

Caverstede Early Years Centre Nursery School

Caverstede Road, Walton, Peterborough, PE4 6EX

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Two-year-olds and three-year-olds make outstanding progress in their early reading and mathematics.
- Teaching is outstanding and staff are highly skilled in promoting children's learning.
- The school provides excellent support for disabled children and those who have special educational needs. As a result, these children make outstanding progress.
- Classrooms provide children with a high quality learning environment. The school gives a great deal of careful thought to its choice of materials and equipment to support children's learning and play.
- The outdoor area contributes a great deal to children's learning and development. Staff use the woodland garden very imaginatively to give children magical learning experiences.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding and children develop excellent attitudes to learning. They are able to concentrate for very long periods of time and develop into confident, independent learners.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have built on the many strengths in teaching and children's achievement found at the last inspection. They are committed to excellence and have made sure the school has remained outstanding over a number of years.
- The school has just begun to use the filming of its best teaching as a way of increasing the amount of teaching that is outstanding and to spread its influence more widely.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 15 lessons and sessions where teachers, key workers and teaching assistants led activities for groups of children. She also observed activities which children chose for themselves and looked at lunchtime arrangements.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and assistant headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, and a telephone discussion took place with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 55 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 32 questionnaires completed by members of staff.
- The inspector looked at the school's work and at documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, its development plan, and information relating to safeguarding. She looked at records of children's attainment and progress and at samples of their work, including the learning journals of some children who left in July 2013.

Inspection team

Margaret Goodchild, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is the only state-funded nursery in Peterborough and provides for children from across the city.
- It offers early funded places for two-year-olds and 40 places for disabled children and those who have special educational needs, including children with severe and complex needs who go on to special school.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs supported through early action is, therefore, well above average. The proportion supported through early action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above average.
- An average proportion of children come from minority ethnic backgrounds. A small minority speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of children who are known to be eligible for subsidised school meals is above average.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher provide training for staff in other Early Years Foundation Stage settings within the local authority and contribute to courses at Cambridge University Faculty of Education.
- The school shares the same building as Caverstede Early Years Children's Centre which is led by the headteacher and governing body but inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching and expand the influence of the school by:
 - developing the use of filming of the school's frequently exemplary teaching so that all adults, can clearly see what makes teaching outstanding and know how to refine the way they talk to children about their learning
 - making greater use of this approach as a way of communicating the school's work to more Early Years Foundation Stage settings.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children join the school with attainment that is typically well below national expectations for their age. The communication skills of two-year-olds and the mathematical skills of children who join at the age of three are especially low.
- All groups of children make outstanding progress, including those known to be eligible for subsidised school meals, those of minority ethnic heritage and those who speak English as an additional language. By the time they leave, children's attainment is at least typical of that seen in this age-group, with some working at higher levels.
- The rapid progress that children make in their learning and personal development prepares them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education, and the school makes sure that all children, including those receiving subsidised meals or who are at an early stage of learning English, are well-supported and given every opportunity to progress and develop.
- The school provides a high level of challenge for more-able children, with learning opportunities that are matched closely to the next stage of their development. As a result, they flourish and make exceptionally good progress, becoming deeply involved in learning activities.
- Children make outstanding progress in developing their language and communication skills. The detailed way in which staff talk to the children about what they are doing throughout the day does much to expand their speaking and listening skills, and extends their vocabulary.
- The outstanding outdoor area provides excellent opportunities for children to develop their physical skills. They develop control and co-ordination through gardening, balancing, climbing and jumping on the trampoline. They develop 'forest skills' in the woodland garden, whittling wood, sawing and hammering, manipulating and combining materials in various ways, as well as learning a great deal about nature and wildlife.
- Children make excellent progress in developing the skills needed in writing through the many opportunities they have to develop fine control of their hands. For example, on a daily basis, they use a variety of tools and they work with real clay. They have many opportunities to make marks and more-able older children learn to write a series of words. For example, a child produced a book of his own, based on the story of *The Hungry Caterpillar*, combining words and drawings.
- Children very much enjoy stories and, at this early stage in the year, they are learning about the sound at the beginning of words as part of their knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make). Children quickly come to recognise their names and by the time they leave, more-able children read simple words. During the inspection, a three-year-old correctly chose the plastic letters to form her name then independently wrote her name beneath it. In a lengthy conversation with an adult about letter shapes, she revealed an understanding of how 'p' and 'd' and the numbers six and nine are 'the same' when turned around.
- As part of everyday activities, children learn to count, to recognise numbers and develop their mathematical thinking. They have excellent opportunities to measure and experiment with quantities, and to find out about the properties of different shapes as they build complex structures.

- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress and benefit enormously from the emphasis on learning through sensory experience. Close partnership with local special schools, therapists and other agencies, as well as their parents, makes sure that support is matched closely to children's individual needs.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because teachers are extremely well informed about how young children develop, and they plan activities very carefully to match each child's interests and the next steps in their learning.
- Activities inside and out are imaginative and motivate children so that they want to learn. Adults, including teaching assistants, provide children with excellent opportunities to learn through discovery and exploring with their senses. This instils in children a joy of learning and a thirst for knowledge.
- Children benefit greatly from the opportunity to work in very small groups with an adult. An outstanding feature of the school's work is the way teachers talk to children and question them about what they are experiencing. By providing words to match children's experience, staff extend children's communication skills and rapidly develop their vocabulary.
- Learning resources (the toys, books and equipment that children use) have been chosen with an exceptional level of care. For example, the high quality wooden blocks of different sizes enable children to learn a great deal about the properties of geometric shapes. The measuring equipment that children use when playing with water and sand provides them with many learning opportunities and develops their thinking.
- Teachers check thoroughly what children can do when they join the school and make use of information from parents about their learning at home. Key workers regularly observe children's learning and carefully record their attainment and progress, then use this information in planning future activities. Parents are kept very well informed about how to support learning at home.
- Most of the strengths found in outstanding teaching are also present where teaching is good. The main difference in good teaching is that staff do not talk to children in as much depth about their learning as teachers do in the best teaching. As a result, children's language development and thinking are not promoted quite so well, though they still make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children learn and play in a calm yet stimulating environment. Behaviour is outstanding because the staff have high expectations, establish clear routines and communicate these very effectively to the children. Parents agree that behaviour is a strength and records confirm that it is managed exceptionally well.
- Children develop excellent attitudes to learning and respond with great enthusiasm to all that the school has to offer. They become skilled in working with one another as well as developing a high level of independence, readily selecting equipment for themselves and learning through investigation.
- Children become deeply involved in activities, often concentrating for very long periods of time. For example, a group of children worked with an adult for much of the morning, making telescopes. Other children showed complete concentration for long periods of time playing with

building blocks in the outdoor area and making mud pies in the woodland garden.

- Children play harmoniously together and relationships are very positive, with no hint of discrimination. They learn to be kind to one another and the school has very effective systems for dealing with the slightest hint of bullying. Children feel very safe and learn how to manage risks for themselves, for example, when using equipment such as hammers and saws and when climbing in the outdoor area.
- Lunchtimes make an exceptional contribution to children's social development. Children sit with their key worker at tables laid with china crockery and set out with their place names. They help to carry the nutritious food to the tables and at lunch and snack time, develop independence by pouring their own drinks and cutting up fruit.
- Children are very happy and thoroughly enjoy their time in the school. Staff work closely with parents to avoid absence and most children come to school very regularly.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Senior leaders and the governing body are committed to maintaining excellence and have succeeded in doing so over a number of years. Attention to detail is exemplary. Leaders have high expectations and communicate these clearly to the staff. They are always looking for ways of improving the school and plan in detail for its further development.
 - Leaders carefully check the quality of teaching and provide staff with helpful guidance on their leadership and effectiveness. Many staff are very experienced and all are well qualified. They have excellent opportunities to develop their work through training and some have travelled abroad to observe best practice. The staff are highly motivated and teamwork is strong.
 - The school provides a wide range of learning opportunities that promote children's personal and academic development exceptionally well and help children develop excellent attitudes to their learning. Careful attention is paid to the quality of children's experiences across the areas of learning, and all classes spend a day each week in the woodland garden. The combination of high quality learning experiences, the way in which children are valued as individuals and listened to does much to support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - The local authority has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness and has provided it with valuable support. This has included supporting leaders in evaluating the school's effectiveness and in analysing information about children's attainment and progress.
 - Training provided for other Early Years Foundation Stage settings is very well received and the school has begun to film aspects of its work. It is at an early stage in using filming to capture the key features of outstanding teaching for use within the nursery or as a means of extending its influence beyond the local area.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body has a very thorough knowledge of the school's work and makes a significant contribution to its development.
 - Governors have a clear knowledge of data and use this to challenge leaders about the school's effectiveness. They gather information for themselves about the quality of teaching. They make sure that any increase in teachers' salaries is linked to their performance and are clear in their expectations, saying, 'Being good here won't get you a pay rise'.
 - Governors keep close control on the school's budget and plan ahead carefully to make sure

spending matches improvement priorities.

- The governing body ensures that there are rigorous systems in place to keep children safe.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	110599
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	425186

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Clarke
Headteacher	Marilyn James
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2010
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