

St Germain Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105145
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	355709
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Hewlett

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	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Amanda Collingbourn
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Grecic
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, involving one teacher and five nursery assistants, and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at assessments and records of children's attainment and progress, curriculum planning, monitoring records and school improvement plans. Twenty four questionnaires returned from parents and carers were analysed as were seven questionnaires completed by staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- Whether the nursery has sustained its level of effectiveness since the last inspection.
- Whether teaching and the assessment of children's progress is consistently good or better.
- Whether the leadership of the school is benefiting from being in a federation.

Information about the school

Children who attend this average size Nursery school are predominantly of White British heritage. A small minority has special educational needs and/or disabilities. Very small numbers of children speak English as an additional language. There is a children's centre on site which was not the subject of this inspection. The school is part of a federation with two other schools. The Early Years Foundation Stage building contains children from all three schools and is located on a separate site from the rest of the school. An Executive Headteacher coordinates the work of the three schools, which are part of a federation with a shared governing body. The majority of children attend part-time, either in the morning or in the afternoon, with some children staying for lunch. The nursery holds the Nurturing School award and Healthy School status.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good nursery. Good care, guidance and support ensure that children are safe, happy and secure. Children's individual qualities and talents are nurtured and highly valued by staff. This makes a strong contribution to children's good behaviour and growing independence. These qualities underpin their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents and carers are highly appreciative of what the school provides. Comments such as, 'The nursery is fantastic,' typify parents' views.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the school and achieve well. They learn effectively because of the stimulating curriculum, which is carefully designed to meet their individual needs and because they are well supported by skilled staff. For most of the time, children select or initiate their learning from a wealth of exciting activities. They show good attitudes towards learning with the majority determined to complete a task before they move onto something else. This is impressive as most children are new to school. As a result, they are confident as they tackle the increasingly challenging tasks that they face. Children's progress is carefully recorded in 'learning journeys' which provide a valuable record of children's experiences and set out clearly the next steps in their learning. However, not all staff use this information as effectively as they might. Consequently, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of the teaching and missed opportunities to extend children's learning across different subject areas. This is particularly evident in developing children's mathematical skills.

Leaders have a good overview of the work of the school and know its strengths and where it needs to improve. For example, they recognise that children's knowledge of the wider world and their contact with children from different communities could be better.

Partnership working, promoting equal opportunities, tackling discrimination and safeguarding procedures are all excellent. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate, with no hint of complacency despite the good provision described in past inspections. Significant improvements have been made in recent years as the school has successfully combined with two other Early Years Foundation Stage departments. Staff and the governing body are united in their pursuit of continuous improvement. All this confirms the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of the teaching, so that the school's best practice is
- reflected throughout by, ensuring that:
 - - staff take every opportunity to improve children's mathematical language and calculation skills in all the areas of learning

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- - assessment of children's progress is consistently used to plan their next steps in learning.
- Broaden children's understanding of the rich diversity that exists in the wider world and increase their contact with it.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

Overall, children enter nursery with knowledge and skills at levels that are below those expected for their age. They make good progress so that by the time they leave, the majority meet the expected outcomes for their age. Children are active and eager learners and achieve well. Most listen attentively and answer questions enthusiastically. Children practise new skills successfully, such as mark making and drawing, with a few able to make a good attempt at writing their own name. Their progress in developing mathematical skills is slower than in other areas of learning. This is because there are some missed opportunities to improve children counting skills or introduce mathematical language when they are engaged in other activities, such as role play or construction. Nevertheless, their knowledge and understanding of the world grows rapidly, for example, by observing and investigating plants in the school garden. Physical skills, such as climbing and balancing, develop well and children often become immersed in role play for extended periods. This encourages their creativity and imagination. Personal, social and emotional development is a particular strength and evident in children's growing independence and the consideration they show for one another.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as their peers because their individual needs are identified early and are well catered for. More-able children also make good progress due to the effective challenge that they are offered. For example, personalised learning programmes are devised for them which include extension work with letters and sounds. Equally good progress is made by those few children who speak English as an additional language.

Within this nurturing environment, children are beginning to understand the consequences of their actions. They feel completely safe and know how to stay safe. The strong emphasis placed on exercise and healthy eating at snack times helps children to adopt healthy lifestyles and understand the importance of good hygiene. They make a good contribution to the school and wider community by acting sensibly, looking after their friends and taking care of equipment. Behaviour and relationships are good throughout. Children learn to play cooperatively and make good progress in acquiring key skills, such as using a computer, which helps to prepare them for the future. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their pride in achieving so well as in their improving attendance.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment ¹	3
The quality of children's learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children's behaviour	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance ¹	3
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Children select from a good range of well-planned and resourced activities, indoors and outside. Key to the provision and its effectiveness is the good quality of the staff team. They have a good understanding of how young children learn. In the very best activities, they take every opportunity to improve and extend children's language skills through challenging open-ended questions. Staff know just when to redirect children to different activities to ensure that they keep their learning purposeful. Accurate assessments, based on regular observations, are used well to identify the next steps in children's learning. This helps adults to closely match the activities provided to children's individual learning needs, to raise the level of challenge and to keep parents and carers informed. It also results in children's very diverse learning needs being met. Occasionally, the teaching does not match these high standards. When this happens some opportunities to extend and improve children's learning are missed and assessment information is not sufficiently taken into account when the next activity is planned.

The good and exciting curriculum enables children to build upon earlier learning. It is firmly based on responding to children's interests and, as a result keeps them involved and engaged. For example, the 'baby clinic', constructed in the role play area brought an immediacy and relevance to the learning. Children booked appointments, made phone calls and produced lists of 'illnesses' that they had diagnosed. This resulted in children

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demonstrating an impressive array of organisational and cooperative skills as they worked with other 'clinic staff' and 'patients'. Staff broaden children's experiences with an enrichment programme that includes an extensive range of visitors.

The key worker system, where an adult is responsible for a small group of children, provides good pastoral care and this has a positive impact on children's behaviour. Parents and carers value the helpful advice and guidance provided by staff. Adults are very skilled in identifying and supporting vulnerable children and they link very well with outside agencies, such as health professionals and other staff both within the centre and the local authority, to reduce any barriers to learning. Good induction arrangements help children settle quickly and happily into school. Similarly, effective contact with primary schools helps smooth transfer into the next stage of education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Self-evaluation is good. It is accurate, honest and linked firmly to the school's ongoing review processes. Led by a very effective executive headteacher and head of Early Years Foundation Stage, the school strives successfully to deliver high quality early years practice. Together they make a strong team which combines to provide children with the best possible start. Good partnerships with parents and carers are central to the school's vision. Parents and carers speak in positive terms about how well their children have settled and how they are kept informed about all aspects of their children's achievements. As a result, they are in a better position to support the work of the school and to consolidate their children's learning. The school is committed totally to providing equality of opportunity for all children and tackling any potential discrimination. Consequently, different groups of children perform equally well.

Staff and the governing body have carried out a detailed review of provision for community cohesion. The nursery is at the heart of its community and the linked children's centre and library help to meet the need of families within the immediate and wider local community. At the same time, there is recognition that there is still more to be done. For example, there is a need to improve children's knowledge and understanding of the wider world, as well as their contact with children from different communities.

All required policies for child protection, safeguarding and children's welfare are fully in place and they are reviewed and updated regularly. Staff and governors ensure that they are implemented rigorously with the result that safeguarding procedures are outstanding.

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Good quality provision and outcomes for children, together with strong leadership and well deployed staff, contribute to good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost a half the parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Of these, almost all who returned questionnaires were very supportive of the school. Comments such as, 'Teaching standards are excellent', and, 'We couldn't ask for more', sum up the views of parents and carers. Very few comments raised concerns. Where they did, they related to the amount of time that children spent in Nursery and the length of the sessions. During the inspection, inspectors found no evidence to support these concerns, but confirmed the accuracy of the overwhelmingly positive responses.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Germain Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 24 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 76 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	88	3	13	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	88	3	13	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	79	4	17	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	67	8	33	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	75	5	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	71	6	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	83	4	17	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	67	4	17	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	79	5	21	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	63	6	25	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	67	6	25	0	0	1	4
The school is led and managed effectively	20	83	3	13	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	88	3	13	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

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.



22 October 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of St Germain Nursery School, Farnworth BL4 0RA

I loved my visit to your nursery because you were so friendly. I want to tell you what I found out.

You attend a good nursery. You have lots of exciting things to do such as building train tracks, using computers and playing with your friends. I could tell just how much you enjoy the nursery by watching you play together, find out new things and learn new words. You are doing really well and make good progress.

Grown-ups take good care of you and keep you safe: this is why you are so happy and behave so well. Grown-ups make each day different and interesting. They teach you well when you work together in small groups. They watch you carefully, make little notes about your learning and write them down for your parents and carers to see. This is important because it helps grown-ups in the nursery and your parents and carers at home to help you learn more each day.

Your headteacher and governors do a good job in making your nursery a safe and fun place to be. They never stop trying to make it better by bringing new toys, books and new ideas to help you learn as much as you possibly can.

Your nursery is good but grown-ups keep trying to make it become even better. I have asked your headteacher and teachers to help you make faster progress with your counting and numbers and let you have more opportunities to practise using them. I have also asked them to help you to learn more about how people live in other countries and in different communities.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Hewlett

Lead Inspector

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