

Bacup Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119097
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379727
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Clare Henderson

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	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathleen Holt
Headteacher	Andrea Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine sessions led by three teachers and five teaching assistants and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's improvement plan, documentation relating to the safeguarding of children, teachers' plans and records of children's progress. They examined 42 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

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

- Whether all groups of children make at least good progress in all areas of learning.
- Whether the strong emphasis on children taking responsibility for their own learning has been maintained since the last inspection.
- How effectively provision extends children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their involvement in local and wider communities.
- The effectiveness of the relatively new leadership team and the governing body in reviewing and improving children's learning and development.

Information about the school

This nursery school is average in size compared to others of its type. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The majority of children are from a White British background. A few are from minority-ethnic groups. The school has gained Healthy Heroes status and the Smiling for Life award. The headteacher took up position in April 2011.

Privately run before-and-during lunchtime provision is situated within the school building. This provision is subject to a separate inspection and a report about 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

This is an outstanding school. Key to its success is the memorable opportunities it provides for all children to explore, create and learn within highly imaginative indoor and outdoor environments. Furthermore, the new leadership team has, with determination and clarity, taken the school forward and successfully sustained the outstanding status it gained at the last inspection. All the children achieve well from starting points that are below and, for a few, well below those expected for their age, particularly in their social and communication skills. They rapidly develop confidence and independence, and make outstanding progress in all areas of learning. Consequently, by the time they move to their Reception classes, their skills are in-line or above those typical for their age.

All aspects of children's personal development are outstanding. They know the importance of looking after their health and well-being. Consideration for others characterises their play and work. These important factors, together with their excellent behaviour, combine to enable them to make an outstanding contribution to the school community. Children's capability to work and play very effectively on their own or in groups, their above average levels of attendance and a willingness to act responsibly make them exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The outcomes for children are excellent as a result of very skilfully managed learning by teachers and teaching assistants; there is a diverse, exceptionally rich and well-planned range of opportunities and care, guidance and support of the highest quality. A rigorously followed equality of opportunity policy prevents discrimination and all children participate fully in school life. The school is an important part of the local community through good links forged with parents and carers. However, parents and carers do not receive enough guidance to help them understand and become fully involved in their children's learning.

Leaders and managers ensure all staff share the same philosophy for educating children and have a common drive to pursue excellence. The governing body knows the school well and, through its work with the leadership team, is becoming more involved in setting a strategic direction to its work. It ensures excellent community cohesion is in place. Its good arrangements and recently updated safeguarding procedures support children's welfare effectively. The school accurately identifies and evaluates its strengths and areas to develop. This leads to precise and sharply

focused development planning. Taking these factors together, the capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to work with parents and carers to guide them to understand and to become fully involved in their children's learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

Children find school exciting and enjoyable and not a moment is lost in learning. They have great enthusiasm, eagerly join in planning activities with adults and classmates and seize opportunities to explore and investigate on their own or when working together with other children. They become engrossed in activities and are rightly proud of their accomplishments. They contribute enthusiastically to discussions, listen to adults and each other, and play a full part in group activities, such as when investigating the big puddles or writing a letter to Santa. Such commendable learning leads to good achievement. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make equally outstanding progress in all areas of learning, and in particular show notable improvement in developing confidence, social skills and speech. Adults are aware and beginning to address the needs of the more-able children by ensuring they are suitably challenged through searching questions and problem-solving opportunities. Of note is that the school gives high priority in all areas of learning for children to develop an interest in, and a love of, reading and writing. Opportunities to learn their letters and sounds, to read and write are woven skilfully within all areas of learning.

Children settle in and follow routines commendably well. The confident and lively way they go about their work and the trust they have in all adults reflects a very strong sense of feeling safe and secure. Their exemplary behaviour is a vital factor contributing to excellent learning and progress. They are exceptionally knowledgeable about food, for example, knowing the importance of eating fruit, exercising energetically and habitually taking care with personal hygiene. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Spiritual moments are woven meaningfully into all learning as children reflect, for instance, on the beauty of nature they find around them. Children's social and moral understanding is central to their play as they learn to take turns and care for one another. Their cultural development is promoted exceptionally well through celebrating festivals, which occur throughout the year. Children's involvement in the local community through visiting the elderly and raising money for local charities demonstrates well their excellent awareness and understanding of their place in the local community. Furthermore, they enthusiastically raise funds or fill shoeboxes to send to children in others countries that they feel are not as fortunate as themselves. With above average attendance, growing independence, familiarity with using skills gained in all areas of learning, they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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	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	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	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 ¹	2
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and teaching assistants expertly manage children's learning. By diligently preparing, working together and supporting activities, they foster children's independence and curiosity. The highly effective guided activities during each session enable children to think about and choose things they wish to do, or review what they have enjoyed when playing and learning. Adults carefully intervene and cleverly and sensitively give support without reducing children's independence. All adults take every opportunity to develop children's vocabulary, knowledge and numerical skills. Such skilful teaching leads children to the next level of thinking. For example, in an activity which involved investigating the properties of water, a group of children were highly excited and enthusiastic as adults skilfully and safely encouraged them to jump in, over and through big puddles. This enabled them to develop their communication and mathematical skills as they recalled and chose words to describe and sequence the experience whilst developing confidence and problem-solving skills. A key-worker arrangement ensures each adult knows a group of children and their families very well. Carefully made observations of children at work are used to build assessments of their progress which are carefully charted and later exploited to focus particular help whenever it is needed. Learning journals, which incorporate a photographic record, form a useful and developing medium for sharing information about children's progress with parents and carers. Teachers and teaching assistants are increasingly using time to reflect on children's work at the end of each day and plan individual activities to build on earlier knowledge and understanding. This is particularly beneficial for the more-able children who are now learning at a faster rate.

Children benefit enormously from an exciting curriculum, which balances adult-supported and child-initiated activities. Of especial note is the extensive way the school exploits its grounds and facilities, which offer substantial scope for active learning. The garden area does much to develop a strong sense of the importance of the environment and promote awe and wonder about the natural world. By following

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

and exploring themes which the children devise, and through visits and the contributions of visitors, the school enriches children's understanding in all areas of learning and substantially fosters their outstanding personal development. An atmosphere of calm, punctuated by the sounds of children enjoying play and work, prevails throughout.

Outstanding care is the bedrock of children's successful learning. Early assessments show when children have particular learning needs. Partnerships with the local authority, health service and neighbouring schools combine with the expertise within the staff to give exceptionally effective support. In this way, children's learning needs, particularly in speech and use of language, or particular behavioural difficulties, are addressed very successfully. Close links with parents and carers successfully encourage above average levels of attendance.

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?

Leaders and managers successfully realise their ambition and high expectations for all children to have the best possible start to their education. The new leadership team have rapidly and sensitively established a strong team spirit and high morale amongst all staff. This leads to consistent approaches to managing children's learning and contributes to the excellent progress made by all groups of children. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures, already established in the school and extended by the new leadership team, successfully identify and ensure a continual drive for school improvement. The governing body provides strong support and is extending its role through, for example, seeing the work of the school at first hand as link governors within each area of learning. Attention to safeguarding children is good: the governing body has ensured all requirements for children's welfare are now fully up-to-date and meet requirements. Staff are extremely well trained in child protection and safeguarding and in turn they deal with any concerns in a proper and very effective way. Importantly, too, they ensure that children are able to conduct themselves with consideration for others. The governing body and school are totally committed to equality and diversity, celebrating the individual qualities of each child and their family. All groups of children make equally outstanding progress. The school forges good and developing partnerships with parents and carers through day-to-day contact and information shared via newsletters. Exceptionally strong partnerships with local support, health and emergency services and other schools locally and those further afield greatly enhance the school's work, enrich the curriculum and contribute markedly to make community cohesion outstanding.

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	2
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	1

Views of parents and carers

More than three fifths of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Most of these expressed their full support for the work of the school. They value highly the care, exciting curriculum and welcoming family atmosphere that adults generate. Inspection evidence supports their positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bacup 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 68 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	81	8	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	86	6	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	81	8	19	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	79	8	19	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	35	83	7	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	74	10	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	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)	27	64	12	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	81	7	17	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	60	16	38	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	67	10	24	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	74	11	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	88	4	10	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.



28 November 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Bacup Nursery School, Bacup, OL13 8EF

We really enjoyed our time with you in your school. There are so many interesting things to do that we could see how much you like being there. You have some wonderful places where you learn and play: indoors and outside on the climbing frame; the sandpit; riding your bikes; and especially in the big puddles. I am sure you will remember for a long time things you have done and discovered. All the adults make sure you are safe and happy and that you can learn and play in many ways together.

Your parents and carers think your school is fantastic and we agree. It is outstanding. We are delighted to see how you all settle in quickly and join in your group discussions when you are thinking about what you have enjoyed and what you would like to do next. We are also delighted to see how well you share things and take turns. We are impressed by how well you look after the toys and equipment. We looked at the photographs of you at work and saw how much you are learning and discovering while in the nursery. To make your learning even better, your teachers are going to plan more ways of involving your parents and carers in what you are learning so they can help you at home.

You have many opportunities to learn about life and these help you to prepare for your next school. We hope that you have fond memories of your time here and that you all do extremely well in future.

Yours sincerely

Clare Henderson
Lead inspector

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