

Brunel Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119092
Local Authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	358491
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Geoff Yates

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Edwin Sowerbutts
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Smith
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons and observed teaching by two teachers and five key workers (other adults designated to look after a group of children), held meetings with the other federated school's Section 5 inspection team (on site at the same time as the inspection), senior managers, members of the governing body, staff and held short conversations with the children. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school development plan, policies, including those relating to safeguarding and equal opportunities, and 18 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether the legal requirements not met at the time of the previous inspection had been addressed successfully.
- How effective the school is in developing children's personal and social skills.
- The steps taken to improve children's calculating skills.

Information about the school

This is an average sized nursery school which draws its children from an urban area close to the town centre of Blackburn. A large majority of children are of either Pakistani or Indian origin, the remainder representing a range of other heritages. A large majority of children speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. At the previous inspection the school was subject to a notice to improve in relation to legal requirements for safeguarding and community cohesion. There has been a significant change since the previous inspection in that the school is now part of a federation with a local primary school. Both schools share the same headteacher and governing body. The other school is not the focus of this inspection but was inspected at the same time as Brunel Nursery by a different team of inspectors. The report for that inspection will be available on the Ofsted website. Major building work has taken place, which means that the two schools now share the same site.

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

1

Main findings

In accordance with section 13[5] of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The nursery now provides a good quality of education. The children are happy and are stimulated by the opportunities the good curriculum provides. The needs of the individual are at the heart of all the school does. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that children feel very safe. Children behave outstandingly well and get on very well with other children. This was very apparent in the joint 'celebration' assembly held with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the other federated school. Parents and carers think highly of the school and say their children are eager to attend each day. School leadership is highly successful in driving improvement.

Children's achievement is good. They enter the nursery with skills that are well below those expected for their age and in language and communication and calculation their skills are very low. Good teaching overall and challenging activities help children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make good progress. Teachers are skilled in using questions well to extend children's speaking skills. However, at times, opportunities are missed by key workers to develop children's speaking skills further. All members of staff are good at encouraging children to develop the confidence to make choices in their learning and in supporting their personal development. There are good assessment systems in place, with the information gained being used accurately to plan the next stages in children's learning. Children have an outstanding awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They also have a good knowledge of how to lead a healthy lifestyle for their age. For example, when asked why she was washing her hands, a child replied confidently, 'To not catch anything.' There are plenty of exciting opportunities within the curriculum for children to explore the world around them in the classroom and outside area in the school grounds, with a good balance between learning activities chosen by teachers and those chosen by the children themselves. However, there are no planned opportunities for children to go out on visits to the local area to widen their understanding of the world outside school.

The school's good capacity to improve at the time of its last inspection has now become outstanding. This is demonstrated by the highly successful way in which it has in a short time addressed the issues from the previous inspection successfully and moved the school from one which required significant improvement to one whose overall effectiveness is good, whilst also developing the federation with a local primary school successfully. One consequence of this development is the outstanding leadership evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Development plans are based on very accurate self-evaluation. The school is working successfully to close the gap in achievement caused by children's low starting points, particularly in language and communication. Leaders and managers are

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relentless and highly effective in their drive to secure further improvements. As a result, the school is exceptionally well-placed to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide more opportunities for children to use and develop their speaking skills by strengthening key workers' questioning to help children explain their ideas more fully.
- Improve curriculum provision by building in frequent well-planned opportunities for children to take part in visits outside school in order to develop their knowledge and understanding of life in the local area.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

Children thoroughly enjoy all that is provided. During all activities observed, both indoors and outdoors, children were seen to have excellent relationships with the key workers. Individual needs are catered for well. The atmosphere is calm and conducive to good learning. For example, children love to sing along to the chords strummed by the teacher on the guitar or to enter into high-quality role play in acting out the story of the three bears. As a result, all children achieve well. They make good progress and in recent times, according to school data, the majority are working within the expected range for their age in most areas of learning by the time they leave nursery. In language and communication and calculation, despite children's good progress, attainment is still below the expected levels because of their very low starting points. The school is working successfully to close the gap in children's achievement. This is demonstrated by the significant gains made in developing children's skills in using letters and sounds to form words. Children also make good progress in developing calculating skills and, as a result, these are improving. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities have access to the same activities as other children and are given effective individual help if needed. The multi-lingual key worker provides very good support for those children at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language and to their parents and carers. This enables these groups of children to make good progress.

Learning is especially strong in developing personal and social skills because of the high priority placed on these aspects, whatever the activity. The key workers ensure children feel very safe and secure from the moment they enter the Nursery. Children are learning to look after themselves, for example, by self-registering on arrival and putting on their own hats and coats before going out to play. Children are learning to work well together; for example, by cooperating with each other in using the computers. They make a good contribution to the nursery community as they learn to tidy away, thereby keeping the rooms and outside area tidy. Children also practice good hygiene. When the children leave they are well-prepared for the next stage of their education. Transition arrangements under the school's federated status are highly effective.

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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	1
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?

The quality of teaching is good with some outstanding features. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and provide sensitive support for all children, enabling them to develop at their own pace. Key workers provide valuable support, especially in ensuring that children are very safe and that their personal needs are met. Where teaching is strongest, every opportunity is taken to develop children's spoken language and to help them see links between areas of the curriculum. As a result, resources are well-planned so that children can make choices about the resources they want to work with. Where teaching is less strong in activities led by key workers, opportunities are missed to develop children's speaking skills. For example, in snack time, questioning tends to be about what type of fruit a child might want to choose rather than extending questioning into other areas.

The curriculum is of a good quality overall and covers all areas of learning. Resources are very good and there is a well-planned balance of indoor and outdoor activities in the school grounds. The very cold weather during the inspection provided no barrier to children using the outside area. They consolidated their numeracy skills well, in a highly enjoyable way, by taking part in a 'bear hunt' to find ten toy bears. The school's federated status has already played an important part in enhancing the curriculum. Small groups of Year 6 pupils from the other federated school read stories to the nursery children on a

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daily basis. Inspection evidence demonstrates clearly that the nursery children really look forward to these visits and gain a great deal in developing a real interest in books. While visitors come into the nursery to work with children, there are no opportunities for children to explore the local community through visits outside the school gates.

The pastoral care of children is of outstanding quality. Parents and carers are very happy with the provision. The links with any vulnerable families are strong and help to ensure access to the support they need. There are strong links with outside agencies. This is seen to particular effect in the way the new starters in the nursery are made to feel very safe and secure. First-aid procedures and child protection training meet all requirements, with good improvements made since the previous inspection. Staff know the children and recognise their individuals needs exceptionally well, so that if there are any signs of a child getting upset this is quickly addressed.

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?

A strength of the school provision is the highly effective way in which discrimination of any nature is addressed by all members of staff and the governing body. The school's work is very successfully focused on ensuring equality of opportunity for all. The school is outstandingly led and managed and leaders have the confidence of parents and carers and the local community. There is an exceptionally strong focus by all school leaders and the governing body on embedding ambition and driving improvement, despite changes in staff, changes in the school's status and the possible disruptions caused by building work. The headteacher, with the support of governors and staff, provides very strong and highly effective leadership that is consistently securing improvements. She has also been highly successful in ensuring the smooth transition of the school into federated status.

The governing body carries out its duties well. At the time of the previous inspection, the school's safeguarding arrangements were found to be inadequate. This is not now the case and provision is good. All policies are now in place and carried out exceptionally well, staff are fully trained and there are well-understood strategies and procedures for checking the safety of the site and risks to school based activities. The school's promotion of community cohesion has some good elements and an action plan identifies further improvement including webcam links with other nursery schools in different areas of the country. However, the lack of opportunity for children to develop their awareness of communities in the local area and beyond limits the judgement on community cohesion to satisfactory.

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The overall leadership and management of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in both schools have been combined extremely well under a senior member of staff. A teacher from the nursery school is now responsible for children with special educational needs and/ or disabilities across the Early Years Foundation Stage in both schools. These duties are resulting in very good continuity of provision.

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	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	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The return rate of questionnaires from parents and carers was broadly average. Almost all questionnaires indicate strong support for all aspects of the school's work confirming inspectors' judgements that this is a good school. Inspection findings did not support the view of a small minority of parents and carers that they do not receive sufficient information about their children's progress but the school, in the light of the comments made, intends to review its procedures. Induction procedures are good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brunel 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 18 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 54 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	72	5	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	67	5	28	1	6	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	7	39	8	44	2	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	39	10	56	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	50	8	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	5	28	11	61	1	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	33	11	61	1	6	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)	4	22	11	61	2	11	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	39	9	50	1	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	33	7	39	1	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	28	11	61	1	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	6	33	10	56	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	56	8	44	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.



24 November

Dear Children

Inspection of Brunel Nursery School, Blackburn, BB1 1ES

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you all gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently, despite it being so cold outside. We really enjoyed our time with you and joining you in your activities. I am pleased to tell you that the inspectors agree with your school that you receive a good standard of education. It was lovely to talk to some of your mums and a dad.

Staff take very good care of you. Your headteacher and other school leaders work very hard and to make your nursery successful – and they are doing very well in making this happen. We agree with your parents and carers that all the adults working in your school make learning interesting. You do well with your work and really enjoy what you are doing. You work very hard at activities such as learning your number and letter sounds. It was lovely to see the enjoyment in your faces when you were singing the song 'Twinkle, twinkle little star,' a big thank you to the little girl that taught me the words. You behave outstandingly well and are very polite for your age. Some of you told me that you feel very safe in school, which is very important.

I have asked your school to make sure you all get plenty of chances to practise your speaking skills. There is one other thing I have asked your school to do and that is to take you out of school on local trips, after checking it is safe. You can then perhaps look at the houses and other buildings near the school to help you to find out more about what is happening outside school.

We hope you keep on working hard so you can continue to play a big part in ensuring that your school continues to be successful.

Mr Geoffrey Yates

Lead Inspector

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