

Greenacre Community Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104848
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	377137
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2012
Lead inspector	Tim Vaughan HMI

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Barrington
Headteacher	Cathy Earley
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed four sessions led by two teachers and a team of nursery nurses and teaching assistants. Meetings were held with members of the governing body and staff. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school improvement plan, the safeguarding policy and the school's own self-evaluation. The inspector analysed 19 parental and carers' questionnaires and others completed by staff. Inspectors consulted the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. At the time there were no responses available on Parent View.

Information about the school

Greenacre Nursery School is a smaller than average nursery school. A small number of children are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A small minority of children speak English as an additional language. The number of disabled children and those with special educational needs is above average. The number of children known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Investors in People status. The school has resourced provision for children with special educational needs and this was inspected as part of this inspection.

In September 2011 the school established a formal collaboration with Sand Dunes Nursery School. They share the same headteacher and deputy headteacher but each has a separate governing body. This inspection relates only to Greenacre Nursery.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of children	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of children	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Every child and their family are respected and treated as an individual. As a result, children and parents and carers feel valued and included. 'My child has improved so much by coming to Greenacre', was a typical parental comment. Children, including disabled children and those with special educational needs, enjoy the many opportunities to play, learn and make friends. The school is currently not outstanding because there is not enough excellent teaching to ensure that children make outstanding progress.
- Children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are well below those typical for three-year-olds. All children, including the disabled and those with special educational needs, then make good progress from their starting points and achieve well.
- Teaching is good. All staff engage children very effectively through the well-developed classroom and large garden. However, there are some missed opportunities to use open-ended questions to extend children's language and thinking. In addition, there are some inconsistencies in teaching children the sounds that letters make. Books for children display an insufficient number of images of people in non-stereotypical roles.
- Children show good behaviour and relate well to staff, particularly their key worker. They play confidently and cooperatively throughout the school and seek help when needed. They display good respect for differences between people.
- The performance management of all staff is rigorous and supported by good professional development. The headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, knows the strengths of the school. They share a vision for improvement and are clear about the areas in which the school must improve further. For example, they are aware that further training for the governing body on safeguarding will enhance the challenge that they give to the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning by:
 - more frequent use of open-ended questions to extend children’s language and thinking
 - consistently and accurately teaching the sounds that letters make
 - ensuring that images of men, women and minority ethnic groups in non-stereotypical roles are evident in books for children.
- Improve leadership and management by providing further training on safeguarding for the governing body.

Main Report

Achievement of children

Almost all children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are well below those typical for three-year-olds. During the inspection staff were seen to use their knowledge of individual children’s strengths to make very effective use of talk, play and investigation, stories and creative activities. As a result, children were making good progress across the areas of learning. Children enjoy being artistic and they are curious about the world around them. They engage enthusiastically in activities celebrating different faiths and cultures. They respect one another and mix well together. School data show that children are increasingly leaving the school well prepared for the next phase of their education. This represents good achievement considering their starting points.

Children’s progress in personal, social and emotional development and their use of language for communication are strengths of the school. This is illustrated by the confident manner in which newer nursery children approached the inspector to ask what he was doing, or just to talk about themselves to him. Furthermore, children make good progress in their early skills in using books. During the inspection individual children and small groups regularly and spontaneously shared high-quality books with staff. Consequently, children talked confidently about the role of an author, the purpose of a book bar code and the function of the blurb on the cover. However, their ability to link sounds to letters is less well developed because of inconsistencies in teaching.

The skills gap between groups, such as between boys and girls, is closing. This is because staff successfully engage children, for example, in mixed groups to role play, to bake and to be active outdoors. Parents and carers recognise the impact that the school is having, for example, saying, ‘until my child came to Greenacre, he found it hard to communicate...the school has helped him...he is now very confident in all aspects of school, play and home life’.

The school provides resourced places for children with special educational needs. These children and those with disabilities make good progress whilst at the school. This is because staff are committed to building upon what children can already do. It

is also because of the careful planning and tracking of progress by their allocated key workers, well supported by advice from the headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching by all staff is good and some is outstanding. The responses from parents and carers to the inspection questionnaire reflect this. In the best teaching observed during the inspection staff were subtle in how they extended children's play. They encouraged children to make choices and decisions, worked and played alongside children and used positive, reassuring facial expressions and talk. They also used open-ended questions such as 'how did you do that?' and 'what do you think?' to engage children. During one example a nursery nurse was observed teaching children to be cooperative and creative over a sustained period, wall-papering the large outdoor playhouse one day and then painting all of it bright blue the next. In another example a teacher at a baking activity was able to sustain children's interest over a long period through her careful questioning whilst also ensuring that a range of children with special educational needs were fully included. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are aware that there need to be more such examples if aspirations for more teaching to become outstanding are to be realised.

Teaching regularly involves activities to help children listen attentively, enlarge their vocabulary and speak with confidence. However, when the inspector observed the attention being given to the sounds that letters make, staff were inconsistent in their accuracy of enunciating sounds. Senior leaders are correct to identify that improving staff's skills in, and knowledge of, the teaching of letters and sounds is a priority.

The school curriculum is flexible around children's needs and interests across the areas of learning of the Early Years Foundation Stage and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. A strong emphasis is placed upon children learning together, on their first-hand exploration of stories and objects and upon making, drawing and creating.

The learning environment is a key part of the planned approach to the curriculum and it is used very effectively. The nursery has been carefully organised and there are well-developed spaces, including those for reading stories, role play, block play, three-dimensional modelling and playing with trains and toy cars. The outdoor area extends this provision to include many opportunities to dance, run, climb, crawl, hide and cycle.

Each day key workers carefully observe children's learning and then, led very effectively by teachers, they debate their assessments and clearly identify the next steps in learning for individuals and groups of children. This information is shared with parents and carers, and staff routinely track and review children's progress.

Behaviour and safety of children

Through careful attention to daily routines, room organisation, room access and the outdoor area, the school is a safe environment. The school has a well-developed key

worker system, which means that children have an identifiable adult with whom to build a close relationship. Children say that they like being in a group with their nominated worker. As a result, children are confident, inquisitive and well-behaved. Their good behaviour is acknowledged by parents, carers and staff. Children are very accepting of differences between people, for example those with disabilities. There are no recorded instances of bullying and parents and carers rightly express confidence in the school's systems for dealing with any issues that might arise.

Whilst attendance is not compulsory, the school has identified that improving attendance is an ongoing priority. It has improved over the last three years but at an average of 71% over the last six months it is still low. Absences or regular lateness are carefully followed up with parents and carers and with the local authority as appropriate.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, who is new since the last inspection, leads with determination and from a clear set of principles. She has placed a firm emphasis upon the school's vision of quality being one about equality and belonging for all local children and families. She has ensured that the school has successfully addressed the recommendation made at the last inspection that staff identify more systematically and inform colleagues more formally about the next steps that all children need to take. This is now a strength of the school.

The well-planned collaboration with another nursery has brought additional expertise to the team of Greenacre through the creation of a new, shared deputy headteacher post. This has already led to enhanced staff development around data analysis of the progress made by individuals and groups of children, enabling staff to use this data with confidence.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher share an ambitious vision for the ongoing improvement of the school. Self-evaluation builds upon contributions from the whole staff team and the governing body and is perceptive and accurate. Through the expertise and strong teamwork between teaching assistants, nursery nurses and teachers the school curriculum enables children to develop confidence across the areas of learning.

Equality and diversity are strongly promoted, and the inclusion of disabled children and those with special educational needs and their parents and carers is particularly successful. However, there are not enough images of minority ethnic groups and men and women in non-stereotypical roles in the books for children to sufficiently challenge children's beliefs.

Children show a good understanding of right and wrong and mix well with one another, showing respect for individual differences. Children's own achievements are attractively celebrated in their learning journeys, which are full of photographs and quotations, and are shared with parents and carers regularly. Consequently, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding children meet statutory requirements and, in many cases, reflect good practice. For example, levels of staff training are high and there is regular discussion about safeguarding in staff meetings and at meetings of the governing body. However, for the governing body to be better placed to challenge the school in this area further training in safeguarding is needed.

Good performance management and access to professional development means that staff are reflective and focused upon improvement. The freshness of perspective brought by leaders is helping the successful and highly trained staff team to further develop the quality of their teaching and evaluate their practice more critically. For example, the school has just started a 12-month programme of self-evaluation and improvement involving nationally supported training. Considering this and the school's other strengths, including a clear understanding of priorities, the capacity for further improvement is good.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the child's work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of children at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well children behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Childrens' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the children' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe children are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Childrens' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 March 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Greenacre Nursery School, Bootle L20 6PJ

Thank you for being so kind to me when I came to watch you playing in the nursery. I watched choosing time, group time, lunchtime, snack time and playing outdoors. I was very pleased that you talked to me when I visited your nursery. You told me about the nursery and what you like to play. You showed me that Greenacre is a good nursery school.

I was very interested to see all the different places where you can play in the nursery. Most of all I liked the model-making area, the book area and your super garden and the newly painted house – which you painted blue! I liked the dancing that I saw children doing with ribbons outdoors and the good way that teachers look after everybody. You told me that you like going to nursery and are very safe when you are there. Your parents and carers also told me that they are very happy with the nursery and that you have good teachers.

I really liked your learning journeys. These show the exciting activities that you do each week. I am glad that you share these with your families. I was very pleased to hear how you are learning new stories, rhymes and numbers. To help your school be even better, I have asked your teachers to find ways to help you learn even more during your special time at Greenacre. I have also asked teachers to find out how to teach you about the sounds that letters make.

Your mums and dads must be very proud of what you are learning at school. Well done.

Yours sincerely

Tim Vaughan
Her Majesty's Inspector

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