and use this to plan the next steps in learning. As one parent said, 'The nursery is free-flow and they don't get set things'. Activities are challenging, frequently changing and fun. The indoor and outside environments provide plenty of opportunities to explore and investigate so children are encouraged to develop their imagination and creativity. Resources and equipment are of an exceptionally high quality. Success in gaining Healthy Schools Standard reflects good provision which develops children's understanding of how to live healthy, active lives. Those children who stay to lunch also receive high quality food and the experience of eating in a stimulating family environment.

Excellent attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support and there is exemplary practice in the way staff care for the more vulnerable children. Staff work tirelessly with families, children and a range of agencies both in the children's centre and beyond to sustain children's excellent achievement and well-being. Outstanding links with parents ensure that they understand how staff are supporting their child's learning and are able to take part in the process. One parent wrote in the questionnaire,

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'I regularly receive DVDs of my child being busy at nursery. This is an excellent way for me to see what he does.' Exceptionally good links with the local primary school ensure that pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|---|----------|
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| 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?

All leaders and managers are ambitious for the nursery, well-motivated and committed to driving improvement. They are focused on appropriate priorities and share a common vision for improvement with all staff. The nursery has strong links with the 'Research, Development and Training Base', which is situated in the children's centre. The staff use the expertise within the base to extend their understanding of how young children learn and how their practice can be improved. A key feature of the nursery is that leaders encourage staff to be innovative, develop their practice and thereby contribute to a continuous cycle of improvement. This helps to make the nursery an exciting place in which to work. Staff know their skills and expertise are valued and staff morale is extremely high. Procedures to protect children and keep them safe are excellent. Staff know which children are at risk and give priority to ensuring their welfare. They work exceptionally well with other key agencies. Staff are also fully aware of the groups of children who may be subject to discrimination or fall behind with their learning. They provide excellent support and promote equality of opportunity extremely well. Consequently, these children do as well as others. The nursery strives to promote community cohesion and the successful impact of their work with a wide range of community groups and with those further afield both nationally and internationally can clearly be seen. The nursery, within the overall context of the Children's Centre, is seen by the community as a place of quality provision which welcomes them to participate fully in their own and their children's learning.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|---|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 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 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 |
| 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

A high proportion of parents and carers completed the questionnaires and they were overwhelmingly positive about the nursery and what it provides. They clearly agree that their children enjoy nursery and that staff keep the children safe. One or two parents have concerns about the amount of information they receive on their children's progress and how staff deal with unacceptable behaviour. However, the inspection found that many opportunities were provided to talk about children's progress and look at their achievements. Excellent behaviour was encouraged by all staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Pen Green Nursery School 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 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 104 children registered at the school aged 3-4 years.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 53 | 88 | 7 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 49 | 82 | 11 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 48 | 80 | 11 | 18 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 48 | 80 | 12 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 47 | 78 | 13 | 22 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 48 | 80 | 12 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 44 | 73 | 15 | 25 | 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) | 39 | 65 | 20 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 46 | 77 | 14 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 40 | 67 | 18 | 30 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 44 | 73 | 16 | 27 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 44 | 73 | 16 | 27 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 51 | 50 | 51 | 50 | 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.



10 December 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Pen Green Nursery School, Corby NN17 1BJ

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I recently visited your nursery. I really enjoyed talking to you and looking at what you were doing. Lots of you told me how much you like being there and I can see why. There are so many exciting things for you to do and all the grown ups help you to learn. You also help to make learning fun by telling the grown ups what you are interested in and what you like to do. All of you do fantastically well so are ready to go to big school when the time comes. I like the way you enjoy working with each other. You are kind and behave exceptionally well.

Congratulations! Everyone looks after you very well so you feel really safe and know who to go to if you feel unhappy or poorly. You understand what you need to do to stay fit and healthy. I love the way you work and play outside. It looks such fun.

I agree with staff and your parents and think Pen Green Nursery is excellent. Just before I left I asked the grown ups to help you to get even better at solving problems, particularly when you are counting, looking at numbers and patterns, and playing with shapes.

I know you will continue to enjoy being at nursery and wish you well.

Have fun!

Ruth Frith

Lead inspector

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