

Newtown Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119090
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	358490
Inspection dates	22–23 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Clare Henderson

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	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Kay Oakley
Headteacher	Mrs Lyn Rider
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed nine sessions taught by three teachers and five teaching assistants. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, the School Improvement Partner and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, children's attainment and progress, the curriculum, the school's development plan and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. Inspectors reviewed the views of staff and analysed 32 questionnaires from parents and carers.

- How well the children are supported and challenged in their learning.
- Whether the quality of provision enables children to develop into safe, happy and independent learners.
- The quality of planning and the use of assessment and observations to identify the next steps needed to extend children's learning and development.
- Whether leaders and managers, including governors, have secured the school's capacity for further improvement since the last inspection.

Information about the school

This nursery school is similar in size to others of its type. It provides a choice of part-time or full-time education for three and four-year-old children. The percentage of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The school has gained Investors in People, Smile for Life and Healthy School status. Since September 2010, an associate headteacher has been in post for three days a week, with the senior teacher acting as headteacher for the other two days. This arrangement of management will continue until the summer term 2011 when the associate headteacher will take up the headship on a permanent full-time basis.

The school shares its building with a privately managed Early Years Centre. This provision was subject to a separate inspection and a report about its quality can be found on the Ofsted website.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory nursery school. It is a happy and welcoming place to be and all adults provide good levels of care and support for children's personal needs. The delight and enjoyment children show as they skip into school and the confidence most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire have in the good quality of care provided are testament to this.

The starting points for most children in all the areas of learning are broadly in-line with those expected at this age. Although children have fun, are safe and secure within the nursery, the quality of the provision provided has not focused closely enough on providing children with opportunities to develop as independent learners. Consequently, children make satisfactory rather than good progress in their learning and development overall.

Adults take good care of children's individual personal needs and, in particular, of those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They engage well and relate very positively to all the children. However, most adults have had limited training in the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and, consequently, their observations lack clarity about children's progress and so do not identify and address gaps in individual children's learning. As a result, adults do not consistently plan learning experiences which build on children's knowledge and skills and extend their learning and development.

Children enjoy the opportunities provided for them to be active and creative and the curriculum provided is satisfactory overall. However, because of an overemphasis on adult-led activities, children have too few opportunities to reflect on what they have learnt. A wide range of visits and visitors to the school contribute well to children's good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the school's effective promotion of community cohesion. Through their good relationships and the care they show for others, children make a good contribution to their school and the wider community. They behave well, attend regularly and develop a good understanding of what is needed to lead healthy and safe lifestyles.

Although assessment information has not always been used effectively to monitor provision, the school knows its strengths and areas to develop. These are shared by all staff and governors. New initiatives, for example, to improve assessment procedures and links with the pre-school are beginning to embed. However, the newness of the leadership team means that a track record of success is not fully evident. Consequently, the school's capacity to sustain continuous improvement is satisfactory rather than good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of children's learning and development by:

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- improving the quality of planning and assessments to ensure learning experiences consistently build on what children already know and can do and clearly identify the next steps needed to extend learning
- developing the curriculum further to give children more opportunities to follow their own interests and develop as independent learners
- strengthening existing partnerships with pre-school groups to ensure smooth transition from one setting to the next.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - providing staff and governors with further training in the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum
 - ensuring assessment procedures systematically identify the progress children make within each area of learning
 - ensuring assessment information is used to review and evaluate the quality of provision.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children**3**

Children play together happily and behaviour is good. Their smiling faces reflect the enjoyment experienced by all. From the moment they arrive, they are busy and interested in learning. Adults engage well with the children and activities such as preparing for their Christmas show stimulate them to develop their speaking, listening and singing skills effectively while also learning to get on with each other. However, children have too few opportunities to play a full part in their own learning because activities are generally chosen by adults.

Progress is satisfactory in all areas of learning and for all groups of children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. When they move to Reception, most children's skills are in-line with those expected at this age and their achievement is satisfactory overall. This is because until recently, they have had too few opportunities to choose activities for themselves and thus develop skills of decision making and independence. Children have a good understanding about the importance of leading healthy lifestyles. However, opportunities are missed, for instance, at snack time for them to develop skills of independence because adults do most of the preparation. Children learn about staying safe and through activities such as the regular walking bus initiative quickly become aware of road safety issues and of the value of physical exercise for their health and well-being. Such activities prepare them adequately for the future. Children's involvement in the local community through, for instance, visiting the elderly to give them harvest bags or to invite them to their Christmas show demonstrates well their growing awareness of their place in the local community. Their knowledge and experiences of other cultures have been extended effectively through a year long visit from a teacher from Australia.

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These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment ¹	3
The quality of children's learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which children feel safe	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance ¹	2
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?

Adults relate well to each child and pay close attention to their personal and social needs. Consequently, children are happy and secure. High staffing ratios ensure there is always someone available to help if a problem arises. Adults act as a key worker for a small group of children focusing on their academic and pastoral needs. This contributes well to children's feeling of security. Ongoing observations of children are carried out but the information these yield is not used consistently to ensure activities always match each child's interests and level of skills.

The learning environment has been recently improved indoors and outdoors and provides children with an adequate range of opportunities for their physical development and opportunities to investigate and explore. For instance, children were delighted to investigate the properties of ice they found during their visit to their parkland area. Children display sound information and communication technology skills with opportunities for mathematical and language acquisition being further developed. Children enjoy visits and a good range of visitors come to the nursery to extend their learning and life experiences. For instance, they were extremely attentive and interested to see and learn about the eating habits of a variety of different creatures brought to school by the Zoo Lab. Such experiences develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world adequately. However, because adults have limited training in planning a curriculum to

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meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, opportunities to extend children's knowledge and skills further are missed.

Adults know and care for the children well and quickly identify those who may have additional learning needs. They relate well to parents and carers who wholeheartedly praise the good levels of care and support provided. All welfare requirements are met ensuring children are safe and secure. Good support is provided from expertise within the school staff and from good links established with external health agencies for those children with special educational need and/or disabilities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The recently appointed headteacher's enthusiasm and clear direction is infectious and has spread to all adults. Consequently, the management of the quality of teaching and learning and the drive for improvement are improving as reflected in children's satisfactory progress and rapidly improving achievement. However, there is still a way to go in embedding change especially in developing leaders' roles in monitoring and evaluating children's progress and checking on the impact of change.

The governing body provides satisfactory management. Governors are supportive and keen to play their part in promoting improvement. For instance, they have ensured a strong appointment has been made to carry the school forward. Furthermore, they ensure that all safeguarding requirements are effectively met and that procedures to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children are thorough. Discrimination of any form is not tolerated and the ethos established in the school is one of promoting equality for all. However, not all children currently achieve as well as they could because assessment systems are not used sufficiently well to track children's progress. Partnerships with others are satisfactory overall. Links with pre-school groups are not used well enough to ensure information received is used to best effect to build on the progress children make in pre-school. Good links have been established with parents and carers, enabling them to know how they can help their children with learning at home. The quality of community cohesion is good. The school works hard to develop community links and raise the profile of the school in the local area. Links with local schools, including a school for children with complex learning needs, and with other schools internationally are good.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

A higher than average percentage of parents and carers completed the questionnaire. Of these, the vast majority were highly positive in all their responses. They are particularly pleased with how happy their children are in school, that the school keeps their children safe and promotes healthy lifestyles and with the quality of teaching, and leadership and management. A few feel that the school does not inform them how well children are progressing in their learning. Inspectors followed this issue up and found that the learning needs of each child are considered and reported to parents and carers regularly.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Newtown 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 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 69 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	91	3	9	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	91	3	9	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	66	9	28	1	3	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	75	8	25	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	78	6	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	69	9	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	78	7	22	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)	22	69	8	25	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	81	6	19	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	72	7	22	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	63	11	34	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	84	4	13	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	94	2	6	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 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Newtown Nursery School, Colne, BB8 0JF

Thank you all for making our visit to your happy nursery so enjoyable. It was lovely to see how eager you are to learn about new things and that your behaviour is good.

It was a delight to watch you learn while you played. We especially enjoyed seeing you play together, for instance, in your park area as you discovered the pieces of ice. You have great fun both indoors and outdoors and are very busy all the time, finding out new things. All this fun and work mean that, by the time you move into Reception, you have learnt many new skills especially in speaking, listening and how to solve problems which will help you as you grow older.

You go to a satisfactory nursery school. Your adults take good care of you to help you to keep safe but sometimes they do not give you enough chances to try things out for yourselves. I agree with your parents and carers that your school takes good care of you. It is a safe and happy place to be. There are some exciting activities for you to get involved in, especially when you have visitors such as Louise with the interesting creatures or as you get ready for your Christmas show. We were pleased to see you keeping fit and active and at the same time making sure that you play safely together, especially when you join the walking bus.

Your nursery school is led and managed satisfactorily and the headteacher and other adults are keen to find ways to make it better. I have asked the adults and governors to provide more training for your adults and to check your progress to find even more ways to make your school better. We hope you continue to have a lovely time.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Clare Henderson

Lead inspector

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