

Caverstede Early Years Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110599
Local Authority	CITY OF PETERBOROUGH LA
Inspection number	288717
Inspection date	13 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Linda Killman HMI

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 on roll	116
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Rita Bond
Headteacher	Ms Christine Parker
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2001
School address	Caverstede Road Walton Peterborough Cambridgeshire PE4 6EX
Telephone number	01733 571742
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Caverstede nursery is the only nursery school in Peterborough maintained by the local authority. It is part of an Early Years Centre offering a range of integrated services for young children and their families. The majority of children are White British; the remainder from a mix of other ethnic groups. A quarter of children attending are allocated places for their additional needs and/or disabilities, and of these, a very small number remain at the nursery for their Reception year. Children's attainment on entry ranges from well below average to broadly average. At the end of their Nursery year the children transfer to many different schools.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Caverstede nursery is an outstanding school providing high quality education and first-class care for under-fives. The whole school is a harmonious and positive learning environment for children and adults, where everyone is valued. The children thoroughly enjoy coming to school. The leadership and management are excellent. The Head of Centre and deputy are strong leaders and adept at developing practitioners' skills and knowledge through targeted training and by providing opportunities for all staff to use their initiative. One parent's comment sums up the level of commitment shown by this exceedingly professional team, 'All staff I have come across go above and beyond the call of duty.' This is one of the reasons why Caverstede is deservedly a Centre of Excellence. The leadership team have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses because they monitor and evaluate the school's performance extensively. However, written evaluations of monitoring information and development plans are often too wordy and repetitive, making them difficult to digest. The school has a good capacity to improve, demonstrated by the significant progress made since the school's previous inspection.

The quality of teaching, the curriculum and the level of care, guidance and support that children receive are excellent. Children of all abilities thrive and make exceptionally good progress from their individual starting points to reach age-related expectations in all areas of learning. Their communication, language, literacy and mathematical development is particularly good. This is because practitioners focus on these areas in their initial assessment of the children's capabilities, providing them with an accurate picture of where they need to go next. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve very well due to the wide ranging expertise and specialisms provided by practitioners and other agencies to support their learning. The school's personalised 'Possible Lines of Direction' plan ensures that children's learning moves on from what they prefer, what they know and can already do. Information is shared freely with parents and they speak highly of their children's records of achievement that track their progress in detail.

The outstanding curriculum at Caverstede covers all the required areas of learning and is supplemented by an excellent range of interesting and exciting opportunities such as digging in the vegetable garden and exploring the vast range of outdoor activities provided for physical development. Excellent modelling from all adults ensures that the children are appropriately guided in how they should behave and the children know how to play safely. The adults quickly intervene if they are troubled or need reassurance. The opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and to make healthy food choices are very good. There is excellent provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. For example, both inside and outside, a range of 'meeting places' enables them to spend quiet moments alone or in pairs, enjoy quality time with an adult or take part in large group activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Simplify written evaluations and development plans, making them more focused and easily accessible.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding. All children make excellent progress from their individual starting point because practitioners systematically build on their skills and understanding through

meticulous planning and assessment practices. Most children reach or exceed the standards expected by the end of nursery. Good links established with families before the children start school enable them to settle in quickly and learn effectively. The children are confident and work with a high level of independence because practitioners expect the children to do as much as they possibly can for themselves without adult intervention.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development and well-being are excellent. Their attendance is good because they enjoy coming to school so much. They hardly notice when their parents leave or arrive to collect them. The children make choices confidently and take responsibility. For example, they fill their own water tray with a hose pipe, wash their own paintbrushes and help to put their toys away. They relate to each other extremely well and form trusting relationships with all adults but especially with their key worker. The multi-sensory room provides opportunities for children to support one another and to talk confidently about their feelings. Children develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness extremely well. Different languages, religions and cultures are celebrated. Children experience a sense of awe and wonder in nature in the exemplary outdoor area as they lie and watch mini-beasts in action or dig for worms in the mud. Lunch club is very good for promoting healthy food choices and encouraging pupils to widen their experience of different healthy foods. All health and hygiene matters are promoted. The school is community spirited and children feel a sense of security because all families are welcomed with equal warmth. The children are fully prepared for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Activities challenge children very well and teachers organise these effectively. The calm atmosphere and the way that children play purposefully and with sustained interest is indicative of the high quality of the activities provided, suitably tailored to meet their individual needs and abilities. Good use of resources such as computers and the very inviting library provide great variety and promote high interest for the children as they learn important key skills. Practitioners' skills in developing spoken and written language are excellent so that children's progress is accelerated well. Detailed assessment records are kept and all adults know the children well. Teachers use this information effectively in planning for the next steps in learning. The balance between adult led activities and those that the children choose for themselves is excellent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It is inclusive and skilfully adapted to cater for children with additional needs. For example, signing and pictures are used extensively to help all children to communicate effectively. Educational visits are used extensively to broaden children's experiences. Unplanned moments such as the diggers that arrived outside school instantly become a focus for a learning experience. Visitors to the school are frequent and used extensively to enhance the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Quality care, guidance and support of all children is a key priority for staff, which is evident in their high regard for supervision and safety. Children with additional needs are expertly guided and supported. Practitioners know exactly when to intervene and when to be unobtrusive. Children's academic progress is shared frequently with their parents, who are actively encouraged to contribute to their records of achievement. Transfer to the next school is handled effectively. Vulnerable children are given outstanding levels of support and care to ensure that they become successful learners. All legal requirements for safeguarding children are met. Achievement is celebrated and verbal praise as well as guidance as to how children can improve is given instantly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The head of centre is a passionate early years practitioner and an impressive leader. Everything she does is for the benefit of children. In close partnership with the deputy, the ideal balance is struck between raising standards in teaching and learning and effectively managing this extremely complex organisation. All staff have clear lines of accountability and contribute fully to the school's development plan. Practitioners and governors think deeply about improving the school's practice but the plan to support this is currently too complicated and wordy. Governance is excellent. Governors keep up to date with the latest educational developments and provide the school with relentless support and challenge. As a designated centre of excellence, the school is fully involved in a range of projects, including research that helps to raise standards and children's achievement. Everyone is encouraged to be reflective about their practice and in doing so achieve high standards in all aspects of their work.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 March 2007

Dear Children

Caverstede Early Years Centre, Caverstede Road, Walton, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE4 6EX

I had a great time at the Nursery when I came to see you all. It was wonderful to watch you play and enjoy learning new things. These are the things I liked the most:

- You have so many lovely activities to choose from and lots of interesting things to do.
- The nursery garden is fabulous with lots of things for you to do to keep you healthy.
- You try very hard to do things on your own.
- Everyone behaves beautifully.
- You all work hard and get better and better at what you do.

You are lucky to attend such an excellent school with adults that care about you greatly and teach you well. What I have asked the school to do to make things even better is:

- Write clearer messages about what is good and not so good about the school.

Keep working hard and make the most of your fantastic nursery garden in the summer months. I hope the potatoes grow well for you!

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman Her Majesty's Inspector