

Brentwood Early Years Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104984
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	355673
Inspection dates	15–16 June 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	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	58
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Ceridwen Jones
Headteacher	Mrs Deborah Richards
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2008
School address	Brentwood Street Wallasey Merseyside CH44 4BB
Telephone number	0151 638 1567
Fax number	0151 638 1567
Email address	schooloffice@brentwood-nursery.wirral.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited four sessions, held meetings with the headteacher, staff and members of the governing body and spoke informally with children, 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, staff questionnaires and 29 parent and carer questionnaires.

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

- The progress children make from their starting points.
- The effectiveness of safeguarding and care arrangements for all groups.
- How effectively assessment is used in the school to guide children, parents and carers and to inform staff planning.
- The effectiveness of the school's strategy to promote community cohesion.
- The quality of children's learning and engagement through planned, purposeful play and a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Information about the school

Brentwood Early Years Centre is an average sized nursery school. The vast majority of children are of White British heritage and there is a small number from minority ethnic groups. 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. There is on-site childcare and this was inspected separately by Ofsted in 2011. The future of the school has recently been reviewed by the local authority. The school holds the International School Foundation Level Award and Healthy School status.

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

'My child has come on leaps and bounds and she looks forward to coming', 'I am proud to send my child to this school'. These comments expressed by some parents and carers and echoed by many others, help to explain why Brentwood Early Years Centre is a good school. Children behave extremely well and have positive attitudes to their learning. This is because of the high standards of care and support for individuals and the commitment of staff to every child and their family. As one parent said, 'they really do genuinely care'. Safeguarding arrangements at the school are excellent and this is consistently acknowledged by parents and carers. As a result children feel safe and are entirely secure.

Children's learning through play with one another and with adults is of good quality.

Learning opportunities in the excellent indoor and outdoor environment are well-planned and supported by staff. This is complemented by small and large group activities and special experiences like gardening club or meeting visitors. As a result, children's well-being is excellent and they play and explore with confidence and enthusiasm. Very effectively led by the headteacher, the school has developed a well-balanced curriculum. For example, health has become an explicit part of the learning activities aimed at children and their families. As a result, children's understanding of how to lead healthy lives is excellent.

One of the key strengths of the school is the careful tracking of children's progress. The systems that have been developed since the last inspection are good and clearly inform the next steps for children. As a result, learning and teaching are well matched to children's needs and interests. Crucially, this tracking information is regularly shared with parents and carers. This was illustrated by the parental comment 'they always tell you where your child is in their learning, where they should be and what to do next at home and school'.

The partnership that the school has recently developed with parents and carers is excellent with regular communication with parents and carers, and a typical comment is, 'staff are always really interested in what you're doing with your child at home'. The school works very closely with parents and carers to promote children's attendance at school.

Teaching and learning are good and this is very well led and managed by the headteacher. Consequently, children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well from their starting points with some making outstanding progress. By the time that they leave the school most children reach expectations for their age. The school is aware that improving teaching to outstanding, in order to help children to attain beyond age-related expectations, is a priority for development.

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The success of the school is underpinned by the outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher. There is a strong and shared sense of purpose amongst staff and the governing body, high morale and thorough and accurate self-evaluation. There is clear evidence of steady improvement which, from the parental questionnaires, is attributed to the arrival of the headteacher so that the school 'has made great strides and achieved much'. The headteacher is ambitious for the school to further embed these achievements and is already bringing about exceptional improvement. For example, the headteacher is starting to compare the school's performance with nursery schools outside the area and to further improve the good staff development already provided. Considering the improvements made since the last inspection together with its other strengths, including rigorous monitoring and analysis and plans for future improvement, the school has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise children's attainment by continuing the excellent support to parents and carers and improving the quality of teaching across the curriculum so that it is outstanding.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

Children's current work, as well as the school's own data, shows that children who enter the school at three years of age demonstrate skills well below those typical for their age, across each area of learning. By the time that children transfer to primary school their attainment is average. Children have made good progress against their starting points and for some the progress made is excellent. Children's good progress in communication, language and literacy is partly because the school has worked effectively with the local authority to improve learning and teaching. As a result of the school's emphasis upon children's whole-body movements and making good use of the outdoor area, including to cycle, to climb and balance, children also make good progress in their physical development.

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 are given effective support by all staff, they are supported as individuals and staff use their knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage to good effect in their planning and teaching. As a result, children who have language difficulties were observed to be gaining good access to the curriculum during the inspection.

Children respond well to the opportunities across the school to explore and investigate. They enjoy playing with others and the well-planned learning environment also allows children to be independent and practise their skills. For example, through the outdoor role play fire station children are practising recognition of house numbers.

Across the school children demonstrate excellent behaviour, making reference to adults at appropriate times to help them with conflict or difficulty and through showing care for one another. Children also demonstrate a very well-developed understanding of safety, for example, when talking about the need to hold a parents' or carers' hand when out shopping or approaching a Police Officer when lost.

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Children have an excellent understanding of adopting a healthy lifestyle. This is evident in their responses to snack times, lunches and activities. For example, they named the different types of vegetables that they dug out of the nursery garden and explained the use and benefit of these in meals. Hand washing routines are established for all children. Water is regularly made available to drink. Work to promote children's dental health includes a popular toothbrush exchange with local health professionals coming on-site on a regular basis. The work of the school to support families has also led to other improvements in children's health, for example, through helping some families gain regular access to a health visitor.

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	1
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance ¹	3
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Children make good progress because of good teaching and careful assessment and tracking of their progress. Children's development and next steps are routinely shared with parents and carers. As a consequence, staff and families celebrate children's learning together. Where learning and teaching are strongest, the teacher and early years practitioners observe and listen carefully to children and use open-ended questions to reinforce or extend children's learning. Staff also use their good professional development and informed knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum to plan how to

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move children's learning forward. For example, as a result of staff training, the school has improved how children are taught to recognise letters and sounds through rhymes, stories and games. Children's good progress from well below expected starting points in communication, language and literacy has been further enhanced by the strong emphasis upon talking with and listening to children.

Very effectively supported by the headteacher, staff have developed a stimulating and well organised learning environment. This includes a good range of books and magazines to read indoors, outdoors and in the home lending library in the school foyer. Disability and different gender, cultures, ethnicity and languages are valued and promoted through books, labelling and display. The indoor and outdoor classrooms are organised so that there are many opportunities to write and to participate in role play. As a result, boys and girls are becoming confident writers. Opportunities for making and constructing are also well-developed. For example, during the inspection children were able to make pretend ladders using willow tree branches and sticky tape. Other children observed were able to absorb themselves in clay modelling, sensitively supported by the teacher. Staff planning ensures that there is a good balance between play and child-initiated and adult-initiated learning.

There are excellent relationships across the school and support for individuals is very well-targeted and personalised. Parents and carers referred to this as the 'personal touch' where the headteacher and staff give as much time and attention as they can to each individual child and family. As a consequence, there is good teamwork between staff and all children are included. Excellent support is given to children and parents and carers when starting at nursery school or when moving to primary school. A parental comment illustrated this in the comment 'they're not just bringing out my son's confidence but mine too'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is driven forward by the outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher. She is passionate about young children and their families attending a school that meets their individual needs. Over the past three years she has developed effective systems of management, a strong focus upon learning and progress and high expectations of staff and children. She has set strong parental partnership at the heart of the school and ensured that effective links are made with local primary schools and with the local authority.

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Effective support to the headteacher is given by the governing body, and by the senior teacher, whose role continues to be developed. Together they know the school's strengths and weaknesses and have a shared commitment to improvement. Self-evaluation is honest and thorough and recent changes have been carefully introduced and managed. As a result, teaching is good and children's achievement and well-being is good.

Recently the future of the school has been reviewed by the local authority. The headteacher and the governing body have sustained high staff morale and a focus upon children and their families during this time. The headteacher is not complacent and has already embarked on the next phase of the school's development. The aim of this is to achieve outstanding quality of provision, outstanding quality of teaching and high attainment by children through comparing performance against other nursery schools nationally and further improving staff development.

The school's engagement with parents and carers is excellent. This is because the headteacher and staff have developed the school into a calm, comfortable, attractive place for children and families to learn, play and have fun. Parents and carers are welcome to talk to staff, to stay and play with their children, to look at children's records, to attend courses and to help to look after the school garden. A well-resourced home-lending library is used each day and parents and carers value the monthly newsletters that give updates and make suggestions for home learning. The attractive 'learning journeys' of children's development and progress are shared through termly meetings with parents and carers. This effective partnership was described by a parent who said 'at this school, you get a proper conversation. There is no rushing you out'.

The governing body plays an effective role in shaping the school's direction and in holding it to account. Members are well informed about the school's performance and strongly committed to helping the school continue to offer high quality for local families. All staff have a strong commitment to removing barriers to learning and acknowledging every child, parent and carer as an individual. As a result the school is inclusive and is effective in improving children's life chances and in promoting equality. Each child's heritage, language and religion is valued and promoted as are those of the wider community.

Safeguarding is a high priority in the school and procedures are highly effective. For example, there is a clear procedure for checking visitors and an excellent leaflet about health and safety is given to visitors, supply staff and volunteers. The premises are very secure and all rooms have keypad locks. All required systems and procedures are in place to check the suitability of staff.

The school has a clear understanding of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic context of the local community. This knowledge is used carefully to plan and evaluate activities aimed at promoting community cohesion. For example, there are special themes, celebrations and good use of visitors to the school. The way in which the school strives to acknowledge local needs is appreciated by parents and carers.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
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

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. There is overwhelming agreement that children enjoy their experiences, make good progress and that the school is well led and managed. Parents and carers welcome the way that they are consulted, involved and informed by the school about their children's learning and progress. They also feel that the school is effective at meeting their needs.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brentwood Early Years 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 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 58 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	76	7	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	97	1	3	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	90	3	10	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	90	3	10	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	93	2	7	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	86	4	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	93	2	7	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)	23	79	4	14	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	83	5	17	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	79	6	21	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	79	6	21	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	90	3	10	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	93	2	7	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.



17 June 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Brentwood Early Years Centre, Wallasey, CH44 4BB

Thank you for being so kind to me when I came to watch you playing in the nursery. I watched choosing time, group time, gardening club, lunchtime, snack time and playing outdoors. You told me about the nursery and what you like to do. You showed me that Brentwood 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 sitting in the fire station in the rain and the raindrops going down my neck! I liked your classrooms because your teachers have made them very interesting places to be. I really liked your new garden with the apple trees and was surprised at the huge rhubarb, potatoes and onions that you dug up. I was also very pleased to see some of your riding on 'two-wheelers' outdoors.

You told me that you like going to nursery and are very safe when you are there. Your parents and carers 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 share these with your families. Some of you showed me your writing and I was very pleased to see this and to also hear how you are learning new rhymes, stories, letters and sounds. To help your school be even better, I have asked your teachers to find ways to help you learn even more during your special time at Brentwood.

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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