

Clifton High School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Type of inspection	Nursery Education

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Clifton High School is an independent school providing independent nursery education since 1979. The nursery and pre-preparatory departments operate from Regency buildings within the grounds of the lower school, in Clifton, Bristol. The nursery department has separate accommodation with three classes on two levels with additional imaginative play areas, the library and hall on another level. They have their own enclosed gardens. The pre-preparatory department is separate from the nursery in the same building as children in years one and two. There are two classes on ground level with access to the outdoor area. The setting is open five days a week, during term time, from 08:30-15:30 (Nursery) and 08:30-15:35 (Pre Prep).

There are currently 52 children from three to five years on roll in the nursery and pre-preparatory department. All children are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children attend on a variety of patterns including; morning only, full-time and a mixture of mornings and full days. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities, for whom English is an additional language.

There are 26 members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, 10 hold teaching qualifications and 10 hold early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the local authority. The nursery has held the Bristol Standard consistently since 2002, whilst the reception gained the Bristol Standard in 2005.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding; children make excellent progress in all areas of learning. Staff have a thorough knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and understand how they promote and support children's learning through a wide variety of interesting and innovative activities, resources and approaches that reflect children's interests. Staff effectively build upon information gained when children join the nursery and pre-prep department to provide resources, activities and opportunities that support children to make rapid progress. Planning for learning and development is highly effective and well-informed. Frequent observations, rigorous and robust assessment and evaluation of each child's achievements and progress linked to the stepping stones, ensure that their next steps are clearly identified, planned and supported. The coherent system ensures a seamless transition for children when moving from the nursery to the reception class.

An abundance of visual displays of children's own work, including large scale collages prompted by visits from a community poet, photographs and visual images of the wider world, creates an inviting and vibrant environment in the nursery and reception areas. Thoughtful planning and layout of the inside and outside areas promotes all areas of the curriculum, giving children free choice and accessibility to an extensive range of resources. Consequently, children are motivated to investigate and try out new experiences.

Children are engrossed and highly motivated as activities focus, consolidate, and build upon their own interests. For example, staff build upon children's interest in non-fiction books, such as 'A walk in the park'. Children listen and respond well to the clear guidance given by staff to use a digital camera in the outside play area. They are fascinated by what they see and work cooperatively with each other, taking turns to use the camera. Children take photographs of friends and items in the garden that interest them, eagerly talking about vegetables they planted and explain how they care for them. Children show the visiting inspector the labels they have written themselves, clearly demonstrating an understanding that print has meaning. They show curiosity and are intrigued by the still image, experimenting as they hold the camera at different angles. Children develop a good understanding of technology as they observe their photographs on an interactive white board, commenting on images they like. Staff use frequent open-ended questions effectively to support children to develop their own ideas and thoughts. They observe the photographs they have taken on individual printed sheets and offer suggestions using mathematical language of number and position to decide how many photographs should be included in the book and why. Children demonstrate good problem solving skills as they decide how they will mark which photographs they choose. Children are guided effectively by staff, using the mouse on the computer to select their photographs and print the images.

Children's expression of their own ideas is well reflected in the imaginative play areas. Children choose to make a museum and what to include within it. Items include bones, African musical instruments, a dragon café and art gallery. Excellent resources support and extend children's learning. Children are fascinated by the bones, they are intrigued by its shape and are introduced to instruments for measuring its width. Parents support children's learning by supplying a wide and varied range of objects to include in the museum. Staff support children appropriately to talk about these objects, recalling what they contained such as a chocolate box, linking sounds and letters to the country of origin and using their sense of smell and touch to observe differences. Children use mathematical language to describe the length of objects. Children

eagerly make marks to label their items; older more able children write correctly formed words and short sentences.

Staff are knowledgeable and offer children opportunities to develop good learning through both adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children's physical development is well promoted through the highly effective planning of physical play sessions and spontaneous opportunities. Staff promote specific skills and provide challenges that extend children appropriately. Children listen and follow instructions, and know they have to move their bodies in a variety of ways to warm themselves up before physical activity. They find space for themselves to move safely and take turns to throw and catch a variety of appropriate objects, such as bean bags and soft and hard, small and large balls that allows each child to achieve. Staff offer a variety of challenges using differing targets. Staff ensure that children cool down from activities, whilst also developing control and coordination by singing action songs such as 'The Golden Corn'.

Staff skilfully use everyday experiences such as snack time to develop children's understanding and self care skills. For example, children clearly identify their names on their milk mats, select their own seat and make choices between milk and water, pouring their own drinks as required. Children enjoy a range of interesting foods that they have prepared themselves or observe in the making. For instance, a visiting parent introduces children to the ingredients for chapattis. Staff guide children to develop their mathematical skills, identify different forms of measurement and comparison, using cups and their hands. They manipulate, mould and roll the dough. They comment on the texture and shape and observe the changes that take place when cooked. Children in another classroom are intrigued by a popcorn making machine. They listen to the poem 'Popalong Hopcorn' and recall familiar phrases. They are encouraged to use all their senses, describing the texture of the corn when uncooked, the sound of the machine, smell during cooking and description of corn ready to eat. Children squeal with delight when the corn cascades from the machine. Children show care and consideration for each other, taking account of their friends' dietary needs.

Children respond well to the high expectations of staff; their behaviour is extremely good. Effective strategies encourage them to take turns and listen to others, such as the 'thumbs up' sign and agreed ground rules and responses to others based upon respect. Children are happy and settled and quickly become engrossed in the wide range of activities, leaving little time for undesirable behaviour.

Children learn to respect differences, as they learn about their own, the wider community and the lives of others through well planned and innovative activities that are enhanced through a wealth of authentic resources, dedicated involvement of parents and visits within and by representatives, such as the community policemen. For example, parents support children to contribute items for 'life boxes' to be shared with a linked school in Mozambique. African musicians and story teller extend children's awareness of difference. Children are encouraged to develop an awareness of an eco-friendly life style that reflects those of the school in Africa by re-cycling materials in a useful way. Children use plastic bottles as cloches and old sinks and food tins for planting vegetables in the garden. Parents extend these activities by showing children how to create plant pots from newspaper.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. Comprehensive and clear written information with an emphasis on parental involvement from the first point of contact, in conjunction with

information evenings and thorough discussion with staff, ensures all parents are well informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum and how their children are supported in their learning. Clear information from parents, combined with early observations by staff, provides the clear starting point of each child's developmental assessment. Excellent relationships are forged with parents, who are very well informed about their own child's achievements within the six areas of learning and their next steps. This is achieved through easy access to their own child's learning diaries, an open door policy to discuss their child's progress at any time, the sharing of their children's achievements at home, written reports and one-to-one two way feedback between parents and staff through two parents evenings, each academic year. Extensive focused displays of children's work clearly illustrates children's progressive steps in development in each area of learning and promotes parents understanding further. Parents are extremely supportive, very enthusiastic and thoughtfully play an active part in their own child's learning. For instance, providing objects that reflect their own child's interests during 'hand bag heaven', work alongside their children to create willow structures in the outdoor play area and attend information evenings to understand the ethos and focus of activities influenced by a visit by staff to the link school in Mozambique. Parents willingly share their life and professional skills to enhance children's learning. For example, parents extend children's understanding of their own bodies and people who help them by using authentic materials to plaster their lower arms.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The leadership and management is outstanding. The clear vision of the Foundation Stage Coordinator is inspiring. The enthusiasm and commitment of the highly qualified staff to develop their understanding, skills and shared thinking and to review and share good practice is exemplary and ensures that children make excellent progress. The robust and rigorous, regularly reviewed, evaluated and highly effective monitoring system of planning and individual assessment records ensures that children move forward appropriately at their own pace. The Foundation Stage Coordinator and team use their thorough knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, frequent discussions and meetings to effectively plan a wide range of interesting activities that excite and challenge children in all areas of learning. On-going effective monitoring and evaluation through a recognised quality assurance scheme clearly identifies strengths and areas they wish to improve. Children are highly valued and respected by passionate staff who are committed to ensuring that each child's needs are identified and supported within the Foundation Stage.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last nursery education inspection there were no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration was asked to be given to improving the information for parents on short term plans and activities, to ensure they are well informed of the educational provision and to draw reception and nursery practice and procedures closer, to consolidate the Foundation Stage within the school.

Since the last nursery education inspection the areas for consideration have been fully addressed as identified in this report. The appointment of a Foundation Stage Coordinator has had a significant impact in enhancing the provision. Parents are exceedingly well informed about all

aspects of the nursery education provision and their children's progress. The nursery and reception classes work closely as a team, sharing knowledge and best practice and are dedicated to ensuring that all children thrive.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk