

The Brambles Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115829
Local Authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	357826
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Susan Mann HMI

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	0–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs D Urquhart
Headteacher	Mrs A Gale
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 13 hours of classroom activity in all areas of the Nursery. They held meetings with members of the governing body and spoke with children. They observed the school's work, and looked at written policies and procedures, minutes of meetings, and planning and assessment information about children's learning. They also looked at 33 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- The interpretation of school data to assess children's level of attainment on entry and their progress.
- The quality of teaching and the use of assessment information to ensure learning opportunities are sufficiently challenging, especially for the more-able and other identified groups of children.
- Systems used to incorporate children's assessment information into child-initiated play to provide a suitable level of challenge for all children.
- The extent to which the curriculum covers all areas of learning, with particular regard to communication, language and literacy and information and communication technology.
- The effectiveness of the governing body.

Information about the school

The Brambles Nursery School offers funded nursery education and childcare registered on the Early Years Register and both parts of the Childcare Register. There is a children's centre on the same site which offers a range of integrated services, including health, family support and social care. The maintained nursery provision and the childcare provision are delivered alongside one another for children aged between six months and five years.

The school is located in a socially diverse area. Children are mainly of a White British background, with a small minority of pupils from Bangladeshi heritage, and a very small minority of pupils from other Asian backgrounds. There are a few children from families of refugees and/or asylum seekers. The number of children who are learning to speak English as an additional language is above average. A small minority of children have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including speech and language difficulties.

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

Brambles Nursery is a good school. Children develop well during their time in the Nursery and the childcare provision. They have fun and are very well cared for. The school benefits considerably from its integrated children's centre provision and its successful work with children and their families. This provision significantly enhances the care, guidance and support children receive. Children in all age groups of the Nursery develop strong bonds with staff which promote their confidence and emotional well-being to a great extent. As a result, care, guidance and support are excellent, particularly for those children whose individual circumstances mean they need extra support. Children who are learning to speak English as an additional language make good progress. They receive a high level of support in their home languages through interaction with the bi-lingual members of staff who speak Bengali and Arabic, and through frequent use of translation services. One parent commented: 'Brambles nurtures my child as an individual whilst embracing all that is good about multi-cultural diversity.'

A number of outcomes are outstanding. The extent to which children feel safe at school is excellent. Adults have successfully created an exceptionally caring and secure environment where all children are warmly welcomed and in which children feel extremely well supported. The quality of children's behaviour is outstanding. Children demonstrate exceptional consideration and compassion for one another as they play and move around the nursery. Children's contribution to the school community is excellent. They demonstrate a very strong sense of belonging to the school, and show great pride in their work. The extent to which children are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles is superb. Children relish their healthy meals brought from home, both hot and cold, which are almost wholly nutritious in content. They thoroughly enjoy vigorous exercise and fresh air during their frequent opportunities for outdoor play. The school's practices and procedures for safeguarding are exemplary.

The headteacher and senior staff team have a clear vision for the future of the school. They work closely with the governing body and move forward to build on stronger aspects of the school and address weaknesses. Self-evaluation procedures are accurate and development planning sets challenging targets which are carefully monitored. The governing body provides rigorous challenge to the school management team to ensure continuous improvement. Consequently, the school's capacity to improve further is good.

The quality of teaching is good. Children throughout the school benefit from a balance of child-initiated play and adult-led activities which is wholly suited to their stage of development. The school has robust assessment arrangements throughout the age range from when children start at the school, to accurately track the progress of each child to check they make consistently good progress. This information is rigorously analysed by senior staff to assess the levels of children's attainment and progress. Staff make good

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use of this information to extend children's learning in adult-led activities, and they ask children searching questions which extend their thinking and develop their understanding well. In child-initiated activities, there is less extension of children's learning in this way to enable all children, especially the more-able children, to be consistently and sufficiently challenged. The curriculum is good and covers all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage well. It has particularly successful foci on the well-being of children, their personal and social skills, and the development of their communication skills. In the outdoor area, children enjoy the well-planned learning environment. However, at times, the outdoor activities on offer do not entice children to access all areas of the curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend children's learning in their child-initiated play by ensuring that:
 - all the staff provide a high and consistent level of challenge through their questioning and support of activities so that children, especially the more able, are challenged to achieve their identified next steps of learning more effectively
 - the use of the outdoor environment is enhanced and extended to provide exciting learning opportunities which cover all aspects of the curriculum to help children progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children enjoy their learning and they achieve well throughout all age ranges. School and children's centre data indicate most children begin their time at Brambles School with levels of attainment which are below national expectations, although this is not the case for all children. When children leave the Nursery to go into a Reception class at school, their levels of attainment are variable, but above average overall. There are no trends of underachievement in any specific groups within the school, and these are monitored by the school to ensure all children progress well. Inspectors observed how children greatly enjoy their learning and activities which are delivered through a play-based curriculum. Levels of attainment seen during the inspection accurately matched children's records of achievement and assessment data. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress overall. There are well-established and effective procedures in place to tailor provision to a child's individual needs. The school works in close partnership with parents and carers and a wide range of external agencies to access services so that each child is given an appropriate level of support.

Most children make good progress, and some children make very good progress, so that they are working within or above the expected levels of the Early Years Foundation Stage by the time they leave. Children who have made less progress are often those who have had more absence from school than others, for example, those children who are more susceptible to illness because of their young age, or those who take an extended period of leave to visit family. Attendance at childcare or nursery provision is not statutory. However, the school actively promotes good attendance and as a result, in the Nursery, attendance rates are above those normally found. Staff develop a sensitive and supportive rapport with parents and carers, and they telephone families to enquire about reasons for absence and to offer their help or advice.

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Children develop a good level of basic skills that will help them in the future. They are confident speakers, regardless of their level of language, and they demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. The wide range of meaningful activities they enjoy every day enable them to develop their understanding of the world around them. For example, in the 'Chinese restaurant' they use real coins to carry out their role-play transactions, and in the 'Brambles Cottage Police Station', children use a telephone to role play conversations and 'real-life' situations. The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children are curious about and interested in the world around them. They express their thoughts through discussion and creative activity and demonstrate a good level of maturity and understanding.

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	2
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	2
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?

Children are motivated to learn because the staff have high expectations of how well they will progress, and good interaction supports their development well. The development of children's social and emotional well-being is given a high priority by the staff, who nurture children to become self-assured and confident. Babies and very young children receive provision highly suited to their stage of development. Throughout the nursery, the proportion of child-initiated play is good and suits children's needs well. This carefully planned balance empowers children to make their own choices and follow their own interests. The staff make accurate assessment of children's preferences and development

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so they can be encouraged to access the whole curriculum. Frequent observations of children's development are collated into children's records of achievement which chart each child's progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Children enjoy all aspects of the curriculum, which provides an interesting and well-presented variety of learning opportunities. Babies enjoy activities tailored to their stage of development and younger children enthusiastically sing rhymes and songs. The daily opportunities for outdoor play are popular. Children eagerly put on their own coats and gloves when they wish to play outside. They enjoy all their play activities, although on occasion staff do not extend their learning sufficiently. Cross-curricular links are good, with children learning about Chinese New Year through role play, making masks with arts media, and hunting for rabbit pictures in the outdoor area to develop their observation, recording and matching skills. Children make regular use of computers, digital cameras and other equipment to support their learning in information and communication technology.

Children receive excellent care in school. The personal support given to children with learning, behavioural and emotional needs is highly attentive, and staff are persistent to achieve the best possible outcomes. The school and children's centre collaborate successfully together, and with a range of agencies, to sustain children's learning, development and well-being. This is particularly the case for those children whose families find themselves in challenging circumstances. One parent commented: 'All staff are fantastic unbelievably supportive of both child and parents. Cannot fault them one bit.' Transition arrangements are excellent. Children are extremely well supported in their entry into school at every level, and movement between different classes in the Nursery is managed very well so that children feel secure and reassured. Provision for children moving on from the school is very good, with strong links with Reception classes and schools, and excellent liaison between staff.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide well-coordinated leadership and work well with the childcare manager and other senior staff. All senior staff share a clear vision for the current and future priorities of the school, and they set challenging yet realistic objectives for development. For example, the teaching staff have already identified the need to target children's learning more effectively during child-initiated play. They are currently trialling systems for this for consistent use across the age range. The enthusiasm of the senior leadership team to sustain and enhance the quality of provision is shared

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throughout the staff team. The performance of children is rigorously analysed and teaching is monitored to inform strategic planning. The governing body is actively involved in the life of the school through frequent visits and observations of learning. They are experienced and influential in determining the future direction of the school. They provide rigorous challenge and a high level of support for the school's headteacher to ensure the best outcomes are achieved for the children. The headteacher and governing body manage the school's budget efficiently and spending is carefully scrutinised and evaluated. Therefore, the school achieves good value for money. The childcare provision at the school complies with the conditions of registration, and the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are met.

The headteacher and staff have established strong partnerships with parents and carers. Parents and carers are included in their children's learning through parents' and carers' meetings and interviews, and information about the curriculum is sent home to help parents and carers support their child's development. Partnerships with a wide range of agencies are effective to enhance the school's provision. These are especially strong to support children facing challenging circumstances, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language. Staff are dedicated to promoting equality of opportunity for each child who attends. The school's ethos of inclusive practice is evident in all strands of its provision and improvement planning. The school makes a strong contribution to promoting community cohesion, and is particularly effective at a local level through purposeful engagement with a range of community groups, activities and local charities. The school knows the context and characteristics of its community well, and as a consequence, pupils from different backgrounds get on well with one another.

The school's practice with regard to safeguarding children is outstanding. Children's welfare is of paramount importance to the school and this priority permeates all aspects of school life. Excellent procedures are wholly embedded to protect children's welfare.

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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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A lower proportion of parents and carers than is often the case returned a completed questionnaire. The overwhelming majority of responses were positive, with almost all parents and carers indicating a high level of satisfaction with the work of the school. All parents and carers consider the school keeps their child safe and healthy, and all believe their child enjoys school. The inspection found the outcomes for children being safe, healthy, and well cared for are outstanding. Some parents and carers expressed the wish for more opportunities to meet with staff to discuss their children's progress. The inspectors spoke to the school about this and learned that there are informal and formal opportunities for parents and carers to discuss their children's progress throughout the year. However, we have asked the school to review this aspect of school life and ensure parents and carers are aware of the opportunities available to them for such discussions.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at the Brambles Nursery and Children's Centre 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 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 234 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	76	8	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	82	6	18	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	17	52	13	39	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	58	13	39	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	64	11	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	70	10	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	76	8	24	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)	15	45	13	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	64	12	36	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	52	14	42	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	58	10	30	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	76	7	21	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	76	8	24	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.



9 February 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of The Brambles Nursery School, Southsea PO4 0DT

Thank you for giving us such a lovely welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you about what you do at school, and watching you play. Thank you very much for talking with us.

We think that Brambles is a good school and a friendly and happy place where all the children are very well looked after. We were very impressed by how well you all behave and how kind you are to one another. The adults looking after you are very caring. They keep you safe and help you to be healthy. We especially liked the way you all eat such healthy lunches which will help you to be healthy.

We enjoyed seeing the interesting activities you have, such as the water tray and the sand. You all try your best and do really well with your learning. We have asked your teachers to try and help you to think even harder sometimes to help you learn even more.

We thought your outdoor play area is lovely and we saw how much you enjoy playing on the trikes and running around outside. We have asked your teachers to think about ways to make your outdoor play even more exciting to help you learn lots more interesting things.

We really enjoyed coming to your school and we hope you will continue to have lots of fun and work hard so that you can do even better!

Yours sincerely

Susan Mann Her Majesty's Inspector

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