

Ribblesdale Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119089
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379725
Inspection dates	14–15 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Sarah Drake

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Yearling
Headteacher	Viv Parsons
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited three sessions and recorded 10 observations of the provision delivered by four different teachers and five teaching assistants. They held meetings with staff and members of the governing body, and spoke informally with groups of parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to children's progress and school management, including safeguarding. They also took into account the questionnaires returned by 10 staff and 29 parents and carers.

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

- Whether all groups of children achieve equally well, with a particular focus on the development of the personal and communication skills of boys and children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The success with which staff use information gained from observation and assessment to provide sufficient challenge and interest for children's learning.
- How successfully the leadership balances the different demands of the nursery with those of the other provision for which it has responsibility in order to ensure that children in the nursery make at least good progress.

Information about the school

Ribblesdale is of average size for a nursery school. It serves a wide catchment area, and offers part-time provision for the morning or afternoon. The overwhelming majority of children are White British. Small numbers are of Pakistani or Polish heritage and are learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children that have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. An increasing number of children have complex needs and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Children join the nursery throughout the year. Around one quarter experience five terms in the setting but the majority spend three terms there before transferring to one of 15 local primary schools. The nursery holds the Lancashire Quality Mark for Early Years provision and has Healthy School status.

The nursery offers breakfast, lunch and after-school care as well as full day care and holiday care. This provision did not form part of this inspection but a report of its quality can be found on the Ofsted website.

The nursery building is shared with the children's centre which opened in March 2006. The centre has been inspected by Ofsted and a report of its quality can be found on the Ofsted website.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

As at the time of its previous inspection, Ribblesdale Nursery is an outstanding school. It offers children high quality education based on staff's excellent knowledge of their individual needs and of how young children learn. Inspirational leadership by the headteacher and other senior staff ensures that the nursery constantly builds on previous success and adapts to changing circumstances. Strong teamwork and regular discussion lead to staff seamlessly adjusting the provision on a daily basis according to their observations of children's skill levels and interests. Parents and carers are delighted by the quality of provision. Typical of their comments is that 'we feel that our child has come on in leaps and bounds since starting nursery.'

Most children join the nursery with skills that are broadly as expected for their age, although their communication skills are often weaker than other areas. Exceptionally skilful teaching ensures that by the time they leave for their Reception classes a very large majority of children demonstrate skills above those for their age in all areas of learning. A minority, particularly those who attend for five terms, have skills well above expectations, such as the ability to write simple words independently. Outstanding care, guidance and support mean that children settle very well and grow in self-esteem. Excellent attention to the promotion of equality of opportunity results in all groups of children making first rate progress. The vibrant curriculum ensures that they greatly enjoy their learning. For their age, children have an exceptional understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. Their behaviour is excellent, they develop a strong sense of community and they take very good care of each other.

The nursery building is a hive of activity throughout the day. Outstanding leadership and management, including excellent deployment of resources, ensure that the nursery runs smoothly and provides a positive, welcoming environment to all. High quality partnerships with a wide range of other agencies greatly enhance the quality of provision. Members of the governing body are kept well informed about nursery activities and provide staff with good levels of support. Strategic planning is effective and built on a clear view of the nursery's strengths and weaknesses. However, the nursery does not analyse with sufficient rigour the development of specific skills, such as the use of language for communication and thinking, by different groups of children. This means that whole-school planning and evaluation are sometimes rather generalised and that success criteria are not sufficiently sharply focussed on the desired impact any actions should have on children's progress. Despite this, as

evidenced by the on-going high quality of provision, the nursery has outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the precision and rigour with which information about children's progress is collected and used by:
 - analysing the skills of different groups in the different areas of, at least, communication, language and literacy and using this to guide strategic planning
 - ensuring that development planning has sharply defined success criteria related to outcomes for children.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Children arrive at nursery with a smile on their face and an eagerness to start exploring the different resources on offer during each session. The excellent balance between familiar objects, such as the home area, and new items, such as a programmable 'bug', means that children develop a sense of security and, therefore, the confidence to experiment. They form warm, trusting relationships with staff so that they listen well to guidance, such as how to hold a pencil so that it is easier to use, and make rapid progress. Children develop good thinking skills, concentration and persistence. For example, when some boys ran out of water which they were using to 'paint' with outdoors, one set off to find more. He decided which tap would be most useful, filled the bucket, carried it carefully through the room, found his friend who was by now pedalling round the bike track and triumphantly announced, 'I've got more water!' Immediately his friend said, 'Thank you', got off the bike and returned up the hill with his friend to continue mark-making. On the whole, boys' skills on entry to nursery are lower than those of girls but there is no trend of difference by the time they move to reception. The growing minority of children who join the nursery with communication difficulties make excellent progress due to very well targeted provision. Similarly, the progress of children with complex difficulties is outstanding both in their ability to communicate and in their physical coordination. All children, including the small number that speaks English as an additional language, thoroughly enjoy their time at nursery and they achieve exceptionally well.

Consistent daily routines and excellent behaviour management mean that children swiftly learn that cooperation and sharing create a happy community. They understand that taking turns is fair because they are fully confident that their turn will come. Children are friendly, exceptionally supportive of those who have additional needs and very helpful about tidying up. They know that fruit is healthy and they cut up their snack-time apples safely. They delight in playing in the fresh air and take good care when negotiating the steps or driving wheeled vehicles round the track. Children are very interested in other cultures, as demonstrated by their recent celebration of Eid, and generously contribute to, for example, Christmas shoe boxes for those less fortunate than themselves. Unless they are unwell, children attend very regularly. The curiosity, self-confidence and zest for learning that they develop

at the nursery create an exceptionally strong foundation on which to build their future learning.

These are the grades for pupils'/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:	
Pupils' attainment	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The warm, individual welcome offered to each child and their parent or carer at the start of sessions sets the tone of the nursery's high quality provision. It also exemplifies the superb care, guidance and support that underpin the success of the nursery's work. Staff work exceptionally well as a team. They skilfully balance planned focus activities with vigilant observation of what is happening elsewhere. They use well-timed words that pre-empt possible problems and lead children's learning forward. High-level questioning helps to develop children's thinking skills and independence. Daily end-of-session discussions ensure all staff are aware of milestones in children's development, their current interests or specific needs. These meetings are key to the highly successful way in which the planning is constantly adapted to provide suitable challenge.

Staff are particularly adept at identifying early those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and then drawing on the expertise of a range of professionals to provide very well-tailored support. Close working with the children's centre and day-care provision makes a strong contribution to this. The provision for such children is first rate, with outstanding attention to detail which underpins the excellent progress that each child makes from his or her starting point.

The encouragement of all staff to develop and use their expertise greatly enhances the quality of provision. Specialist groups effectively promote the language skills of those with communication difficulties. Outstanding teaching of music leads to great enjoyment for the children and the development of sophisticated skills, such as beating a rhythm both quickly and quietly, that enhance their early reading skills. Staff use the exciting outdoor area imaginatively to promote children's learning in all areas, for example to collect apples which are then used for baking a cake, to go on a treasure hunt for images of different owls, or to make and decorate 'owl boxes'. All

elements of the provision are carefully designed and successfully used to provide children with optimum opportunities to learn as they play.

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	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

High quality leadership ensures that decision-making about the nursery is kept separate from, but is complemented by, planning for the other areas of provision on the site. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher, who also has responsibility for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have responsibilities across the different settings. This leads to strong partnership working and liaison that provides children with seamless levels of care. Regular staff meetings ensure that all are clear about priorities and responsibilities. Helpful observations of teaching and good access to training promote consistently high quality provision. The governing body provides the nursery with good quality support, for example in matters to do with staffing and finance, but its role in strategic planning and holding the leadership to account is less strong.

The nursery is very inclusive; a feature praised by parents and carers, and it enables each child to build on their skills with equal success. Effective procedures promote safeguarding, including training for staff and their vigilance of children's safety. The leadership responds very quickly to any identified hazards. The nursery promotes community cohesion well so that children build good relationships with others who are different from themselves. Activities, such as visits to Clitheroe castle and to the neighbouring care home, develop children's understanding of their own community.

Excellent partnerships with parents and carers help children to continue their learning at home through, for example, activities such as decorating leaf shapes or the use of 'dads and lads' story sacks. All staff, including those who work in administration or in maintaining the high quality of the accommodation and grounds, work together exceptionally well. Parental comments such as, 'fantastic - my child has thrived and I couldn't be happier' confirm that such teamwork builds a highly successful school.

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

Views of parents and carers

All parents and carers who volunteered their views express high levels of satisfaction with and praise for the nursery's provision. A small number would appreciate receiving more information about their child's progress but the majority say that they feel well informed about this. All the views were discussed with the headteacher. Nursery staff are freely available to parents and carers at the beginning and end of each session but the nursery leaders say that they will consider ways to ensure that all feel that they know enough about how much progress their child is making.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ribblesdale 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 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 75 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	26	90	3	10	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	52	10	34	4	14	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	62	11	38	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	72	7	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	55	11	38	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	76	6	21	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)	17	59	9	31	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	66	8	28	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	59	11	38	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	66	9	31	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	69	9	31	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	76	7	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.



16 November 2011

Dear Children,

Inspection of Ribblesdale Nursery School, Clitheroe, BB7 1EL

I did enjoy my visit to your nursery; thank you very much for your warm welcome to me and the other inspector. We came to find out how well all the adults help you to learn new things.

We were delighted to see how much you enjoy everything that you do at nursery. You make good friends and take very good care of each other. It was good to see how well you get on with the adults and trust them to look after you. We were impressed to see how carefully you use knives to cut up your fruit and how sensibly you go up and down the steps. You obviously really enjoy playing outside – the owl boxes that you made looked very cosy! You learn very quickly because the adults organise interesting things for you to do and help you to think for yourselves. You are very good at listening to what they say. This helps you to understand, for example, how to get better at putting on your own coat or holding a pencil so that it makes more satisfying marks.

The adults are very good at deciding exactly what they can do to help you learn at your own pace. This means that by the time you are old enough to go to big school you are very ready to make the most of the new things that you will find there. All the adults, including the senior leaders, work together extremely well to make nursery as much fun for you as they possibly can. We have suggested one thing that we think could make it even better and they have agreed to try it out.

Thank you again for helping me to have a great time with you all. I hope you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Drake
Lead Inspector

