

# Emneth Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120765
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	327356
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jill Bavin

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>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	74
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Stefan Fisher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Clarke
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 May 2006
<b>School address</b>	Hollycroft Road Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE14 8AY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01945 582401
<b>Fax number</b>	01945 582802

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- What is the impact of recent focus on children's personal, social and emotional development?
- How successfully is the setting developing its work to promote early problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills?
- How effectively do staff and governors contribute to driving improvement

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, chair of governors, staff, observations of teachers and children at work, including brief conversations with children, parents' questionnaires and scrutinising documents, including records that track children's progress. Inspectors did not assess other aspects of the school's work in detail, but found no evidence to suggest that the judgements in the school's self-evaluation were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Emneth Nursery School and Children's Centre offers early education places for up to 80 children on a part-time basis, with an additional 16 full time equivalent places for children to access day-care. The setting is known as 'the centre'. Additionally, the day care centre provides day care and early education for 37 children aged between three months and five years. The centre comprises a day nursery, nursery class, breakfast, lunch and tea clubs, as well as various courses and support groups for parents and carers. Children spend different periods in the centre both during the week and through their Early Years, according to their family circumstances. Some centre staff work with families in their own homes or other settings in the wider community. Most commonly, children's attainment when they join the centre is well below national expectations for their age. The children's centre employs a range of professionals including a midwife, staff nurse, portage worker, Homestart co-ordinator, Childminder network co-ordinator and traveller support worker. The provision has been managed by the headteacher and governing body of the school since it opened in 2004. Most children are from White British backgrounds. Currently there are five children from a settled Traveller community and five children who speak more than one language at home. Some 12% of children in the nursery school have identified learning needs, often related to communication and language. The centre is an ICAN accredited centre, reflecting its work supporting children's language development. It gained the Healthy Schools award in 2006 and 2008 and the School Travel Plan Award in May 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This nursery and children's centre gives children a wonderful start in life by awakening their curiosity and interest in learning and communicating. Its effectiveness is outstanding. In this highly nurturing and stimulating environment children make outstanding progress in all areas of learning. Consequently, they reach standards that are similar to those expected for their age by the time they move onto school, which means they are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. Several children exceed expectations for their age in key physical skills such as riding a bicycle without stabilisers, and the proportion exceeding expectations for their age in all areas increases as they move through the centre. The quality of provision is equally high for babies, children under three years and children over three years. Parents and carers are highly appreciative of the centre's considerable strengths. Comments such as, 'she absolutely loves it there'; 'a great environment'; 'the support we both receive has been excellent' are representative of the views of the vast majority of parents of children of all ages. A recurring theme is the approachability of both day care and nursery staff.

Children enjoy their activities hugely because of highly effective teaching. Staff have an exceptionally strong understanding of how children at these ages learn best. Their expertise ensures that babies and children have ready access to an extremely wide variety of appealing resources and activities that cover many areas of learning at one time. Staff throughout the centre recognise the wealth of experience available to children when they use natural materials and when they have the freedom to develop their own ideas. A recent example of this was when one of the day care children rode a tricycle through a puddle and discovered tyre prints. Staff explained that for a while the centre 'exploded' into a 'learning adventure' with ideas about tyre prints, for example through paint and across large expanses of paper, until the children moved on in their interests. During the inspection, nursery children used a raft of physical, creative and early numeracy skills while making 'hedgerow posies' in the tradition of Roma Gypsy travellers. A group of children worked impressively together developing their ideas and exploring their understanding of the world around them as they became 'tricycle washers', in the style of a car wash service. An adult supported and challenged them with questions such as, 'How will we know which ones we've cleaned?' This resulted in children thinking about keeping a numerical record of their 'work-load'.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. Their behaviour and response to learning are often impeccable. Relationships are extremely positive at all levels. Not only do babies and children demonstrate enormous trust in the adults working with them, but older children also enjoy forging relationships with babies. Staff place enormous importance on encouraging children's independence and choice. They are extremely successful in this because they are exceptionally good at knowing when and how to intervene in a child's activity and enabling even the youngest children to take responsibility. Consequently, children concentrate, persevere and embrace responsibility impressively. Young children in day care clear the remains of snack away to the compost area. As with every activity in this centre, the value is 'multi-purpose'. Several of these daily routines support children's early numeracy understanding. The youngest children compare weight while carrying bags of raisins to the snack table, and older children sort resources into their storage areas at the end of the morning. Children willingly water and tend plants, including fruit and vegetables. They are avid consumers of what they grow. They enthusiastically clamber, climb, build and run. They have the freedom to test their own limits physically, and so make safe choices.

Children's spiritual, moral, and social development is outstanding. They reflect on their own and each other's feelings with increasing maturity because staff encourage sensitivity and set excellent examples of how to resolve potential conflict. Children's cultural development is good. Work on the Roma Gypsy culture helps older children to understand the idea of the past, as well as enriching their understanding of contemporary trailer life. Older children begin to appreciate the diversity of personalities within the centre, for example by realising that a child with learning difficulties is not being 'naughty' when removing her sun-hat.

Children at different ages and of different abilities, including those who find learning difficult, make equally outstanding progress, helped by adults' skills in adjusting the complexity of the language they use to suit each individual child. A recent focus on developing personal, social and emotional development even further has extended both staff and children's skills in this respect. Staff have more consciously used vocabulary and language about relationships. Close observations demonstrate that this has resulted in children using such language more often and more effectively. For example, children have been heard building into their personal commentary, 'I'm being a good friend'.

The centre's leaders place huge importance upon children's welfare. Procedures for safeguarding children meet requirements. Policies concerning children's well-being are comprehensive and have a positive influence on practice. The centre's attention to detail, for example in conducting daily risk assessments of each learning area, underpins the smooth running of such an effective learning environment. However, the focus on children's well-being in this centre is about far more than policies and routine procedures; it extends to the centre's impressive commitment to working in close partnership with families. Working with the community, whether other professionals, or families, is a high priority and very successful feature of the centre's work. As such, it begins as soon as possible, often with the 'Baby on the Way' course. Excellent relationships with parents contribute to very high attendance at several courses, such as 'Improving your computer skills' and 'Baby Talk' sessions. Staff also support toddler groups in isolated geographical locations. Considering how to support parents is an intrinsic part of the centre's culture, so when staff found a Developmental Movement Play course to be extremely valuable, they naturally offered it to parents.

All these strengths clearly arise from outstanding leadership and management. The senior management team shares an astute understanding of the centre and the staff team, and uses this to benefit the children. They know that the quality of teaching varies, as does the contribution of staff with particular responsibilities, but they deploy staff extremely well, ensuring that all children benefit equally from the overall outstanding provision. Their self-evaluation is modest, however, born of extremely high expectations of themselves and others. This highly reflective team recently introduced an extremely useful system for collating information about how well children are doing. They recognised that the reason this indicated good, rather than outstanding, progress in elements of early mathematical skills was likely to be because of over-cautious recording; a view upheld by inspectors, who saw children making exceptional progress in all areas of learning. Nevertheless, the senior management team promptly raised staff awareness of opportunities for children to solve mathematical problems. The result is more focused assessments and clearer 'next steps' for learning in this area for each baby or child.

The new chair of governors has made an extremely strong start to his role, and is already supporting the centre very effectively. Systems to enable other governors to become fully involved are good but are too new to have yet made a full impact. Most commonly the centre shares an excellent sense of purpose, contributing to a culture with a complete absence of

complacency. The centre has continued to provide extremely well for children while continuing to develop and improve its provision since the previous separate inspections of both the day care and nursery. It is, therefore, extremely well placed for further development.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Embed plans to extend governors' involvement in checking the centre's effectiveness.

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## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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**Overall effectiveness**

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do children in the EYFS achieve?</b>	1
The standards[1] reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

**Personal development and well-being**

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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**

<b>How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?</b>	1
<b>How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?</b>	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

26 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Emneth Nursery School and Children's Centre, Emneth, PE14 8AY

Thank you for being so friendly and showing us what you were doing when we visited you. We were very pleased to see how much fun you have and how well you learn. Here are some of the fantastic things about you and your teachers:

- you make really good progress in your work
- you enjoy yourselves hugely
- you concentrate very well and behave superbly
- you are really good at being kind to each other and sharing
- you are very grown up about doing jobs and deciding what you want to do
- the grown ups help you to learn and to keep safe extremely well
- you have lots of very interesting activities and equipment and lots of freedom to make choices
- the headteacher and teachers have very good ideas about how to keep doing the very best for you
- the grown ups in the centre care deeply about you and work very closely with your families.

We have asked the grown ups to carry on with their plans to help the governors become even more involved in understanding how well you are doing.

We hope you will carry on listening so carefully to the staff and enjoying your learning so much.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin

Lead inspector