

Millfield Community Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108745
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	324825
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Sheila Mawer

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	71
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	35
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Fiona Barnes
Headteacher	Miss Carol Thompson
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2006
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bell Street Sunderland Tyne and Wear SR4 6JR
Telephone number	0191 5532775
Fax number	0191 5532777

Age group	3–4
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2009
Inspection number	324825

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

The school is situated close to the centre of Sunderland. Children attend part-time on a flexible basis, from the start of the term following their third birthday. The school manages and provides nursery education and day care provision for up to 72 three and four-year-old children and childcare for up to 41 children, including 11 places for under three's, which was inspected as part of the school inspection. The large majority of children are of White British heritage. About a quarter are from minority ethnic backgrounds and most of these children are learning English as an additional language. On occasions, up to eight different home languages are represented in the school. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average for a school of this size. The school has experienced significant changes since the previous inspection. Following major refurbishment in 2008 it became part of a designated Children's Centre where a wide range of family health and welfare services for the local community are also provided.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Millfield is a good school. Some of its provision is outstanding. The headteacher has shown good leadership in managing the refurbishment of the building and the expansion of services into a successful school. Excellent partnerships are established with parents and health professionals. These are crucial in promoting the children's welfare, which is outstanding. Excellent care and support, safeguarding and child protection arrangements meet national requirements and levels of supervision are high. The children's personal development is outstanding. They are happy and eager learners and this is reflected in excellent behaviour and good attendance. They understand how to keep safe and healthy and cooperate successfully with each other in their play by taking turns and sharing equipment. These skills are preparing them well for their future lives. Parents express exceptionally high levels of confidence in the Nursery and day care provision. They appreciate in particular the autonomy given to children, the wide choice of activities, the caring and nurturing environment and the seamless move from day care to nursery.

Children in the Nursery and those receiving day care achieve well. They make good progress from starting points that are below what is usual for their age. By the time they leave the school, most children are equipped with the skills appropriate for their age and make particularly strong progress in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language also make good progress because their needs are quickly assessed and they receive good support. Children learn and develop successfully both indoors and outside through good teaching and rich learning experiences, which often include visits and visitors. Children's progress in writing, letters and sounds are satisfactory. When planning and teaching, staff sometimes miss the opportunities to focus on the development of these skills across all activities. The progress children make in all of their learning is tracked, giving the school a clear view of achievement on entry and exit. Staff observe and assess the children's progress during activities. These observations are useful, but too descriptive to give a clear view of what has been achieved and what to plan for the next steps in learning.

Leadership, management and governance are good. Effective provision in both the Nursery and day care setting has been achieved through strong teamwork from the headteacher, nursery teacher and day care manager. They share high aspirations and provide good guidance to the staff and clear direction for the school. Where improvements are needed, training and support is offered and welcomed by staff as a means of improving their practice. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development through their monitoring role. In this positive climate of seeking to make provision even better, good improvements have been made since the previous inspection and the capacity for further improvements is good. This very inclusive school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Children from a very wide range of backgrounds and cultures get on extremely well together and respect and celebrate their differences. With the growth of the school the needs of the local community are being successfully met through its wide range of services and support. The school is an integral and important part of the local community.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the planning and teaching of writing skills and letters and sounds to raise standards in communication, language and literacy.

- Improve the observations made by adults during activities to gain a more accurate view of how well children are achieving to plan the next stage in the teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in the school from starting points that are below what is expected for their age and often low in aspects of language and mathematics. Close partnerships with parents and good day care provision ensure that children get off to a positive start and continue to make good progress through the school. Children who are learning English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities all progress at the same rate as their peers and their learning is successful. This is because they are well supported and work is specifically planned to meet their targets. By the time they leave the school, the vast majority of children attain the standards expected for their age in most areas of learning. Progress is particularly good in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. Children's progress and skills in writing and linking sounds and letters is not as rapid, as these aspects of learning are not always planned and promoted enough in their activities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's outstanding personal development is promoted exceptionally well through a rich learning environment and excellent relationships. Thorough induction arrangements and good quality day care help the children to settle quickly into the routines of the school. They show a great eagerness to learn and their good attendance reflects a keen enjoyment of school. Children share resources fairly and act responsibly, gaining qualities to prepare them well for the future. In choosing their own learning, they know how to keep themselves safe. This was clearly demonstrated when they travelled safely through an obstacle course on bikes and chose to wear hats to protect them from the sun. Most children behave impeccably, reflecting the school's success in developing their social skills. Improved outdoor provision is strongly promoting the children's problem solving and creative skills, as well as keeping them fit. The woodland garden provides much awe and wonder, with bird watching being the main focus of excitement at the moment. The school regularly endorses healthy lifestyles and safety. The children enjoy healthy snacks and try out different foods to help them make sensible eating choices. Children are very keen to contribute to school life by caring for plants they are growing, supporting each other in play and tidying up at the end of the day. In a wide social and cultural mix, the children respect and support each other exceptionally well. Global links are extended through a partnership with a nursery school in Kenya.

Quality of provision

Effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development

Grade: 2

Good provision for children aged three and under lays a secure foundation for later learning. In the day care setting, children are engaged in safe and rewarding learning experiences and these continue in the Nursery. Children succeed in their learning through good teaching, effective support and a strong understanding from adults of how young children learn effectively. The children benefit considerably from a good range of activities inside and out. It engages them purposely in their play and gives them choices to be active learners. A good balance is

achieved between adult led sessions and free choices for the children. At times, writing skills and linking letters and sounds are not given regular practice across all areas of learning. Planning and teaching is not always promoting the development of these skills sufficiently. As children investigate and learn, adults make written observations of progress. These observations are sometimes too general and not concentrating on what the children have achieved and the next stage of the learning. The school works very successfully to promote and value parents' contributions to learning and development. Parents join their children in a variety of well attended 'shared' family learning workshops. For example, parents and children alike hugely enjoyed a dance workshop during the inspection. The flexible arrangements for attending nursery and day care are really appreciated by parents.

Effectiveness in promoting children's welfare

Grade: 1

Outstanding welfare and care arrangements contribute significantly to the children's excellent personal development. Key workers have a thorough knowledge of the children they support and ensure they feel safe, secure and happy. All staff have received training to bring them up to date with recent requirements regarding children's welfare and safety. Statutory requirements to safeguard children meet current requirements. Thorough risk assessments are made to ensure that children are safe inside, outdoors and during visits. Health and safety requirements are exemplary, particularly in recording accidents, notifying parents and administering medicines correctly. Any barriers to learning, especially for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language, are significantly reduced through early interventions and very good support from outside agencies. Promoting the welfare of children aged three and under in the day care setting is of the same high standard as Nursery. Parents express complete confidence in the care and safety of their children at school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

As the school has grown, management demands have increased significantly. The headteacher has successfully established a strong leadership team to ensure that all services are well coordinated and run smoothly and that challenging targets are met. The school's mission statement of providing equality of opportunity for all children and promoting high quality care and education is effectively met. Senior staff have improved their roles since the last inspection and are beginning to take on more formal responsibilities in monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and self-evaluation is accurate, although too modest at times. Governors are very supportive of the school and fulfil their roles well. Through reporting back on visits, attending training courses with staff and monitoring the improvement plan, they are holding the school to account. The governors were closely involved in the school's refurbishment. They have welcomed its expansion, particularly in how resources are being used effectively for the benefit of the community and the positive impact this is having on community cohesion.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
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	2

Achievement and standards

How well do children in the EYFS 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/or disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

14 May 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Millfield Community Nursery School, Sunderland, SR4 6JR

I really enjoyed my inspection of your lovely school. Thank you for sharing some of your activities with me and letting me join you at lunchtime. I want to tell you what I found out during my visit and what I have told your parents in the report.

Your school is good and some things are excellent. You are all making good progress in the activities you really enjoy, both indoors and outside. I know how proud your teachers are of your excellent behaviour and how much you help each other. You are all very well cared for by adults, who make sure that you are safe and secure in the school. It was good to see so many of you using a lot of energy outside on the bikes and trikes to keep fit and choosing healthy foods at snack time. Everywhere I went I saw happy smiling faces, because you were having so much fun in choosing your own activities. I also noticed how you all remembered to put on your sun hats when playing outdoors. That was very sensible, as the sun was very hot on the day I watched you outdoors. The headteacher and the governors are doing a really good job to make sure that you all learn as well as you can. Those of you who go to the day care are being looked after very well indeed and getting on as well as everyone else in the school.

I have asked the school to give you more time to practise your writing and learn your letters and sounds. This will help you a lot when you move on to the Reception class. You might have noticed adults writing down how well you are doing in your activities so they can help you to get better. They are going to check that what they write down really helps them to improve your learning.

Some of you will leave the school at the end of term and move on to the Reception class in your next school. For those staying and those moving on, I hope you will continue to work hard, enjoy your learning and have lots of fun.

Yours faithfully

Sheila Mawer

Lead inspector