

Emneth Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120765
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	380098
Inspection dates	3–4 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Nursery
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Whatley
Headteacher	Susan Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They made five visits to sessions in the nursery taught by seven members of staff. Visits were also made to the day care area of the school. Inspectors met with members of the governing body and staff and talked to children during sessions and at lunchtime. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation, including the school development plan, assessment records and safeguarding policies. They analysed completed questionnaires from staff and those returned by 48 parents and carers of children in the nursery and those being looked after in the day care provision.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How successful is the nursery in helping boys to make as good progress as the girls?
- Do teaching and curriculum provide enough opportunities for girls to develop confidence in numeracy?
- How effective is the governing body in monitoring the work of the nursery?

Information about the school

Emneth Nursery is an average-sized nursery school serving a largely rural community within a seven to eight mile radius of the school. Most children are White British. A very small minority are Travellers. The nursery runs two part-time sessions of two and a half hours daily and parents and carers are able to access up to six sessions a week i.e. four mornings or afternoons and one full day. A higher than usual proportion of children are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion with a statement of special educational need is also higher than average. The nursery has ICAN accreditation reflecting its work with children who have speech and language needs.

The nursery is attached to a children's centre which is managed by the nursery school's headteacher and overseen by its governing body. This was inspected under a separate inspection schedule in December 2010. The governing body is also registered to provide day care between the hours of 8am and 6pm to children aged three months to five years of age. About 16 of the nursery school children also access the day care sessions for 48 weeks of the year. The inspection of the day care provision was included in this inspection. Currently, the nursery provides day care and/or nursery education to a total of 104 children.

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

Emneth Nursery provides an outstanding education for its children. This is endorsed by many written comments from parents such as: 'A wonderful nursery school' and 'The entire ethos is very impressive.' The setting provides a strongly inclusive and welcoming atmosphere. Children settle very quickly both in the nursery and the day care areas, and staff work closely with parents and with sensitivity and skill with children to ensure that this is the case. Daily routines and expectations are extremely well established and modelled by staff in an exemplary and highly consistent way so that children rapidly adapt to these and apply them themselves.

Parents and carers are rightly pleased with the progress made by their children. A sharp focus on personal, social and emotional education coupled with a strong emphasis on language development ensures that children make rapid progress in these areas. The close tracking of individual children and their progress ensures that both boys and girls make equally good progress. Use of signing is routine so that children with speech and language or other communication difficulties make exceptional progress in their learning and development. In addition, the widespread use of signing and symbols enables other children to communicate and develop friendships with those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children also make significant progress in other areas of learning such as numeracy and creative and physical development. Their knowledge and understanding of the world around them develops extremely well through visits to local towns and the seaside. They learn an enormous amount about Travellers through projects on Traveller history which are informed through the school's collaboration with members of the local Traveller community. Children have reasonably good opportunities to explore technology through, for example, the use of digital cameras and walkie-talkies as well as computer technology. However, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) is not as highly developed as other areas of the curriculum.

Teaching is outstanding. It is extremely well organised and one of its biggest strengths is the tight match of work to the needs of individual children. This is because teaching is underpinned by diligent planning that is evaluated daily and amended and adjusted along the way to maximise children's learning and progress. Children's interests are very thoughtfully incorporated into planning and this contributes to the exceptionally high levels of engagement of children in their work. The outdoor area provides a stimulating and successful extension of the classroom. Curricular provision is excellent because of the rigour of planning and the extent to

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which it is tailored to the individual needs of children. Consequently, the outcomes achieved are outstanding.

Children develop high levels of confidence both in the staff, who provide exceptional care for them, and in their own abilities. As a result, they willingly embrace new experiences and are open to new ideas. Children are thoughtful and considerate. They develop a growing sense of themselves as part of the communities in which they learn and live. They make an excellent contribution to the nursery through their exemplary behaviour, their enthusiastic involvement in putting things away and in serving one another at the lunch table. Children also contribute to the local community through, for example, the 'walk to school week' where they help to raise awareness about green issues and encourage others to walk too. Children receiving day care also enjoy their time in the setting and benefit from the high quality provision for learning and development as well as the excellent care taken of their day-to-day needs.

The school is exceptionally well led and managed. The headteacher sets very high expectations and works proactively with staff to provide the best education and care possible. She is outstandingly well supported by other senior and middle leaders. Strong self-evaluation results in areas for development being identified and addressed very quickly. In addition, the open ethos and strong relationships encourage continuous development and improvement and a culture of constant striving for excellence. The governing body provides a strong strategic direction for the development of the nursery that takes into account local community needs. Members have a good understanding of the quality of provision in the nursery and day care. While they work closely with the headteacher, they do not always have the opportunity to hear directly from, or question, other staff in leadership positions about their work. Nonetheless, given that the nursery has sustained, and indeed improved, the high quality provision and outcomes since the last inspection, the capacity for even further improvement is exceptionally good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the outstanding curricular provision to provide even more opportunities for children to use ICT
- Improve the role of the governing body by creating more opportunities for members to work with a wider range of senior and middle leaders.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children**1**

Children begin at the nursery with a wide range of prior attainment and learning. The overall attainment on entry is below age-related expectations especially in areas such as language and literacy and numeracy. Children make rapid gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding so that, by the time they leave, their attainment

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is above age-related expectations. More-able children are challenged most effectively so that many of them are close to achieving, and some actually do achieve, the early learning goals for five-year-olds by the end of their time in the setting. The small number of children from minority ethnic or Traveller backgrounds make outstanding progress from their starting points because of the nursery's inclusive approach. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified at a very early stage once they begin in the nursery. The close tailoring of work to their needs ensures their progress is excellent.

Learning begins immediately children arrive. They get down to work in a very businesslike manner and remain fully engaged, often totally engrossed, until group time at the end of the session. In one group, dressing up and role playing the story of 'Sleeping Beauty' ensured that all children took part and listened. Signing enabled all children in the group to take part. A wealth of opportunities encourage children's writing and they, for example, use post-it notes with relish to leave messages and readily make marks on clip boards to emulate writing. Children work together extremely well. For example, two boys collaborated with huge success to build a house using wooden bricks. They discussed where they could put a door and examined the wooden blocks very carefully to get the right sizes in the right place. This showed that they were applying the measuring skills they have been working on recently. The example also typifies the high level of independence children demonstrate in their learning.

Children have a strong sense of right and wrong and very clear views about what they like and do not like, what they consider fair and unfair. They engage in lively social discussion at snack time and lunch. Children readily ask questions and are curious about how others live. The secure environment makes children feel very safe and they demonstrate confidence in staff to deal with any problems or concerns. They also know how to keep themselves safe taking well-judged risks when on the climbing frames or riding bikes in the outdoor area. Children enjoy the outdoor activities enormously and this helps them to keep fit. They also appreciate the healthy and nourishing lunches prepared on-site. Packed lunches are not, however, always as healthy though all children enjoy fruit either for pudding or as a snack. Overall, given the high levels of independence, exceptionally well-developed social skills, and good skills in literacy and numeracy, children are exceptionally well prepared for their next step in education.

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 Taking into account:	1
	2

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Children’s attainment ¹	1
The quality of children’s learning and their progress	
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	2
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?

The individualised approach to learning promotes children's development exceptionally well and contributes to the excellent teaching. Work is carefully adapted and fine-tuned as a result of sharply focused assessment to meet different needs and interests. For example, staff ensure that they pitch activities at the right level for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and prepare appropriate resources to help ensure they make as good progress as others. Staff interactions with children are purposeful and well judged giving significant opportunities for children to think for themselves or steering their thinking in order to extend it and enable them to make a discovery about something they might not have noticed before. Children's views are actively taken into account in planning and when setting targets. The opportunities for children to reflect on their work, identify what they have enjoyed and where else they would like to take their learning is established practice.

Curricular provision is extensive in terms of breadth and depth and promotes rich learning opportunities, such as, through the Forest Schools scheme. Themes and topics incorporate the development of the 'whole child'. Considerable thought is given to the range of activities provided. A very careful balance is struck between activities that are familiar, and which continue to generate worthwhile learning for children, and those that are new. The large space within the nursery is organised very effectively to provide a stimulating and very well resourced learning environment, exceptionally so for most areas of learning. Resources for information and communication technology are not quite as rich as for other areas. The balance between activities chosen by children and those promoted by adults is very good. The work on superheroes was initiated by children bringing in related artefacts or objects. This was picked up by staff and incorporated into the superhero theme with

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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children making up their own superhero stories. This has particularly supported boys' literacy and, where girls have not been as excited about superheroes, they have developed their own fairy tales. Girls are as effectively encouraged as boys to develop their numeracy skills, for example, girls made equal use of the measuring tape and exploring height. Constant assessment and evaluation picks up and addresses very quickly any disproportionate impact of activities on any one group. The curriculum is enriched by frequent visits and visitors.

Care, guidance and support are excellent. The key worker system, where every child is attached to a specific member of staff, works exceptionally well in both the nursery and day care to ensure that each child is happy and safe. The school works with a very wide range of agencies to support individual children, especially those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Where necessary, parents or carers are given high quality support. Home visits are actively used to support both children and their families. Attendance is very diligently monitored and followed up exceptionally well in the small number of cases where it is not regular enough, usually with considerable success. Most children attend very regularly and are away only when ill or when visiting health specialists. Transition arrangements are comprehensive both for children coming up from the day care provision into the nursery and those moving from the nursery into primary school.

The day care children are exceptionally well looked after and cared for, and this is aptly reflected in the following comment from a parent: 'Staff make sure that you are well-informed about everything that has happened in the day and take time to listen to any concerns.' Children are given a nourishing breakfast, lunch and/or tea and regular attention through valuable interactions with adults. Babies are provided with stimulating toys and tactile materials to encourage their development. The ratio of adults to children is very good. The separate outdoor area for day care children provides a safe but interesting environment for children to explore and enjoy.

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 has established a strong team of staff who are proud to be working at the school. There is a strong sense of professionalism in the way staff go about their work. The clarity of expectations leads to highly consistent application of policies, procedures and educational approaches to the nursery's work. The work of

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the school is rigorously monitored by the headteacher and other senior and middle managers. Staff promote equality of opportunity exceptionally well. Tracking of children's progress and rigorous analysis of the learning and experiences of different groups of children have ensured that all participate and achieve equally well. The outreach work with Traveller families has been especially successful in encouraging their involvement in the work of the nursery. It has also contributed to the very positive work on promoting community cohesion. The nursery is a cohesive community where children get on with one another exceptionally well. Links with the local community are extremely well developed. Children are taught very effectively about cultural diversity through the curriculum and every opportunity to give children first-hand experiences of those from different backgrounds is fully exploited. The school's work on community cohesion is thoroughly evaluated.

The governing body meets its statutory obligations well. It is particularly strong in managing finance and promoting safeguarding. Governors are robust in their checking of building and grounds to ensure health and safety and school security. There is comprehensive awareness among staff about safeguarding and they are highly vigilant in their every-day work so that children are kept very safe. Almost all parents and carers agree that their child is safe.

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	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

The proportion of completed questionnaires is higher than usual and responses are exceptionally positive. Parents and carers are particularly positive about their child's enjoyment, the quality of teaching and the progress their child is making, how well

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the setting meets their child's needs and the quality of leadership. The inspection findings support these positive views. All parents and carers' indicate that they are happy with their child's overall experience. Most of the parents and carers writing comments are fulsome in their praise of the quality of provision and its positive impact on their child.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Emneth 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 48 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 55 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	71	14	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	85	6	13	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	34	71	12	25	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	63	18	38	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	65	16	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	29	60	16	33	1	2	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	65	16	33	1	2	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)	28	58	13	27	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	35	73	13	27	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	46	20	42	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	56	19	40	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	33	69	14	29	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	36	75	12	25	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



5 October 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Emneth Nursery School, Wisbech, PE14 8AY

We enjoyed visiting your school, and in particular, we enjoyed talking to you. We should like to thank you for making us feel so welcome. It was a delight to have lunch with you and listen to your views. You get an excellent start to your education in the nursery which helps to make you ready for primary school.

These are some of the best things about the school.

- You enjoy your time at the school and get on so well with one another.
- The progress you make in your learning is excellent.
- Your confidence and ability to work by yourself develops rapidly.
- You get totally involved in the interesting and exciting activities set up for you.
- Those of you who need extra help are exceptionally well supported and the signing helps everyone to understand what is going on.
- You learn a lot about the Traveller community and their way of life. You are also very interested in learning about people from different countries.
- Your headteacher works really successfully with other staff to continually improve the school and make it the best that it can be.
- Children in day care are really well looked after and have lots of fun while learning.

There is nothing your school does not do well. There are a couple of things that could be even better. We have asked the headteacher and governors to give you even more opportunities to use information and communication technology and for governors to work more closely with staff.

Yours sincerely

Gulshanbir Kayembe
Lead inspector

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