

Highfield Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119067
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	358488
Inspection dates	29–30 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Sue Sharkey

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	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Holt
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Hindle
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2007
School address	Wright Street Chorley Lancashire PR6 0SL
Telephone number	01257 262441
Fax number	01257 262441
Email address	head@highfield-nur.lancs.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed four sessions, teaching and learning in three lessons and the work of three teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, pupils, representatives of the governing body, parents and carers, and staff. The inspectors observed children's work and looked at the school's system for tracking their progress, safeguarding documents and key policies. Inspection questionnaires from 31 parents and carers and six school staff were also taken into account.

- How effective the school is in ensuring that children achieve well in literacy and numeracy.
- The plans the school has in place to ensure that all groups of children make the best progress they can.
- How the school challenges children both indoors and out.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized nursery serving a wide area in an urban community. The large majority of children are from White British backgrounds and a few children speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is low. Most children attend part time and are admitted to the nursery following their third birthday. The school admits children from three to five years of age. On the same site is a children's centre providing integrated services for children and their families in the community. Independent management committees, through the governing body, provide a nursery for children aged three months to five years as well as before school, lunchtime and after-school care on the premises. All these settings did not form part of the inspection but reports about the quality of their provision 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Highfield Nursery School provides good quality education and gives good value for money. It is a very caring place in which children grow in confidence. The nursery provides a very warm and welcoming environment for the children and their families

who are highly appreciative of what the school provides, saying that 'Staff go out of their way to help and meet our children's needs every day.' The school's inclusive ethos means that children with different learning needs and from different backgrounds can grow, play and learn happily together. The good quality of their nursery experience prepares children well for the next stage in education both academically and socially.

Children develop good personal and social skills because all adults have high expectations of them with regard to being kind and considerate to each other, while learning how to work in small groups as well as alone. They learn successfully and make good progress from their early starting points. By the end of nursery their attainment is typical for their age overall, but can be lower in numeracy. This is because of limited opportunities to explore numbers across all the areas of learning. Those children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or where English is an additional language, are well supported and achieve well. Each child is taught as an individual and levels of support are adapted according to their needs.

Teaching is good and is underpinned by a well-planned curriculum. Good links with a wide range of partners support children's learning, particularly by delivering important messages, for example dental care, fire safety or home safety. Teaching assistants carry out their role well, particularly with small groups of children who need guidance and support. Adults talk with children constantly and through good quality questioning they skilfully encourage children to speak, develop new language skills and extend their learning. However, this quality of questioning is not used enough. Continuous improvements to the outdoor area have ensured that this now provides a rich area in which children can enjoy their learning but there is not always sufficient challenge to extend children's learning outdoors.

The school's capacity to improve is good. The headteacher and the leadership team have a clear view of the school's own effectiveness. Self-evaluation is good and takes into account the views of parents and carers and children. It is very effective in identifying strengths and weaknesses, which helps to lead to school improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve achievement by:

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- deepening teachers' understanding of the learning opportunities for numeracy across all areas of learning
- ensuring that adults use of questioning reflects best practice in order to extend children's learning
- ensuring that outdoor activities constantly promote children's learning well.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children achieve well and are enthusiastic learners. They thoroughly enjoy both the indoor and outdoor areas where they are able to explore and investigate by themselves or in small groups. This provides good opportunities for children to play and work alongside each other, learning to share and take turns. Children are often highly motivated and concentrate for long periods on activities that interest them, such as digging in the garden to find creepy crawlies. Other children focus as they enjoy listening for sounds around them. They are able to recognise that different birds make different sounds while they giggle as a noisy vehicle drives by. Children enter the nursery with a wide range of different skills which are often below what is expected for their age, particularly in numeracy. They make good progress throughout their nursery experience so that when they leave their attainment is usually in line with what is expected for their age and sometimes above. There is a strong focus on developing children's positive self-esteem, independence and confidence helping them to make good and sometimes very good progress in their learning. Early identification and effective support, that includes close working with other professionals, ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language make the same good progress as other children.

Children are developing a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They are eager to choose their own snack from a wide range of different fruits available to them. Adults talk with the children about their choice helping to foster good social skills. Children have plenty of opportunity to take energetic exercise in the safe outdoors. They feel very safe in school knowing that there is always an adult they can turn to if they have any worries. Most children attend the nursery as two to three-year-olds so they are familiar with the centre's routines and follow them well, establishing good hygiene practice. Children's behaviour is good. Their relationships with each other are excellent and children integrate effortlessly, learning to understand and respect cultural differences. They enjoy learning about different cultures, for instance trying different foods or exploring different art techniques, which stimulate their curiosity thus supporting good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children make a positive contribution to the nursery community and help to take responsibility for tidying up and putting things away. Attendance is average.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' 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 are highly skilled at nurturing children and promoting their well-being. The good outdoor and indoor provision, as well as the expectations of staff, ensures that all groups of children make good gains in their learning. As a result of a very effective curriculum, staff provide a wide range of well-planned and resourced activities to engage and stimulate children's interests. For example children use computers with confidence and enjoy capturing exciting moments on their camera. Adults are careful to ensure that children's own ideas are taken into account and their interests followed up. Children's ongoing assessments are discussed in order to prepare activities that match their needs. The school has had a focus on developing early reading and writing skills and assessment evidence indicates that this is proving to be successful. Number skills are planned into activities and adults take opportunities, while singing, for example, to count numbers but there are missed opportunities to regularly include numeracy throughout all the areas of learning.

Sessions are arranged skilfully to balance time for group work, free-flow from indoors to outdoors and children's own independent learning. Outside, children enjoy dancing in the rain with their animal umbrellas, as well as making sure the fire engine arrives at the fire on time. These activities allow children to use their own imagination as well as to begin to understand the world around them. Outdoor activities complement those planned for indoors but outdoor tasks are not always challenging enough for children. Movement from

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one activity to another is calm and purposeful and children clearly understand what is expected of their work as well as their behaviour. Adults set a good example to children of how to behave and how to speak. This underpins positive behaviour management. Group times contribute well to children's social and emotional development. Children enjoy sitting calmly while they listen to well-chosen stories. They respond when given the nod to join in with rhyming words and take every opportunity to use actions with their hands as well as their whole bodies if they need to be an animal on the move. Activities with smaller groups are planned into daily sessions. For example, children talked with their teacher about how many potatoes will balance a pineapple. The teacher used appropriate questioning to challenge pupils' thinking while they slowly add a potato one at a time until there is good balance. Adults' questioning of children to extend their learning is often of a good quality but this best practice is not used often enough.

In this safe and secure learning environment, children's welfare is taken seriously. Good induction systems are in place and the school works closely with parents and carers to ensure that children are well prepared for the nursery and settle well. The key person system provides a stable framework within which children feel safe and well supported. The school monitors attendance carefully and works closely with families to help them understand the importance of regular attendance. Good links are made with other professionals to support children, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or in need of additional provision. Parents and carers praise the school highly for the support they give to children as well as to the family.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Children's enjoyment and achievement are at the centre of the leadership's drive to further improve the nursery's good provision. There is a strong sense of teamwork and staff are united in their desire to do their very best for the children. This is an inclusive school that works successfully to promote equal opportunities and avoid discrimination. This is exemplified through the good progress made by all groups of children and the way in which they work and play well together. Children's progress is monitored carefully and focused learning groups ensure that children are not left behind in their learning. The headteacher and the governing body ensure that systems for safeguarding children are good and all policies and procedures are in place. The governing body is supportive, fully involved in school life and meets all its statutory obligations. Members of the governing body are keen to improve their expertise through training and share their many collective skills with the school. As part of the children's centre, the nursery is at the centre of the community and engages in many activities such as the 'Toddle Waddle' walk. Community

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cohesion is good. There are good links with children's families and the school engages well with different groups. Opportunities for children to learn about and understand differences between families in the local community and the wider world are taught well through role play and special themes.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are positive about the way the school cares for and educates their children. They feel that their children enjoy school, are kept safe and they are pleased with their children's progress. Some took time to add comments to the questionnaire they returned, many to reinforce the strength of their positive views. A few parents and carers were concerned about behaviour. Behaviour was judged to be good and the inspectors found that it is well managed by adults during lessons and around school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Highfield 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 31 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 78 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	61	12	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	65	11	35	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	65	11	35	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	61	11	35	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	71	9	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	58	12	39	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	55	14	45	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)	13	42	13	42	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	61	10	32	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	52	11	35	2	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	61	11	35	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	58	13	42	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	71	9	29	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 pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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 pupils. 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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 pupils 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 pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

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.



31 March 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Highfield Nursery School, Chorley, PR6 0SL

The other inspector and I enjoyed our visit to your school very much. When we walked in and saw how colourful it was, how much lovely space you have and what exciting work was on the wall, we knew that we would enjoy our time with you. Thank you for talking to us and telling us all about the exciting things you do. I could see how much you enjoy being inside school as well as outside. I was impressed with how well some of you danced with your animal umbrellas and how carefully some of you listened for different sounds outside. Your mums, dads and carers think that your school is a good nursery and is safe and we agree with them.

We watched you inside school as well as outside and it was lovely to see you being so friendly to each other and friendly to all the adults teaching and working with you. You were well behaved and sometimes we did not hear you and wondered if you were creeping around!! It was lovely to see you working well with each other, the way you shared and played together and enjoyed your fruit at snack time. In fact, we thought that all this was good! I could tell that you were learning well because of all the different activities that the grown ups organise for you.

The adults are good at teaching and in the way they plan exciting activities for you but we have asked them to let you do more counting just like some of you sang in the speckled frog song and also to sometimes make activities more difficult for you outside. The last thing we have asked is that all the adults who work with you and ask you questions should ask you even more questions so that you can learn more.

All these adults care for and look after you very well.

Thank you for helping us find out about your school and for being such friendly children.

Yours sincerely

Sue Sharkey

Lead inspector

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