

Abbey Green Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107188
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	356103
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Tim Vaughan 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	0–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Noreen Hussain
Headteacher	Mrs Margot Dixon
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited eight sessions, held meetings with the headteacher, staff and representatives of the governing body and spoke informally with children, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence including staff planning, children's learning journeys, monitoring and self evaluation, minutes of governing body meetings, staff questionnaires and 70 parent and carer questionnaires. The childcare managed by the governing body was part of this inspection.

- The effectiveness of systems to involve parents and carers in their children's learning.
- How effective safeguarding and care arrangements are for all groups.
- The quality of the school's self-evaluation of the childcare managed by the governing body.
- How well governors help the school to self-evaluate and to make improvements.
- How well communication, language and literacy are being promoted and helping children to achieve their full potential.

Information about the school

Abbey Green is an inner-city nursery school in Bradford. It serves an area of high unemployment and social disadvantage. The vast majority of children are from the British Asian community. Forty-one per cent of children are learning English as an additional language and a below-average number of children have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school incorporates a children's centre which was inspected separately by Ofsted in 2011. The school is average in size. There is on-site childcare managed by the governing body and children aged four months to five years old use this provision throughout the year. The school has achieved the Manningham in Bloom' award for the quality of the children's outdoor area.

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

Abbey Green Nursery School is a good school. Children's behaviour and the way in which they are kept safe are outstanding. There is a clear and shared vision of respecting and supporting individual children, parents and carers and staff. This has enabled the school to provide and manage effective and well integrated education and care for children from birth. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. 'The staff are understanding and helpful; my child has progressed due to this' was a typical comment. It is also clear from many other comments that children love coming to school to play and learn. Following a period of instability the school has successfully maintained the good quality of the education and care that children receive.

The school places a strong emphasis upon celebrating and sharing children's learning from birth. Excellent displays of activities are made on the walls and in home-made books in the corridors. As a result, children are confident learners; keen to explore and try new experiences. Teaching is well matched to children's needs and interests.

One of the school's key strengths is the excellent learning environment. This has been given careful evaluation, planning, investment and attention by the whole staff team. As a result, children play and investigate in a wide range of exciting spaces with confidence and enthusiasm. Children respect their environment and are strongly involved in maintaining the garden and using and returning resources for themselves. Children as young as one year old show an enthusiasm to play both indoors and outdoors.

Children make good progress throughout their time at the school. This is because there is good and some outstanding teaching by teachers and early years practitioners, a well-developed curriculum and strong teamwork. Children are supported to think in shared and sustained ways through consistently good, open-ended questioning. As a consequence, children demonstrate that they are deeply involved in activities and feel very good about themselves as learners.

The school's safeguarding procedures are good and staff and governors have received appropriate training. Safeguarding procedures are followed by governors. In order for governors to now go further and demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of safeguarding, further training is needed.

The headteacher provides good leadership and manages the school well. For example, the childcare provision managed by the governing body has benefited from

carefully planned improvements. The provision complies with the requirements for registration and its strength is that children learn through exciting play experiences, supported by skilled adults.

Learning and teaching across the school are well led. The leadership team has a good understanding of the strengths in provision and where further improvements can be

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made. For example, the school is well aware that governance remains satisfactory because opportunities remain for the governing body to be more systematically involved in evaluation. The school has worked effectively to limit the impact of the high turnover of governors caused by the short time that children spend in the school. A new chair of governors has been elected and stronger governance procedures have recently been introduced.

Given these improvements, along with its other strengths, including the successful partnership with parents and the skilled staff support to children, the school has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve governance of the school by:
 - increasing the extent to which the governing body is fully and systematically engaged in evaluation
 - providing further training for the governing body on safeguarding

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

Across the school, children show high levels of confidence, enthusiasm and motivation, and learn and practise their skills well. For example, during the inspection, one three-year old was so enjoying her writing that she asked to show an inspector. A day later she was able to explain what she had written and why.

During the inspection, children under three, including babies, were seen to be making significant gains in their learning. Their individual progress was good in relation to their capabilities and starting points. School data shows that most children who enter the Nursery at three years of age demonstrate skills well below what is typical for their age, across each area of learning. By the time that children transfer to Reception classes attainment is satisfactory; children have made good progress against their starting points and the gap between groups has clearly narrowed. Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy are among the strongest areas of attainment with girls achieving more highly than boys.

The small numbers of children with special needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because of the attention to individual needs, good quality teaching and close monitoring by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator. Children have close support from their key workers, they are supported as individuals and staff use their knowledge of child development to good effect in their planning and teaching. As a result, children who have language difficulties were confident to communicate with inspectors during the inspection.

Children respond well to the opportunities across classrooms to explore and investigate. They enjoy playing with others and being independent. For example, two-year olds confidently explored outdoors on their own as well as cooperating in a 'what's in the bag today?' song time. Across the school children demonstrate excellent behaviour, making reference to adults at appropriate times to help them with conflict or difficulty. Children also demonstrate a very well developed understanding of safety; for example, when climbing high outdoors, wearing safety goggles during woodwork sessions or when using

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tools to prepare a snack. They ask unfamiliar adults who they are and the youngest babies show that they feel safe with their key workers.

Children demonstrate a good understanding of healthy eating through their snack times, lunches, displays and stories. Hand washing routines are established for all children. Water dispensers are readily accessed by older children. Work to promote children's dental health has led to the school achieving the First Steps to Healthy Teeth Gold Certificate.

Children are well prepared for their later life. They take responsibility for the school plants and pets, they are supported to become confident, inquisitive and playful and they enjoy learning.

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	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?

Children make good progress because of consistently good teaching with some outstanding examples of practice. Where teaching is strong, teachers and early years practitioners sensitively support and then extend children's thinking into new learning. Staff also assess children's learning carefully and track this using the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

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Classrooms, corridor spaces and the outdoor area have been made into fascinating places for children. This includes a good range of resources to investigate such as natural materials, pets and plants. Books, labelling and pictures have been carefully chosen to reflect a range of cultures, ethnicity and languages. Framed photographs of the children's learning abound throughout the building. The layout of each room has been carefully planned and there are well-developed spaces, including for reading stories, listening to music, role-play, block play and making and creating artwork. The outdoor area continues the provision of learning across the curriculum including opportunities to climb, crawl, hide, cycle, talk, read and write. This includes excellent opportunities for children to take risks in a well-managed way. Learning is well matched to children's needs and it is exciting, fun and full of surprises.

Staff knowledge of the learning and development and welfare requirements, and Early Years Foundation Stage guidance, is good. All staff, including those involved in childcare, have good initial qualifications, relevant experience and professional development. For example, as the result of recent whole-school training, all teachers and early years practitioners are skilled in supporting and extending children's thinking by using open-ended questioning. The promotion of communication, language and literacy is a strong focus within the school's curriculum. Staff were frequently observed in the inspection talking with and alongside children in engaging ways. For example, one teacher used a spontaneous opportunity to introduce the words 'amazing' and 'stupendous' as an alternative to the word 'good' in order to widen children's vocabulary. As a result, all children are becoming confident communicators.

The quality of staff knowledge, their teaching and the highly enabling learning environment leads to good progress and outcomes for children. School leaders are not complacent and have clear plans for developing teaching, curriculum and assessment in order to further improve children's outcomes to outstanding. This includes further specific training about the care of babies and children's use of language for communication and thinking.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The success of the school and the childcare is underpinned by good leadership and management. The headteacher sets high expectations and galvanises staff enthusiasm to good effect. She is passionate about developing children's learning and has generated a shared momentum for continuous improvement. There is effective leadership and

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management at all levels because the headteacher builds staff confidence to take on new ways of working. New roles ensure that there is good professional development. As a result, there is a good use of a range of rigorous monitoring activities.

The school has successfully addressed a recommendation made at the last inspection, to involve parents and carers more in their children's learning. An excellent system of sharing children's learning journeys with parents and carers each term is now in place. Next steps for children's learning are also shared and reviewed. This work is complemented by the daily sharing of library books between school and home.

The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination well. This work is enhanced by living by the school's motto, expressed as 'all different, all special, all equal'. This is based upon a good understanding of the community it serves, shared among the whole team. Some members of the staff team are able to speak to children in community languages. They do so very skilfully, mixing their comments with English in order to help all children to understand and to develop their skills.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is good. Children's own faith and culture are valued and celebrated. Story, festivals, books, photographs and artefacts are all used to promote understanding of children's own heritage as well as that of the wider community. For example, books about different faiths are included in the nursery book area. Another example is the annual visits by children to a playgroup and a nursery school situated in other different communities.

Safeguarding is high priority and procedures are good. All systems and structures are in place to safeguard children's well-being throughout the school. In childcare, comprehensive policies and procedures ensure that children are protected and well supported. Governors have undertaken training in safeguarding.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school but their involvement in evaluation is not systematic and comprehensive. There is a new Chair and recently improved systems of governance. This means that governors are now playing an increasing role in the life of the school. For example, one governor has been helping the school to develop the new Special Educational Needs policy.

Having undergone a period of instability, the school now has stable leadership and good and improving teaching. This period of change has prompted greater teamwork between staff. As a result, the focus upon the quality of children's care, learning and teaching from birth has been maintained. The involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning, which was previously weak, is now well established. The headteacher is ambitious and leads with clear vision and has welcomed the freshness of perspective and additional expertise brought by the new deputy headteacher.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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	3
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

Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. There is overwhelming agreement that children are kept safe. Parents and carers say that their children enjoy school and that the school is well led and managed. A small number said that the school did not take account of their views, help them to support their children's learning or inform them enough about their children's progress. These issues are covered in the main body of the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Abbey Green 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 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 88 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	64	25	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	64	23	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	57	27	39	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	59	26	37	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	63	24	34	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	60	26	37	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	53	30	43	3	4	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)	35	50	31	44	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	56	29	41	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	53	30	43	0	0	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	46	34	49	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	38	54	30	43	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	67	23	33	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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 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.



23 May 2011

Dear Children,

Inspection of Abbey Green Nursery School, Bradford, BD8 8HT

Thank you for being so kind to me when I came to watch you playing in the nursery. I watched choosing time, story time, group time, lunchtime, snack time and home time. You told me about the nursery and what you like to do. You showed me that Abbey Green is a good nursery school.

I was amazed to see your garden where there are so many exciting places to play and I will remember the paint that I got on my hands and clothes! I liked your classrooms because your teachers have made them very interesting places to be. I was shocked at how big your guinea pigs were – you must be feeding them a lot!

You told me that you like going to nursery and are very safe when you are there. Your parents also told me that they are very happy with the nursery and that you have good teachers.

I really liked your learning journeys. These show the exciting activities that you do every week. I am glad that you can take these home and back to nursery again. These learning journeys are so special to share with everyone at home. I watched babies in your school having lots of fun splashing in the water tray and drawing on big pieces of paper. Some of you showed me your writing and I was very pleased to see this and I even got felt tip on my face.

To help your school be even better, I have asked the governors to learn more about keeping you safe and to ask more questions about the exciting activities you do.

Your mums and dads must be very proud of what you are learning at school. Well done.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Vaughan

Her Majesty's Inspector

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