



Knowles Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110197
Local Authority Milton Keynes
Inspection number 288596
Inspection date 1 February 2007
Reporting inspector Sue Vale

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Queensway
School category	Maintained		Bletchley
Age range of pupils	3-4		Milton Keynes MK2 2HB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01908 373753
Number on roll (school)	86	Fax number	01908 630184
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ms Ann Pegg
		Headteacher	Mrs Marie Gordon
Date of previous school inspection	27 May 2002		

Age group 3-4	Inspection date 1 February 2007	Inspection number 288596
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Knowles Nursery School is a 52 full-time equivalent place Nursery with 86 children attending part time. Currently fifty per cent of children are learning English as an additional language. Many of the families of those children originate from the rural Sylhet region of Bangladesh and their home language is Sylheti. An additional 10 languages are spoken by children currently attending. There is one child identified with learning difficulties or disabilities. Attainment on entry is broad and for many it is their first experience of leaving the family. The Nursery School was designated a Children's Centre in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Knowles Nursery is a good school and children receive a good start to their education. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the strengths of the Nursery and what it needs to do to develop further through its recent designation as a children's centre. Governors make a strong contribution and are fully supportive of the Nursery's work and its development.

Most of the children begin school with a wide range of abilities and varying experience of English. Consistently good teaching and an interesting, varied curriculum in which children are encouraged to be independent helps them to settle in quickly and make good progress. By the time they leave Nursery, they have made more than expected progress in developing spoken English and in their personal, social and emotional development. Well planned practical activities allow children to develop their own interests and abilities independently. This provides them with a strong foundation for the next stage of their education. As a result, children achieve and progress well towards the goals expected of them. Within this positive picture, there are missed opportunities for teachers to develop children's knowledge of letters and their sounds. In particular, there are not enough visual references for children to refer to when developing their written letter formation or to develop their letter sounds.

Children's personal development and well-being are very good. They are very happy and keen to be at Nursery, although attendance amongst some families does not always reflect this. Children quickly become independent and confident learners and they work and play together very well. Many children show mature attitudes for their age.

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are excellent. Children receive a positive start to their school life because the staff have a high commitment to meeting the needs of all children. Observations and assessments of what children know and can do are excellent and are celebrated in children's individual profiles.

The Nursery has maintained good standards since the last inspection has good capacity to continue to improve and maintain its standards as its facilities for the community grow with the development of the new building.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the involvement of children's families, the community and other agencies to support the development of the children's centre.
- Improve the use of displays to stimulate more effective visual learning of early letter sounds and letter formation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children, including the increasing numbers learning English as an additional language, achieve well. Most children settle quickly and make a good start to school life, rapidly becoming confident and independent learners. Consequently, children make good progress and reach expected levels in all areas of learning. There are a significant number of children who exceed what is expected in their personal social and emotional development. This is because of good quality teaching, and adult interaction which encourages children to make their own choices, along with an interesting practical curriculum.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development is excellent. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children are very happy and keen to have a go at the different activities on offer. This is helped by the interesting learning environment, both indoors and outside, that motivates and stimulates their curiosity. For example, children were very excited when they discovered string tied around the tree and connected to the play house outside; this fired their imagination and resulted in a number of them showing mature attitudes in the way they played together. Children are very eager to come to Nursery. As one mother said, 'My daughter would be going to nursery seven days a week, 365 days a year if she had the choice'. Despite children's enthusiasm, attendance from some families is too infrequent. Children work safely, and are encouraged to adopt a healthy life style; they look forward to their healthy snacks.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' very good knowledge of the early years curriculum and of individual children's interests and abilities mean that children make good progress in their learning and achieve well. Regular, relevant observations of what they are interested in and can achieve are the basis for the way teachers plan the next stage of their learning. These are particularly successful for those children who are new to learning English. As one parent commented, 'Because of the good support and understanding from the teachers, my daughter is starting to speak more English...and this makes her ready for school'. The emphasis on providing interesting and stimulating work means that children want to participate and are eager to try out new activities. Children enjoy learning because teachers encourage them to make their own independent choices. There is scope, however, for staff to make more use of displays, including letters and alphabets, to reinforce effective learning of early letter

sounds and formation. Children are pleased with their achievements and are eager to share their new knowledge and skills with adults.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The exceptionally well-planned and varied curriculum promotes interesting and practical activities both inside and outdoors. The Nursery is arranged for a free-flow of movement so that children can experience the same range of activities whether they are inside or out. This supports children's own freedom of choice and enhances their personal and social development. Hands-on activities make learning fun and children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. An example of this is the way one child independently retrieved all the equipment and resources she needed in order to achieve what she had set out to do. This shows how the curriculum encourages and develops a mature, independent attitude in children. There is very good provision for those children at an early stage of learning English. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) by children, although not seen during the inspection, is an integral part of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are very good. The vision of the Nursery is to care not just for the individual child, but also for them as part of the family and the whole Nursery community. Children receive a positive start to their school life because the staff have a high commitment to meeting the needs of all children. Child protection procedures are fully in place. Risk assessments and procedures for monitoring the health and safety of the children are robust. Parents are particularly pleased with the care their children receive, 'I always know she is being well cared for'.

Academic guidance is very good, particularly for those children who are learning English as an additional language. Children's progress is tracked carefully through their individual profiles to highlight and celebrate their achievements. Within these profiles there are written comments to show what children need to do to take them onto the next step of their learning, however not all of these aims are clearly accessible for adults to easily access when planning activities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. There is a strong sense of commitment to the children and very good team work throughout the Nursery. The headteacher, along with the governing body, has a clear vision for the development of the Nursery as a children's centre, through the planned building works and greater involvement of the community. The leadership has clearly recognised the Nursery's strengths and areas for development. Good procedures for the day-to-day management ensure that things

run smoothly. The governing body is very supportive and they are clear in their understanding of what is working well and what can be improved. They have been a driving force in the vision to develop a greater role for the nursery in the community as a children's centre. Parents are fully included in their children's education and annual questionnaires are sent out to seek their opinions of how the Nursery could be improved.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	1
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?	2
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.

Leadership and management

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

It was lovely to meet you and to spend time with some of you when I came to visit your Nursery. I enjoyed sitting with you when you were drawing, cutting and sticking and when we were outside in the garden with the string.

Knowles is a good Nursery. There are lots of things which you do well.

- You are very happy at your Nursery.
- You like learning lots of interesting new things, and you are eager to try new things.
- Some of you are very grown up and show that you can do many things without help.
- Your teachers plan good activities for you and help you to make good progress in your learning.
- You are looked after very well.
- There are lots of exciting and interesting things for you to do.
- You are fortunate to have such a lovely garden and outside area to play in.

The teachers and governors are working very hard to get ready for turning the Nursery into an even more special Children's Centre, and I have asked them to continue with this. I have also asked the teachers to put up some more displays to help you with your letters and letter sounds.

Best wishes

Sue ValeLead inspector