

Cambridge Nursery School

Cambridge Road, Bootle, Merseyside, L20 9LQ

Inspection dates 12–13 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Parents are extremely happy with the nursery. Children settle in quickly and thoroughly enjoy all the activities provided for them.
- Teaching is consistently good, so the children make good progress and achieve well.
- From generally low starting points, most children leave the nursery with the knowledge and skills expected for their age.
- Children with additional needs are given very good support and make good progress in the nursery.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary and they have extremely positive attitudes to learning. They know that all their ideas are valued and they feel very safe and secure.
- The headteacher leads the school well. The governors and all of the staff share her determination to ensure that all children achieve to the best of their ability.
- There are effective systems in place for checking the quality of teaching and ensuring the good quality of education provided for the children.
- The governing body supports the nursery well, checks on how well children are doing and questions leaders and managers about the school's work.
- As part of a well-established and popular children's centre, the nursery is able to offer children and families good extended care and a range of additional services on site, including family learning courses, all of which contribute significantly to the nursery's good overall effectiveness.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although the school development plan sets out a good range of actions to improve teaching and opportunities for learning, it does not say clearly what the school expects the impact of these actions to be on children's learning and progress.
- There is more to do to develop the teaching of letters and sounds to enable children to make even better progress in establishing early literacy skills.
- Sometimes staff miss opportunities to support children's developing levels of concentration during those activities that children have chosen for themselves.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a wide range of activities in the nursery over the two inspection days, including observations of children in activities they had chosen themselves, in activities led by adults and in small-group sessions led by staff members.
- She spent time with individual children, looking at and discussing their 'learning journey' books, which are records of their achievements during their time in the nursery.
- Meetings and on-going discussions were held with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and staff members. The inspector met with two members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority.
- Parents had not yet responded to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector reviewed information from 21 letters received from parents and from 38 responses to a survey of parental views by the school that took place in the week before the inspection. The inspector also met with a group of parents, including grandparents, to hear their views about the school.
- The inspector took into account the views that staff expressed in the questionnaires they returned.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and safety, and data on children's current progress.

Inspection team

Diane Auton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The nursery school is part of a children's centre which is led and managed by the headteacher and the governing body. The inspection report for the children's centre is available on the Ofsted website.
- The school provides part-time places for morning and afternoon sessions.
- Parents can choose from a range of options within this core offer and can also buy in extra sessions. This means that children's attendance is organised on a flexible basis, in response to families' individual requirements.
- Extended care is provided at the beginning and end of the school day by the children's centre.
- The proportion of children supported at Early Years Action and at Early Years Action Plus is broadly average; there are no children on roll, currently, with a statement of special educational needs.
- The local authority provides four extra places at the school for children who have additional needs; these places are currently all taken up.
- Most children are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their home language. A very small proportion of children, from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, are learning to speak English as an additional language.
- A new headteacher came into post in January 2011 and two new teachers have also joined the staff since the time of the school's previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding and ensure that it has an even greater impact on children's learning and progress, by:
 - continuing to develop ways to teach children about letters and the sounds they make, in order to support their emerging skills in reading and writing even more effectively
 - ensuring that children are helped to stick with an activity they have chosen for themselves for increasing periods, in order to support and develop their concentration.
- Set out explicit end-of-year progress targets in the school development plan, so that, when leaders are making their evaluations of the school's effectiveness, they can measure children's progress against the targets and gain a more sharply-defined picture of how well the school is doing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the nursery with a range of developing skills, although most are at an earlier stage of development than would be expected for their age. Some children, including those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, are at very early stages of learning.
- Children make good and sometimes outstanding progress in all of the areas of learning. They do especially well in their personal, social and emotional development and this is largely because of the excellent relationships between adults, children and parents.
- By the time they leave, most children reach the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning. However, they do not do so well in early literacy because, when they start nursery, most are at a lower level in communication and language than in the other areas. As a result some children are still catching up by the time they leave. Leaders know that this presents a special challenge and are working to find ways to close the achievement gap between literacy and the other areas.
- Children who are disabled or who have special educational needs, including those in the extra places provided by the local authority, make good progress in relation to their starting points and abilities. They are included in all activities and are helped to participate in everything on offer.
- Children who speak English as an additional language make good progress in learning to speak English and gain confidence and improved communication skills, as a result of the good support provided for them.
- Children do very well in developing their personal and social skills. Staff encourage them to be independent and to try to do things for themselves. For example, they are learning to fasten up coats and put on wellingtons to go outside. They work together extremely well in enthusiastic 'tidy-up' teams at the end of sessions.
- Because they have regular opportunities to sing together, children recognise rhyme and know and enjoy many nursery rhymes and songs. They enjoyed retelling the Christmas story to packed audiences of parents and family members, acting out the parts and singing the songs and carols with great enthusiasm.
- Children are interested in mark-making and writing activities. They are learning to recognise writing in the labels and displays around the nursery. They identify their own names when they register at the start of sessions and at snack times. They use chalks, crayons, felt-tips and other media to represent writing on different surfaces, from sand to paper.
- As a result of effective and highly-structured small-group teaching, children are starting to recognise the sounds at the start of words and the letters that represent them; this is a new development in the nursery, however, and there has not yet been time for it to show a full impact on children's learning and progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Staff have a wide range of experience and expertise. They know the children and their families very well. Parents think highly of them and appreciate the care they bring to their roles.
- In their letters to the inspector, parents spoke about how much their children had learned in such a short time in the nursery. A typical comment was, 'My child is much more aware of the world around her and is much more confident – she comes home and sings songs to us!'
- In all of their letters and in the meeting with the inspector, parents said how happy they were with the progress their children were making. A number of parents reported that the school's prompt identification of their children's additional needs had enabled speedy action to be taken, with helpful support provided. Many parents spoke of how staff in the nursery and family learning courses in the children's centre had helped them to support their child at home, and the

positive difference this had made.

- Teachers plan sessions well. They review activities regularly to ensure that they are interesting for the children and that they support learning and progress well.
- Adults spend time talking to the children and questioning them, helping them to achieve increasingly well in speaking and listening. However, staff sometimes miss opportunities to check on children in free-choice activities to ensure that they are learning to stay focused on an activity for a sustained period of time.
- A regular check on each child's progress is used well to plan future learning. The children's 'learning journey' books give a lively account of their progress across the areas of learning. They include photographs and examples of counting, number work and early writing. Records of comments children have made about their learning are also included and show their developing language skills.
- All of the children receive small-group teaching, including sessions with their key carer each day. This is helping to move their learning and progress forward and to build their confidence as learners. Small-group sessions to teach the children about letters and sounds have been introduced this term; this is a very positive development, although still at an early stage, and children are interested and keen to learn more.
- Staff work well with a wide range of other professionals to ensure good support for children who have additional needs and this is a key factor in helping those children to make the same good progress as everyone else. Very detailed assessments are provided during the year for the children in the additional places provided by the local authority. This helps to ensure that children's next placement is accurately matched to their individual needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children are often fully absorbed in their play. Because they enjoy their activities and are busy and happy, there are very few squabbles.
- They play together extremely well and chat to each other about what they are doing. They sit at the computer with a friend and enjoy using a software programme together. They take part in role-play activities together, acting out favourite stories.
- Everyone knows and understands the school's routines. Children respond exceptionally well to signals at the end of sessions and know when it is time to tidy up or to go and sit on the carpet in their key groups. They have trusting relationships with the staff and know that they will be well looked after if they are unwell or upset.
- Children are kind to each other, welcoming and friendly with visitors; they have a good understanding, appropriate to their age, of what are the right and the wrong things to do.
- Staff are very positive role-models and everyone is treated with care and respect in the nursery.
- Children attend regularly and their punctuality is good; this reflects a strong partnership between home and school.
- Induction arrangements for children at the start of the year are planned carefully and are extremely supportive. The school has close links with the nearby primary school and with other local schools. It works with them to ensure a smooth transition for children as they move up into the Reception classes.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads a complex organisation skilfully and provides strong and effective leadership in the nursery school. She is well supported by the assistant headteacher, by a united staff team and by well-informed governors. There is a vigorous drive for continuous improvement and the school has successfully addressed the areas for action that were identified at its last inspection.

- The arrangements for checking how well staff are performing are robust and performance is measured against the progress children make. An extensive programme of staff training and professional development ensures that staff skills are continually being up-dated and improved.
 - Leaders have a detailed picture of every child's progress; regular checks are made across the year and careful records are kept.
 - The school development plan identifies well-chosen actions to help children to learn and progress well. However, the plan does not include clear targets for children's progress during the year, and this means that leaders' overall picture of how well the children are doing is not as precise as it might otherwise be.
 - The school's partnership with parents is a considerable strength. Parents are given many opportunities to become involved in their children's learning. They are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work and its importance in their community.
 - Children in the nursery benefit greatly from the centre's partnerships with a wide range of agencies in the community, including health and social services and other local schools.
 - The local authority provides regular advisory support for this good school; this has helped leaders to drive forward the improvements achieved since the school's last inspection.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of children's achievement and of the quality of teaching and learning in the nursery. This enables them to evaluate the school's work competently. They contribute to managing staff performance, ensuring everyone is held to account for children's progress. Governors carry out their statutory duties effectively, ensuring that the effective procedures to safeguard children's welfare are managed well and reviewed regularly. They ensure that equal opportunities are promoted actively; that all of the children have every opportunity to enjoy all of the activities on offer and that there is no discrimination. Governors attend regular training events and often join in staff training activities.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104847
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	400742

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Cliff
Headteacher	Debbie Clark
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2010
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