



Castle Vale Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103144
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 276859
Inspection dates 23 June 2006 to 23 June 2006
Reporting inspector Alison Cartlidge AI

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Yatesbury Avenue Castle Vale Birmingham, West Midlands B35 6DU
School category	Maintained	Telephone number	0121 7487578
Age range of pupils	3 to 5	Fax number	0121 7492074
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair of governors	
Number on roll	95	Headteacher	Ms Lesley Wiltshire
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Nursery provides full-time and part-time places for children who live within the locality. The number of children entitled to free school meals is high. The proportion of children with learning difficulties is above average. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below the expected levels.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school provides well for its children. Leadership and management are good because the caring headteacher and other members of staff are constantly seeking ways of improving provision. A calm and well organised routine enables children to achieve well from their starting points, although by the time they leave the school their standards are below the expected levels. Children make good progress. The best progress is made in personal, social and emotional development because teachers have especially high expectations. Teaching is good and children's differing needs are considered well in most sessions. However, occasionally the pace of learning in group 'planning' sessions is too slow and not all children are sufficiently involved. The school has a good curriculum that provides a wide range of exciting activities both indoors and outside. These activities contribute well to the children's enjoyment and their good attitudes and behaviour. Children receive good care and support. The very beneficial links made with external agencies is an outstanding feature of the school's work. The school's evaluation of overall effectiveness is in keeping with inspection findings. However, whilst senior managers have a wealth of information from their frequent monitoring, not enough use is made of this information to check that all groups of children achieve equally well. Members of staff and governors work together well to identify strengths and weaknesses. The school has developed well since the last inspection and has the capacity to improve further. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that group planning times move on at a good rate and consistently maintain the interest of all children.
- Make better use of the information collected from monitoring to check the progress of different groups of children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, achieve well. Despite standards being below the levels expected for their ages when they leave the Nursery, children make good progress. Progress is especially good in personal, social and emotional development and most children are working within the expected levels in this area of learning. They are confident when choosing activities and work together cooperatively. In communication, language and literacy, all the children are keen to share their ideas, although several have limited speech. Most children are beginning to make marks to represent letters, although few are writing recognisable letters and words. In mathematical development, although children count accurately, their knowledge of mathematical vocabulary is uncertain. Whilst the school does not set targets for children to achieve by the end of the year, teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations for what children should achieve based on rigorous assessment procedures.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being are good. Children behave well and enjoy their work. They develop good attitudes towards school and are happy and eager to learn. The children are very inquisitive and they enjoy exploring the world around them and asking adults questions. They share resources sensibly and take turns. However, some become restless when group time lacks purpose or the pace is too slow. Attendance is satisfactory, although the school monitors this well. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children are independent and have a healthy respect for others. Vibrant displays are successful in ensuring that children develop a good awareness of different cultures and traditions. Children make a good contribution to the school community by taking responsibilities for tasks such as collecting registers and delivering milk. Children have a good understanding of the importance of staying safe and eating healthy foods. As one child said, 'eating my fruit will be good for me'. They also understand that it is important to wash their hands before eating. Children's improving academic and social skills prepare them well for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching is a key factor in the good progress made by children. All adults work together well guiding and supporting children in their chosen activities. Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning skilfully to capture the children's interest and to extend their learning. This is particularly evident when children are working with members of staff on 'focus' activities. At these times, there is a good pace to learning and adults are successful in linking subjects together to introduce new ideas or vocabulary. For example, a painting activity included good opportunities to count, to learn about French culture and to develop independence. Adults generally have good expectations of what children can achieve, based on thorough assessments of what they already know and what they need to learn next. As a result, activities are usually closely matched to children's needs and this leads to good progress in most sessions. However, some group 'planning' sessions lack purpose and the pace is too slow leading to some children losing interest. When these sessions are managed well, as when a teacher discussed the activities that were available that morning, children's progress is faster.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that reflects the needs and interests of the children well. The very strong focus on developing children's personal and social skills through the 'Values Education' programme has a particularly good impact on learning.

Children are taught the importance of staying safe and healthy. There is a good balance between activities directed by the teachers and those that children have chosen for themselves. However, the school's recent monitoring has shown that there are differences in the choice of activities made by boys and girls. This difference has only just come to light and the school has not yet looked at how this might affect what boys and girls achieve. A particularly strong feature of the curriculum is the way that learning is enriched by visits and visitors that capture children's imagination and help to make learning purposeful. On the day prior to the inspection, children had been on a visit to a zoo. This was being used well to extend children's skills in many areas of learning. They were counting, drawing and naming animals they had seen, as well as working in a role play area looking after an elephant and making booklets to report on their visit.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school is a happy and welcoming place and the high level of care provided by all members of staff is evident in all aspects of its work. As one parent said, 'teachers care deeply about their pupils'. Nurture groups are used well to support vulnerable children. Outstanding links with outside agencies such as the health visitor and other specialists safeguard the well-being of all children very well. There are good arrangements for when children first start school and this means that they settle quickly and are ready to learn. Child protection arrangements are securely in place. Academic support is good. Adults assess the progress of individual children and have a thorough understanding of the needs of each child. This information is used well to plan the next stage of learning. However, there is little information to show comparative progress from term to term between groups of children, and this makes it difficult for teachers and governors to check that all children are consistently doing well enough. Children with learning difficulties are identified quickly, assessed thoroughly and supported well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management by governors and members of staff are good. The experienced headteacher is especially good at supporting the pastoral needs of all members of staff, parents and children. The school runs smoothly and provides a calm and purposeful haven for the children. Teachers and teaching assistants work well as a team, focusing on improving provision and responding to changing needs. For example, the recent introduction of the 'Values Education' programme supports the children's social and moral development well. School self-evaluation is satisfactory. Whilst the school's evaluation of overall effectiveness is accurate it is too modest about aspects of its work. However, information collected from monitoring the school's work is not always analysed in enough depth to show the impact of provision on the progress of different groups of children. For example, recent monitoring of the curriculum has shown that girls take part in more organised activities than the boys,

but this valuable information has not been used to consider how this might affect the children's learning and progress. The school has clear plans about how it intends to improve although it is not always clear on how the impact on children's progress is to be measured. Governors are supportive of the school and carry out their duties well. Parents and children are given good opportunities to share their views and to contribute to the school's self-evaluation process during 'have your say day'. For example, following feedback from parents, the school changed consultation evenings to provide more time to discuss children's progress. Issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been successfully addressed and the school has the capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	No
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

24 June 2006 Dear Children Thank you for being so friendly and kind to us when we visited your school. We have asked your teachers to read this letter to you. What we liked most about your school

- You like your teachers and enjoy coming to school.
- Your teachers are kind and give you exciting things to do.
- You are good at talking to grown ups and at playing together.
- Your teachers are working hard to make the school even better.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Make sure all children are involved at the times when you talk about what you are going to do.
- Check that you are all learning as quickly as each other.

We thoroughly enjoyed answering your questions and watching you at work and we hope you carry on enjoying being at school. Yours faithfully Mrs Alison Cartlidge Additional Inspector Alexandra House 33 Kingsway London WC2B 6SE T 0207 421 6800 F 0207 421 6707 www.ofsted.gov.uk