

# Hardmoor Early Years Centre

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 115831               |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Southampton          |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 290339               |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 30 April –1 May 2007 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Jo Curd              |

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

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|---|---|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Nursery   |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Maintained  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 2–5   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed   |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |   |
| School                                    | 122   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                                      |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mrs Yasmeen Hussain                                     |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Miss Karen Stacey                                       |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 4 November 2002   |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Leaside Way<br>Bassett Green<br>Southampton<br>SO16 3EP |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 02380 552220  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 02380 678052  |

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|--------------------------|----------------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Hardmoor Early Years Centre was opened in 1995. In 2006 it was designated as a Children's Centre as part of wider Sure Start provision and extended to include younger children and day care. An inspection of day care in August 2006 found it to be good with outstanding elements. The Centre is registered to provide nursery education for 96 part time 3-5 year olds and day care for 48 2-5 year olds. Children come from a range of backgrounds and a wide geographical area. About a third are from minority ethnic backgrounds and more than usual are learning English as an additional language. Four places are funded for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The Nursery uses a new purpose built classroom and two classrooms of an old Infant School with secure spacious grounds and a wood. The Centre runs a wide range of early years provision supporting families in the school and community.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good Nursery with several outstanding features including the curriculum and care, guidance and support. All the children make good progress in all six areas of learning. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and appreciative of all the Nursery provides. As one said, 'Hardmoor represents everything we expect (and hope for) in an Early Years Centre with our son reaping the rewards of all the hard work and support of teachers and help of staff in general'.

Because leadership and management are good the Centre has developed and improved well since its last inspection. The headteacher and senior management team are able and experienced. Together they have successfully maintained the good progress of all whilst expanding the Centre, including year round day care, integrating new staff and welcoming younger children. Self-evaluation is strong, accurate and largely successful. It has led to some very positive developments including work with local schools and imaginative approaches encouraging children's writing. Not all aspects of the Nursery are evaluated thoroughly however, and although still good, some aspects, including parts of the outdoor area such as tables left without resources available, are less well used than others. Whenever weaknesses are identified leaders and managers act quickly to improve them. Their track record shows that capacity for further improvement is good. As one parent said 'This Centre has grown from strength to strength and hasn't looked back since six years ago'.

Children start at the Nursery with a very wide range of experience, knowledge and skill. They are each welcomed, valued and cared for well in this diverse and highly inclusive community. Standards on entry are below those expected for this age. Several children have speech and communication difficulties and delays and some have limited experience in other areas of learning. Due to good teaching, effective use of very good resources and an outstanding curriculum all the children make good progress in all six areas of learning. Most reach and some exceed national expectations by the time they leave.

All members of the Centre's community are cared for and supported extremely well. Parents greatly appreciate the fact that the whole family is welcomed and supported, for example, through fortnightly 'Stay and play' for Dads and male carers and the Centre's broad and well used community facilities. Extremely good links with parents and other groups are used well to extend children's learning. Staff occasionally do too much for children however. As a result, few opportunities for learning are missed, which slightly reduce the progress for some and the good contribution which children make to their community.

Personal development and well-being are good. Positive relationships pervade the Centre and children are confident, friendly and well behaved. Within the very broad and practical curriculum children learn how to use equipment correctly and keep themselves safe, for example, always holding hands with an adult on school trips. They are well prepared for later life because they make good progress in their learning and develop many practical and relevant skills. They enjoy Nursery, especially working in the woods, playing in the multi-sensory room and going on frequent trips in the Centre's minibus. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children have a good awareness of health through eating fruit and taking exercise.

Overall, a parent summed up the feeling of many by saying that Hardmoor Early Years Centre is 'A lovely environment with impressive learning and care'.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve self evaluation so that all aspects of the Nursery, particularly outdoor resources, are considered carefully and improvements are made.
- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring all staff encourage children to do as much as possible independently.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children start at Nursery with a range of experience, knowledge and skills. Overall their attainment is lower than expected. Due to good teaching and outstanding curriculum and care all the children make good progress. Extremely strong and effective links with parents and other agencies extend learning and contribute well to this. Most children meet and some exceed national expectations by the time they leave. Because teaching and learning are good progress in all six areas of learning is good. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with English as an additional language make good progress because activities are appropriate and support is extremely good.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Children successfully develop high levels of confidence, behaviour and self-esteem from the role models, high expectations and praise of all staff. Their enjoyment of Nursery is evident in their faces and eagerness to enter at the beginning of sessions. Parents report that their children are disappointed to miss Nursery if they are unwell or in the holidays. Attendance is satisfactory and absences are mainly due to ill health. Children develop exceptional skills of safety because they learn to take risks and deal with situations wisely. For example, they learn about stinging nettles and know they must dress sensibly to enter the woods and know how to move and travel safely when out on trips. They are extremely well prepared for later life and learning through their good progress, diverse curriculum and many relevant practical experiences. They have a good understanding about healthy lifestyles including the need to eat fruit and take exercise. Although children contribute well to their community through raising money for charity and helping with tasks this is slightly reduced by the fact that staff occasionally do too much for them.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good because most staff use their very good knowledge of each child, early years development and the required curriculum effectively. Many of the staff are new however and some are new to Nursery education. Some staff occasionally do too much for children, such as writing their names on work, wiping tables and tidying equipment away. This reduces opportunities for learning and slows the learning of some. There is a good balance between adult directed and child chosen activities. Teachers ably plan a wide range of imaginative activities which successfully interest and engage the children. Staff make good use of detailed assessments. They are particularly skilled at interacting in and extending children's play so that

good progress is made by all. Accommodation and resources inside are very good quality, attractive, accessible and used well to promote children's learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is extremely rich and very appropriate for all the children. It is very varied and rooted in practical first hand experience. A wide range of resources, celebrations and special days successfully help prepare children for life in a culturally diverse society. Effective planning ensures that links between all of the areas of learning are positive and meaningful. Learning is greatly enriched by work in wood, play in the multi sensory room, visits, such as to a local farm and visitors. Children enjoy these greatly and their experiences contribute well to the good progress and personal development of all. Extremely good links with parents are used very well to extend learning and the curriculum. As a parent said, the Nursery is full of 'creative and exciting opportunities'.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

All members of the Nursery community are valued, cared for and supported extremely well. As a parent said ' I have nothing but praise, it has been a pillar of strength to me'. Procedures for child protection and safety are securely in place. Assessments are very thorough and used very well to guide children in their learning. Communication in the Nursery is very good and brief meetings of all the teaching staff each morning ensure that all children are guided, supported and cared for very effectively. Sensitive but prominently displayed photographs and details of children's medical needs and allergies help ensure that all are cared for well. Practical activities, a very appropriate curriculum and skilled support staff ensure that children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who have English as an additional language are cared for, guided and supported extremely well. As a result, children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The Centre is led and managed well. The head teacher is knowledgeable, experienced, well organised and efficient. She values each member of the Centre's community, draws on their strengths and helps each to develop further. A strong and successful climate of learning includes adults as well as children at the Centre. Adults then effectively use their own learning to increase the experiences and progress of all the children. Good skills and experience of the senior management team and governors are integral to this success. The recent growth and changes to the Centre have taken considerable time and energy. Despite a very strong and successful emphasis on self evaluation and analysis, some aspects of the Nursery, including elements of the outdoor play space, have not been reviewed thoroughly and as a result some elements are more effective than others. Indoor space is used particularly well because resources are well organised and accessible. Some tables outside however are left without resources and some equipment has become tired.

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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 | <b>School Overall</b> |
|---|-----------------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 2   |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?  | 1   |
| 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

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 2 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 2 |
| 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   | 2 |
| 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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>          | 2 |
| <b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b> | 1 |
| <b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>   | 1 |

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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**

16 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Hardmoor Early Years Centre, Southampton, SO16 3EP

Thank you for being so friendly when I visited your Nursery and telling me about things you are learning.

I think your Nursery is very good with some things that are very, very good. You behave well and enjoy Nursery very much and your learning is super. Your teachers look after you really well and make sure you know how to stay healthy and safe. You told me about wearing the right clothes and boots for being outside and how you should always hold a grown up's hand in the woods. Your teachers plan good things for you to do to help you learn and they help you to be ready for your next school. Sometimes your teachers do things for you which you could do for yourselves, for example, writing your name, wiping tables and putting things away. Why don't you have a go and see if you could do these things?

Your teachers think very carefully about most parts of the Nursery. The equipment and rooms inside are very good. I have asked them to look after the parts of the outdoor play area that are not cared for so well too.

I wish you and your families all the best for the future.

Jo CurdLead Inspector