

Caverstede Early Years Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110599
Local Authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	356778
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Lynne Blakelock

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	LA Nursery
Age range of pupils	2–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	141
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Keith Warren
Headteacher	Marilyn James
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who observed the four teachers over eight lessons. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and a group of parents. Several groups of children were spoken to. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation, including the safeguarding policy, risk assessments and the children's personalised learning plans. An analysis was made of the school's information about the children's achievements. Questionnaires from 52 parents and carers and 29 staff were analysed.

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

- To what extent is the Nursery, through its provision, enabling boys as well as girls, to achieve their potential?
- How effective is the quality of recording of what children say about their learning used in planning their next steps?
- To what extent do partnerships with parents and carers facilitate children's learning and development?

Information about the school

The school is situated in the Walton area of the city. Together with the children's centre, which is inspected separately, it provides a full range of extended services. The large majority of children who attend are White British. Twenty five per cent have special educational needs and/or disabilities, covering a wide range of complex learning and behavioural issues, which is above average. A very small minority speak English as an additional language, of which a few are at the early stages of speaking English.

The school was awarded National Healthy Schools status in 2009. It has been re-accredited with Investors in People Bronze status and the Peterborough Inclusion Mark. In 2010, it achieved the Intermediate International Schools Award and Eco Schools Bronze Award. The school is part of the Voyager School cluster. It works closely with the local primary schools.

In 2009, the acting headteacher was appointed as permanent headteacher.

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 school which provides the children with an excellent quality of education. They are prepared exceptionally well for the next stage of their learning because the school promotes both their academic and personal development very effectively through high-quality provision. The starting point for its success is strong, committed leadership at all levels, including governance. Based on an excellent knowledge and understanding of the school's performance, senior leaders demonstrate the school's exceptional capacity to move further forward.

A major factor in its continued success is that learning is personally planned for each child. Activities also invariably capture children's imaginations because they are planned around experiences that they can relate to and in which they are interested. They extend children's learning across a range of skills, both inside, and through the exceptional environment provided by the outdoor provision. As a result, learning is very broad. The school promotes the children's cultural and multicultural awareness although there is not as clear a structure to this as there is to other aspects of learning, to ensure that provision builds on children's existing awareness. The progress of both boys and girls and their achievement are excellent because teaching methods, the learning environment especially the outside space, engage both sexes equally effectively. They learn by doing and through discovery which further stimulates their learning. The development of children's speaking and listening skills is the focus of all learning. Although girls' levels of speaking and listening skills are generally a little higher than the boys' by the end of Nursery, the progress of both groups from their starting points is equally good. The emphasis on literacy in promoting learning across all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage is central to planning. As a result, questioning by the staff since the last inspection has become far more focused on the purpose of the children's learning. Recording of what they have said, as well as experienced, is extremely thorough and always forms the basis for planning the children's next steps in their learning.

A great deal is expected of the children, encouraging their excellent behaviour and contribution, within excellent care and welfare systems. The staff understand the crucial role that parents and carers play in the security and happiness of the children. Consequently, the school has excellent procedures in place to communicate with parents and carers and to seek their views. The inclusive nature of the school is exemplified in its sensitivity towards children's individual circumstances and the provision put in place. As a result, all parents and carers can be involved in, and have the information and skills, to support their children's learning and personal

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development. In return, many see the school as supporting the whole family.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide a greater structure for developing children's cultural and multicultural awareness of the world so that they have a broader understanding of the beliefs and lifestyles of other people.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

The large majority of children start the school with knowledge and skills that are broadly in line with national expectations for their age but this varies from year to year. Children's creative development and their emotional skills are generally below average. Both boys and girls make excellent progress because learning methods engage them fully so that they want to learn more. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those from minority ethnic groups and children who speak English as an additional language also make exceptional progress. Individual education plans focus very accurately on developing specific skills. By the time that they leave, the school's evidence and inspection findings show that the attainment of the large majority of children is above average and for some well above. Most children show a good range of skills: such as being able to make simple statements, recognise their name and try to write it, count up to and sometimes past ten. Children have made significant progress in their creative development. For example, a child made excellent progress during the inspection through experimenting with wood and by the end of a very focused and challenging one-to-one activity, was managing the vice and hacksaw confidently and making independent choices about the size of nails to use. Other activities also promote a range of skills. A group of four children extended their speaking and listening skills, their imagination, physical skills and their personal development very well, through a story about the zoo and the actions of the animals.

The children play considerably within a very secure, caring and happy environment. Most children cannot wait to start learning each day and attend very regularly. Healthy and safe practices are reinforced through the sessions, justifying the school's Healthy Schools status. The children can explain, for example, why it is important to wash their hands before they eat. They are proud to show that they can take responsibility and are diligent, for example, in registering themselves and showing that they can recognise their names. Lunch time is an excellent social and learning occasion where the children sit with others and staff to eat, practise their table manners and talk with others. Children are sensitive to the needs of others, as seen in their enthusiasm for fund-raising. There are many opportunities for children to reflect on and explore the world around them. However, although they find out about other countries and their characteristics, there is not a clear structure to build their awareness and understanding of other cultures and their lifestyles. Children's

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good concentration, curiosity about the world and keenness to work independently, together with their above average attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, ensure that they are outstandingly well prepared for primary 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
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	2

How effective is the provision?

The learning environment is welcoming and vibrant, promoting learning and enjoyment very effectively. Together with consistently good and often outstanding teaching, it leads to children's exceptional progress over time. Careful planning, based on detailed monitoring of children's learning, results in activities that challenge all children well. The inclusiveness of the Nursery school is demonstrated in the identification of those children who have, for example, a specific gift or talent so that all can reach their potential. The staff encourage further learning through focused questioning, but it is the many opportunities for children to learn independently that drives their progress. Assessment of their learning is recorded in great detail, together with photographs. A major strength of this is the accessibility of the records to the children and their parents and carers, acting both as reminders of what they have learnt and pointers of the next steps in their development.

Excellent planning is a significant factor in children's outstanding achievement and great enjoyment of learning. There are so many opportunities for children to be challenged in what they do and to develop a love of learning. Specialist provision for

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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those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, for example, encourages their rapid progress. The backgrounds and cultures, including the languages of the children, are taken fully into account in planning so that they can reach their potential. Personal development opportunities run through all playing and learning and are integral to planning. Stories, for example, often have a moral as well as enabling children to revisit other learning and to extend it. The outdoor area is used fully as an extension to the indoor classrooms. The very wide range of resources and activities, such as wood whittling, promote many different aspects of children’s development and encourage them to take responsibility for the environment. Regular visits provide reinforcement and extension to learning, bringing considerable excitement into children’s experiences.

All children are cared for extremely well, within the fully integrated provision of education, care and extended services. The breakfast club, for example, provides a nutritious start to the day and an early start to play. Comprehensive and personalised arrangements are in place to prepare children when they join the school, and parents and carers say that the excellent links with primary schools, including the Voyager cluster, make transition a positive experience for their children. Key persons are fundamental to children’s quick settling into the Nursery. The children trust them and are confident in their care. Those whose circumstances make them vulnerable or who find some aspects of learning difficult are supported exceptionally well. Attendance is monitored closely and parents and carers are supported in order for them to maximise their children’s attendance. Very effective use is made of a range of agencies for those children who will benefit from specialist support.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	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?

The headteacher’s strong vision, ambition and drive are shared and supported by the staff so that there is a very clear direction and purpose. The staff are valued and involved in decision-making about the school’s work. Thorough monitoring, coupled with the staff’s very secure understanding of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, drive the setting ever forward. An example is the rapid progress that the children are making in their creative development. The children’s needs come first in every aspect of planning and their

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excellent progress owes much to the dedicated input of key workers. This leads to excellent equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination for all groups of learners. Together with a broad range of partners with whom the school works very closely, children are empowered to reach their potential in their learning and well-being. In particular, the provision offered by the children’s centre is far-reaching and complements the work of the school. Parents and carers, learn from workshops and parents forums, how to support their children’s learning, particularly in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. Such partnerships contribute to the school’s good promotion of community cohesion, especially within the locality. The school has good safeguarding procedures which are reviewed regularly and thoroughly. This forms part of the work of the effective and well-led governing body whose members make a significant contribution to the success of the school. They regularly challenge its work, within a supportive ethos, and because they know the school so well are key players in influencing its future direction.

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	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are extremely supportive of all aspects of the school’s work. They commented particularly on the excellent promotion of children’s independence and the outstanding quality of care. One parent or carer wrote, ‘My son has developed in all areas more than I could have hoped for, due to the school knowing his needs and planning for them so effectively.’ Another expressed her amazement at how full of assessments her child’s record of achievement is, saying, ‘The long observation records and post-it notes

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build up a very accurate picture of my child's current interests and abilities.' Several parents and carers spoke of the excellent impact the school has on family life, while at the same time 'making an amazing difference to our son's well-being and development'. The very few negative comments have been passed on to the headteacher although the identity of the writers remains confidential.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Caverstede 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 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 141 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	85	8	15	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	85	8	15	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	36	69	16	31	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	75	12	23	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	73	14	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	39	75	13	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	73	13	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)	31	60	15	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	40	77	12	23	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	56	18	35	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	63	16	31	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	38	73	13	25	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	43	83	9	17	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 is for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring term 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



26 November 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Caverstede Early Years Centre, Peterborough, PE4 6EX

I enjoyed spending two days with you when I visited your school recently. It is an excellent school. You really like coming to school, you work hard and you learn so much. Well done!

Here is a list of some of the best things about your school:

- you make excellent progress in your work so that you are very well prepared for primary school
- the headteacher leads the school very well
- teaching is always at least good and often outstanding
- the staff care for you very well and keep you safe
- the outdoor area is wonderful and gives you many interesting activities
- there are outstanding partnerships between the school and your parents and carers
- all of the staff work very hard for you
- you behave excellently.

The staff are always trying to improve your school. I have asked your headteacher to help you to find out more about how other people live so that you know more about their lifestyles.

I hope that you will continue to work hard and enjoy your excellent school.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Blakelock
Lead inspector

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