

Crossens Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104845
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	355641
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Bamber

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Dodd
Headteacher	Mrs S Gilbertson
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2008
School address	Preston New Road Churchtown, Southport Merseyside PR9 8PA
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Four sessions were observed, covering both morning and afternoon provision and involving seven members of staff. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and with parents and carers. Documentation was scrutinised and included the school's development plan, children's learning journeys, safeguarding, and health and safety policies, and protocols and data relating to children's attainment and progress. In addition, 24 parent and carer questionnaires and those completed by staff were analysed.

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

- Whether the Nursery's outstanding effectiveness reported at the time of the last inspection has been maintained, given the change of location to new purpose built provision.
- Whether the governing body is now more knowledgeable about children's progress within the Nursery.

Information about the school

Crossens is larger than most nursery schools. Nearly all children are White British. A smaller than average proportion has special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school offers extended services through a breakfast club, a lunch club and an after-school club. It also offers flexible provision to enable some children to attend all day, every day, or to attend all day for two and a half days a week; as well as the normal five half-day sessions. The Nursery has Healthy School Status. Since the last inspection, the Nursery has relocated to new purpose built provision.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding Nursery school. Consistently high quality leadership and management, characterised by the inspirational drive and ambition of the headteacher and by rigorous and accurate self-evaluation, result in children achieving extremely well, attaining excellent overall skills for their age and in parents and carers being fulsome in their praise for all the Nursery provides. The written comment, 'My son absolutely loves it at Crossens and can't wait to go everyday. That speaks volumes to me', reflects the views of all parents and carers who corresponded or spoke with the inspectors.

Children thrive in this extremely happy, stimulating and purposeful setting. From the moment they enter each day they are absorbed in a wide range of activities which they thoroughly enjoy and which challenge and interest them. Staff skilfully guide and support children's learning so that they become increasingly independent and make excellent progress in most areas of their learning. Staff are outstandingly successful at promoting children's spoken language. They continually talk to children about what they are doing, posing questions that make them think and which encourage them to articulate their thoughts. On occasion, there is not the same consistent promotion of children's mathematical vocabulary or of their understanding of mathematical concepts. As a result, children's skills in this area of their learning are not as high as in all other areas.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is exceptionally good because they are so very well cared for and supported. They relate extremely well to each other, behave impeccably and cooperate most happily. Their highly stimulating and relevant curriculum, provided in superb accommodation and supported by excellent quality resources, makes a very significant contribution to their outstanding all-round development. Teaching is rooted in an excellent knowledge and understanding of needs of Nursery-age children and provides that fine balance of support and challenge necessary to promote children's high achievement.

Leaders very effectively use partnerships with a range of external providers and organisations to promote children's learning and well-being, with children's safety paramount. Parents and carers attest to how well informed and involved they are in their children's development. Governance is of high quality with the governing body sharing the headteacher's constant and successful pursuit of excellence. The school's record in achieving this, combined with the improvements evident since the last inspection, indicate an excellent capacity for the Nursery to maintain its outstanding effectiveness.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise children's attainment in problem solving, reasoning and number to a high level, by more consistently promoting mathematical vocabulary and concepts during activities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the Nursery and achieve outstandingly well. The vast majority enter with skills in line with those expected for their age. By the time they leave, most possess skills that are high compared with those expected in the majority of the areas of learning. Their communication, personal, social and emotional development, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world are particularly strong. Their ability in aspects of their mathematical development is above that expected for their age. Children get on extremely well together, sharing, turn-taking and working cooperatively. They enthusiastically move between activities, talking animatedly about what they do. They are consistently inquisitive about how things work and about the natural world. They like to be independent, but are also aware of how to act safely in their own and other's interests and to seek help and support when concerned. Children understand the reason for good personal hygiene, for a sensible diet and for exercise. That they put this into practice was very evident during the inspection. Children recognise that the rights of others, for example, to have access to resources are as important as their own. They respect their environment, willingly tidying away and helping with jobs. Children's involvement with the church, charitable works and with the local care home indicates their excellent contribution to the Nursery and the local community.

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

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Children's attainment ¹	1
The quality of children's learning and their progress	1
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	1
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	1
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?

High quality teaching, an extremely well-planned curriculum which is matched very effectively to children's needs, and outstanding care, support and guidance, ensure children's excellent achievement and well-being. Staff consistently challenge children to explore ideas and to think things out for themselves. In particular, staff are skilful at encouraging children to role play. This sparks their imagination and reflects their experiences very well. Both indoors and out, children have lots of space, excellent resources and highly relevant activities to support their learning. Because staff continually and accurately assess children's development, and use this information very effectively to plan the next steps in their learning, all groups of children make outstanding progress. Highly effective provision is made for those children who have an emerging gift or talent, who are more able than most or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The same care is taken to ensure that children, who attend all day, either for the whole week or for two and a half days, have well-matched provision. Staff work extremely closely with parents and carers to ensure that children's needs are fully met and that they feel fully secure and happy. Excellent induction arrangements, including home visits, smooth children's entry into the Nursery. Additionally, close liaison with receiving schools make children's transition to them a highly positive experience.

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

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The Nursery is extremely well led and managed. The headteacher's presence as the leading professional provides an excellent role model for all staff and reassures parents and carers, who praise her involvement with the children and constant availability. The quality of provision is rigorously checked and staff's professional development is very relevant and highly effective, resulting in continuous improvement in all areas of provision. Morale is high and teamwork excellent. Governance has improved since the last inspection from good to outstanding. This is because the governing body is now much more aware of the progress that children make and has even more relevant expertise within its membership. It rigorously monitors provision, and the budget, and has managed the relocation and implications of the new build extremely well. The promotion of equality of opportunities within the Nursery is excellent. No child is disadvantaged, whatever their circumstance, and the flexibility of provision is such that all needs are catered for. The governing body meets its statutory requirement as regards safeguarding children and there are strong procedures to vet all adults who work regularly with children and for ensuring that visitors are known and accredited. Some minor omissions from some paperwork prevent safeguarding from being outstanding. Community cohesion is excellent. The governing body audits provision and the school is aware of and meets the needs of the local community. Children are part of the community and contribute to it, and the school has strong links with the church, and also with other nurseries in the borough, in the wider United Kingdom and in Italy. Partnerships are extremely beneficial and relevant to children's development and well-being. For example, specialist art teachers are weekly visitors and key to children's excellent creative development. Prior to Bonfire Night, representatives of the police and fire service talked with children about how to stay safe. The highly productive partnership with the local authority also contributes significantly to the staff's professional development and excellent practice. Excellent use is made of the accommodation and resources available to ensure outstanding outcomes for children, indicating that the Nursery provides excellent value for money.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

All those parents and carers who returned the questionnaires and/or met with the inspectors expressed highly positive views. They were particularly fulsome in their praise for the headteacher and staff in the way in which their children are so well cared for and helped to develop. Respondents to the questionnaire were particularly pleased with how much their children enjoyed the Nursery, how safe they were and how well the school was led and managed. Inspectors fully endorse these positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Crossens 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 61 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	92	2	8	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	14	58	9	38	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	75	6	25	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	75	6	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	54	8	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	67	6	25	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)	11	46	9	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	67	7	29	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	58	7	29	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	67	5	21	0	0	0	0
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	20	83	4	17	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.



5 November 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Crossens Nursery School, Southport, PR9 8PA

I so enjoyed my two days with you recently when I came into the Nursery to see how well you were getting on. What I found out was that you are doing really well because all the adults who teach you and look after you are helping you to learn lots of things really well. The word we grown-ups use for this is outstanding. What I particularly noticed was how well you play and learn together, how beautifully you behave, how much you enjoy your time in the Nursery, how pleased your parents and carers are with it and the lovely spaces you have in which to play and learn. I was also very pleased to see how many people from outside the Nursery help you with your learning, for example, the two adults who help you with your art work and the people from the police and fire departments. The adults who run the school do a brilliant job.

One of the things I have to do is to talk with your teachers about anything that could be even better. There are not many things because the Nursery is already so good. But I have asked the grown-ups to help you to do even better with your number work.

Thank you for chatting to me in such a friendly way when I was in the Nursery. I know you will carry on playing very nicely together

Yours sincerely

Paul Bamber

Lead inspector

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