

Warrington Road Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110959
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	378206
Inspection dates	7–8 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Frank Carruthers

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	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Hodgkins
Headteacher	Amanda Brown
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2009
School address	Naylor Road Widnes WA8 0BS
Telephone number	0151 424 4686
Fax number	0151 495 9290
Email address	head.warringtonroad@halton.gov.uk

Registered childcare provision	Bambini Day Care Centre
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	44
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	January 2009

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons, and held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and staff, as well as senior staff at the children's centre and individual parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at teachers' planning, school policies and records as well as 41 parental questionnaires and staff questionnaires.

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

- How well are different groups of children achieving, including boys and girls and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- How effective are safeguarding procedures?
- How effective are leadership and management at a time of change at senior leadership level?
- What is the impact of the current deficit budget on the quality of provision?
- Have the outstanding outcomes, provision and leadership and management found at the previous inspection been maintained?

Information about the school

This larger-than-average size nursery school serves the local community of Halton View and neighbouring areas and includes extended provision for children from birth to five years of age in a registered day care centre. This provision formed part of the inspection, although it is in the process of re-registration with a different provider. The school is part of a children's centre, which is the subject of a separate inspection. The children are almost all White British. About 10% of the children have attended the day-care provision before joining the nursery. The percentage of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly more than that found in most nursery schools. The school has several awards, including International Schools and 'I Can' status. Since the last inspection, there has been a change of headteacher. The acting headteacher was the former assistant headteacher and took up post at the start of this term.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This nursery school continues to provide an outstanding education for the children, as was found at the previous inspection. Children achieve exceptionally well in all areas of learning as a result of excellent teaching in a stimulating environment for learning. Children thoroughly enjoy to come to school and settle very quickly. They make great strides in learning how to be independent and soon learn how to plan ahead which activities they will choose to do. Even at this early stage of the school year they show excellent levels of cooperation with staff and other children. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities also do extremely well thanks to one-to-one support provided by teaching assistants. Children behave exceptionally well, evident in the way they treat equipment in school and respond when asked to wash their hands and tidy resources away. The children make excellent progress in early skills of reading, writing, number and problem solving. The outdoor resources and indoor soft play area that are in use every day mean the children's confidence and physical coordination are outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education.

These outcomes are the result of excellent provision. All adults working with the children have an astute understanding of how young children learn. Through careful planning, excellent teaching and a rich curriculum, they encourage the children to pursue their own interests while at the same time developing their understanding by perceptive questioning. They are often highly effective in intervening in the children's play to help develop their learning. Staff track the progress of the children exceptionally well and use the information to identify children who are finding learning difficult. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The staff use agencies and resources available within the children's centre and further afield exceptionally well to assist families so that parents and carers can themselves help their children to blossom. There is a wide range of excellent workshops and courses as well individual support for parents and carers. In addition, the day care centre provides very well for the welfare and learning of the young children it looks after. All these aspects are important elements in the highly effective way the school promotes community cohesion.

Despite recent changes to senior leadership in the school, the overall effectiveness of leadership and management continues to be excellent. The acting headteacher has made a good start in planning for the future development of the school and

monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. This has made for a smooth transition of leadership. The roles of some key teachers are changing within the new management team and these are in the process of development. All staff report they feel highly valued and part of the decision-making processes. The governing body makes a good contribution to strategic planning and challenges senior staff to account for actions proposed and taken. School leaders have made significant financial savings this year and have a clear plan to balance the current deficit budget within the next twelve months. Partnerships with parents and carers and other agencies and schools promote the quality of the children's experiences in the school exceptionally well. School self-evaluation is robust and all at school promote the best interests of the children so that they have the best opportunities possible. As a result of these highly positive outcomes, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the management roles of key staff to support the work of the acting headteacher in maintaining the high quality of provision.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

Most children start in the nursery with skills that are below those expected for their age. The range of attainment is quite wide. A few have special educational needs and/or disabilities while some have well-developed social and communication skills. All children make excellent progress. By the time they move on to Reception classes in local primary schools most are achieving well above expected levels for their age. They are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their education, having a real passion for learning, an ability to think and plan their daily routines for themselves and excellent early skills of reading, writing and number. Boys are fully involved in activities, as are the girls, and have good communication skills. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are encouraged to take a full part in the nursery. A few started school with extremely limited social and communication skills. With the patient support of staff, they have settled well and are joining in group activities.

At the time of the inspection, most children have attended school for half a term. Already their independence in the classrooms and outside is excellent. They use equipment and resources sensibly, dress themselves for outdoor play and wash their hands for snacks. Encouraged by staff they are talking in clear, full sentences and playing cooperatively with other children. Outdoors the children work together to build bridges from blocks and planks. Indoors they take on roles of doctors, patients and receptionist at the 'surgery'. 'You'll need to drink lots of cold water,' the doctor tells one patient. The children have a good understanding of how to play safely and have regard for one another on big apparatus. The children's enthusiasm for school is evident in their good attendance, and parents and carers report that their children are very keen to attend school.

These are the grades for children’s outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Children’s attainment	1
The quality of children’s learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which children feel safe	2
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	1
The extent to which children develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Children’s attendance	2
The extent of children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teamwork is a major factor in the high quality of the provision. All staff plan activities together, make observations on the children’s learning, lead whole-group sessions and intervene positively in the children’s play to promote language and learning. Staff note down ideas the children suggest as they play and use these to good effect when planning further work in their fortnightly plans. This makes for a very good balance between learning devised by adults and ideas generated by the children themselves. For example, the sophisticated interest in dinosaurs of one child was used to very good effect to involve all children in the group. Whole-group sessions are lively and used effectively to recall what the children have been doing in order to reinforce learning. Staff make story time extra special by involving the children very well. The story of The Gruffalo was made even more exciting when the lights were turned off and the children pointed torches at the Big Book. The curriculum covers all areas of learning for this age group exceptionally well. A key feature is the outstanding use of the spacious outdoor area to promote learning. Of particular note are the water features, with pumps, gullies, pipes and buckets, the sand areas with diggers and other equipment, and several play houses. Indoors five classrooms and a soft play room cater for the different areas of learning and provide an excellent environment for learning.

Staff operate a highly effective key person system that helps the children to identify with individual staff and feel secure. Links with the day care centre are excellent. This means the children who join the nursery from the toddler room are confident and happy. The children in the day care’s three- and four-year-old group benefit very well from using facilities in the nursery, especially the outdoor area and soft play room, and from playing with other children from the nursery. Links with associated primary schools are also very comprehensive and include visits by staff between schools to discuss the children’s transfer as well as visits to the primary schools for the children. All aspects of assessing and recording how the children are progressing are outstanding, providing a model of best practice used by other Early Years Foundation Stage settings in the borough.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Close analysis of information about how well children are progressing and day-to-day involvement in the children’s learning mean the acting headteacher has a good grasp of the effectiveness of the school. While at the same time continuing the best of the provision already in place, she has begun to make refinements, for example, in bringing the monitoring of teaching in line with the cycle of school development planning. Her role in promoting teamwork and driving forward improvements has already had a good impact, for example, in analysing data about different groups of children. The different roles of key teachers within the new management team are yet to be defined and made fully effective. With the support of the governing body and the local authority the acting headteacher has put in place an effective plan to bring the school budget back into balance. Inspection evidence shows that the adjustments made to reduce spending are not having a negative impact on children’s outcomes. The governing body has a good range of expertise among members and a full complement of parent governors. Leadership by the Chair is good and there is not only support for the school leadership but also a good level of challenge. There are plans in place to help members gain a better understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage through visits and links with staff.

The school promotes equality of opportunity exceptionally well, evident, for instance, in the excellent arrangements for supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All elements of safeguarding are good. Training of staff is thorough and comprehensive and relevant policies in place and appropriately reviewed. Links with agencies are extensive and help families to be involved in their children’s development, and to provide support in times of stress. Parents and carers comment very favourably on the availability of such resources. The day-to-day leadership and management of the day care centre by the manager are good. Community cohesion is promoted exceptionally well not only by these partnerships but also by links further afield, for instance by well-established links with a setting in China and a more recent one with a setting in Estonia.

These are the grades for the 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	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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

About half of all parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire and the level of support and appreciation for the work of the school is very high. One quarter of respondents made additional comments, almost all very supportive of the school. These views endorse the findings of this inspection. A comment typical of these views is 'I would thoroughly recommend this nursery and have only praise for the teachers.' Another commented, 'There is a very real school-home partnership.' One or two parents and carers would like more parent-teacher meetings. Inspectors find the school operates an open-door policy with parents and carers to meet and discuss a child's progress. Opportunities for them to see and take home the children's folders and files of photographs and work are continuous and a model of good nursery practice.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Warrington Road 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 inspector received 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 81 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	93	3	7	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	85	6	15	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	73	10	24	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	70	12	29	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	78	9	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	64	12	30	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	76	10	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)	25	63	14	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	70	11	27	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	66	13	33	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	69	10	27	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	76	9	22	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	76	10	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 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 November 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Warrington Road Nursery School, Widnes WA8 0BS

We really enjoyed our visit to your nursery school. You were having so much fun in the classrooms and outside. You go to such a wonderful nursery school. All the adults who look after you do a great job. They help you to learn a lot and show you how you can look after yourselves. I was very pleased to see how well you plan what you are going to do each day. You had a fabulous time playing outside with water and with sand, in the adventure playground, building bridges and riding bikes. I enjoyed watching you being doctors and patients at the clinic so much I would have liked to join in. You played together and shared things so well. I know the grown-ups who look after you at home think your school is great and we agree.

When we visit schools we inspect lots of the things the adults do to make sure they are doing their very best for all the children. The adults at your school certainly do that for you. We have one suggestion to make. We want the teachers to do the best they can to help your acting headteacher to run the school. This means they might be given different jobs to do. In this way, your school will continue to be excellent.

On behalf of the inspection team I hope you all carry on enjoying school and doing so well.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Carruthers
Lead Inspector

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