

St Philips Marsh Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108893
Local Authority	Bristol City of
Inspection number	356445
Inspection dates	21–22 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Enza Phillips
Headteacher	Simon Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Observations were made of group activities, as well as the free-flow activities taking place both in and outdoors. Inspectors observed all four early years teachers and their nursery nurses assisting children in their learning. They spoke to parents at the start and finish of the day and held meetings with governors and curriculum leaders. They discussed aspects of their work informally with many other members of staff. They observed the Nursery's work in detail, and examined monitoring and assessment information, curriculum and development planning. Inspectors analysed 43 responses to questionnaires distributed to parents and carers and eight returned by staff.

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

- How well staff use opportunities to develop children's language, literacy and calculation skills, particularly those who are at an early stage of learning English.
- How well the setting works with parents and carers in order to involve them more in their children's learning.
- How well the school uses assessment data to identify how children can do better and to set targets for their future.
- The success of partnerships to help in building children's confidence and promoting their independence, and the impact these have on their learning.

Information about the school

St Philip's Marsh Nursery School is a large nursery with 129 children attending, mostly part time. The school has a higher proportion than usual of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The main areas of need are speech, language and communication, visual impairment and autism. While most of the children are of White British heritage there is a wide range of other cultures represented in the school. The school has an above average proportion of children who are at the very early stages of learning English. Although children have a home-base classroom, classes share the corridor spaces and the outside area. The school provides breakfast and after-school clubs as well as a 'stay and play' facility for parents and toddlers.

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

St Philip's Marsh provides a good learning experience for all of its children. It has several outstanding features. These include the quality of care, guidance and support it provides for the children, the range of partnerships it has with a variety of outside agencies and excellent relationships with parents. It provides outstanding care, via breakfast and after-school clubs, to meet the needs of working parents, as well as such activities as 'stay and play' and 'cook 4 life'. Parents expressed great support for the setting, one expressing the views of many: 'St Philip's is a wonderful nursery. Parents are encouraged and welcomed to feel part of the school community. My son has made fantastic progress and really enjoys it.'

The school provides a good range of stimulating and exciting activities for the children in a rich and inspiring learning environment. As a result, children make good progress from their many and varied starting points. The school has further improved the good practice identified at the last inspection. The primary reason for the school's success and its ongoing improvement is the excellent leadership and drive of the headteacher. He and all the staff care passionately about the education and development of all the children who attend. They are always looking for ways to improve. Induction procedures are very good and ensure that every child settles quickly and develops good attitudes to learning, which takes place in a happy and harmonious atmosphere.

Children's needs are quickly assessed on entry. Wide-ranging assessments continue throughout every child's stay in Nursery in order to sustain the good quality provision. The data are used well to identify where further development is needed and to set targets. Nevertheless, short observations of children's learning do not always indicate how it could be further extended or supported. Consequently, although children make good progress some do not always make as much as they could.

The curriculum is rich and stimulating and the quality of teaching and support provided is good. Particular emphasis has been placed on developing children's speech and language skills. Children benefit from teachers who are skilled at using signing and visual stimuli to help them learn. Role play is encouraged and the various role play areas across the school are prominent, very attractive and well equipped. They inspire all the children, including those at an early stage of learning English, and enable them to interact socially and practise their speaking and develop their language and vocabulary within a small group. Middle leaders are competent and dedicated. They monitor planning and provision carefully. However, they do not have enough opportunities to observe colleagues in the classrooms in order to judge the success of actions taken to improve developments in language, literacy and calculation.

The care, guidance and support provided by the Nursery are outstanding. The Nursery works extremely closely with parents and carers and a range of outside agencies to ensure

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that provision for children is at the optimum level. Parents appreciate this. They receive regular reports of their children's progress, are given details of what their children will be learning, and have regular meetings with their children's key workers. Children's 'Learning Journeys' are an accurate and exciting record of children's learning and development and parents and carers are invited to contribute to these.

The introduction of a wider range of services provided by the school has necessitated changes in the way the school is run. The need for a more businesslike approach in terms of financial and day-to-day management has become imperative. The changes have been managed with great skill and empathy by the headteacher and governors. Morale is buoyant because staff have a voice in how changes are made and there is a great emphasis on teamwork. The changes have been carefully monitored to ensure that children continue to receive the very best provision to enable them to continue to make good progress in all areas of their development. The result is a Nursery very well equipped for purpose. It has a staff with high morale and expertise who are aware of the good quality of the provision but are always keen to make it even better. Self-evaluation is accurate and clearly identifies where further development is needed. There is a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency and quality with which the next steps in children's learning are identified.
- Ensure that curriculum leaders have sufficient opportunities to monitor the impact of actions taken to improve children's communication, language and calculation skills through focused observations in the classrooms.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

Children love coming to the nursery and enjoy every minute they are there. One parent told the inspector, 'My child cries because he doesn't want to come home!' There is a highly appropriate emphasis on developing children's social skills when they first start at the nursery so that all children are ready to learn and persevere with their learning. Behaviour is good although some children become distracted when they are not kept fully occupied during, for instance, tidy up time. Children are kept very safe at nursery and learn how to begin to take risks safely. One child on the climbing net edged cautiously along towards the tower at the end; he had to judge exactly when he could reach it with his leg. A member of staff watched closely but did not interfere, praising him highly as he made the final right decision and reached the tower successfully.

Staff seize every opportunity to develop children's learning. It was so cold that there was ice in the garden on the first day of the inspection. Children gathered it and described it. Their descriptions included: 'it's freezing', 'really cold' and 'it turns into water when I hold it in my hand'. As a result they learned to use their senses and develop their vocabulary. The school does all it can to develop children's number and calculating skills through simple problem solving, number rhymes and songs, and including number in as many activities as possible.

Attainment on leaving is well in line with that of children of a similar age although it is below expectations when they start. Children with special educational needs and/or

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disabilities make excellent progress in their learning because they receive excellent and highly focused support relevant to their needs. All other groups make good progress and achieve well.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They celebrate festivals of children from other cultures attending the nursery and they all play together happily. They help to contribute by tidying up, raising money for charity and caring for and helping each other, particularly when children new to the nursery join their classes. Attendance is good and the wide range of basic skills that they learn prepares them well for the future.

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	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children's behaviour	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance ¹	2
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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?

A wide range of exciting activities interest and motivate the children. The school has a wide range of equipment such as touch screen computers and digital cameras which all children learn to use competently. These extend children's learning opportunities and greatly increase cooperative and collaborative working. The garden provides myriad opportunities for children to learn about eco-issues such as recycling and composting. They grow their own vegetables and see them being cooked for lunch, thus practically enhancing their knowledge of healthy eating! The sensory area with its herb bed, sound

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'room' and visual stimuli, provides a huge range of exciting experiences. The variety of activities ensured that all children, whatever their ability, received the support or challenge they needed to further their development.

Staff use puppets to inspire children and are expert storytellers. One teacher enacting the story of the Three Billy Goats Gruff, started with a group of three children. Because of her skill, more and more children gravitated to the group and at the end there were eight of them sitting, enthralled, eagerly joining in the repetitive rhymes, and answering questions about the story. Staff are skilled at questioning in order to make children think. Even at lunchtime children are learning: 'How many slices of bread?'; 'Two have been eaten. How many are there now?' Staff observe children carefully and record their development diligently. This occurs across all areas of learning so their records are comprehensive. However next steps in learning are not always identified. Support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is exceptionally good. Special resources enable them to access similar activities to the rest of the children, for example by using specially adapted bikes or Braille books.

The quality of care, guidance and support is exceptionally high. The welfare needs of all children are met extremely well. All equipment and resources are well cared for and spotlessly clean. Transition arrangements into and out of the Nursery school are of high quality and the school has excellent relationships with the many primary schools to which children move. The school has a wide range of contacts and relationships with outside agencies. These are excellent sources for helping to build children's confidence and to develop their independence. The links enable the school to meet the needs not only of the children, but often their families as well.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has developed a very clear vision for the future which is shared by all staff. He has devolved responsibilities and created a dedicated team committed to further improvement. Although found to be good at the last inspection there have been significant improvements since then in terms of provision and development of staff expertise. Teaching and learning are monitored rigorously by the headteacher, but curriculum leaders have not had sufficient opportunities to monitor their areas alongside colleagues in the classrooms. The governing body ensures that children are safe and secure. They are very supportive, have a good knowledge of the Nursery's strengths and challenge it constructively. They monitor the work of the Nursery well and are fully involved in decision

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making. They ensure that there are equal opportunities for every child and that there is no discrimination. This is evident in the progress made by all pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those are at an early stage of learning English. The Nursery has excellent relationships with parents and the local community. They have established a number of strong links that enable it to disseminate practice as well as improve it. There is a very clear understanding of community cohesion and the school has wide-ranging links and resources which help to extend children's understanding of other cultures. All safeguarding and child protection procedures are robust and statutory requirements fully met.

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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

There were 43 responses to the questionnaire and the inspector spoke to several parents and/or carers before and after sessions. They were extremely positive and exceptionally supportive of the school. The many positive comments often refer to the dedication of all the staff: 'I cannot fault the staff in any way. Thanks to them all, from the friendly cleaner to the head'; 'The staff have made so much effort to try and get to know and understand my children.' One comment summarised the views of many: 'This is the most fantastic environment for a child to start school; it is exciting, fun and fab.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at St Philips Marsh 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 119 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	84	7	16	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	81	8	19	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	58	14	33	3	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	56	17	40	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	74	10	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	58	15	35	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	67	14	33	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)	19	44	11	26	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	70	11	26	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	67	9	21	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	53	18	42	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	74	10	23	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	88	5	12	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.



25 October 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of St Philip's Marsh Nursery School, Bristol BS2 0SU

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really loved seeing you so happy and enjoying all the wonderful things to do and learn. You have a really good Nursery with a fabulous garden and outside area and you certainly loved being adventurous on the new adventure equipment. This letter is to tell you some of the things we found out.

You go to a good Nursery. All the adults give you the help you need to help you learn really well.

You behave well and you play very happily with each other. You make yourselves useful and always help to tidy up each day.

You all really enjoy all the activities that are provided for you. You really seemed to enjoy playing outside and finding all that ice!

All the adults look after you exceptionally well and keep you safe.

Your headteacher keeps everything running exceptionally well and everyone enjoys working and learning at St Philip's because it is such a happy and well-organised place to be.

We have asked the leaders to watch what is going on in the classrooms more often and also to always make the notes on your learning show what you need to learn next. You can help your teachers by being really sensible, particularly when it comes to 'tidy-up' times.

Thank you again for making my time at St Philip's so happy.

Yours sincerely

Christine Huard

Lead inspector

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