

# Ditton Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110957
<b>Local authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	378205
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 December 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mark Williams HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	56
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Browne
<b>Headteacher</b>	Linda Bowles
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 April 2009
<b>School address</b>	Dundalk Road Widnes WA8 8DF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Three teachers and a number of adults working with children aged three and four years were observed in four sessions. Also observed was the centre's Nativity play which included younger children. Inspectors held meetings with three members of the governing body, with the staff and 10 parents and carers. While there were no formal meetings with children, inspectors took every opportunity to speak with them during their sessions in school. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the learning journals of children, photographic evidence, and documentation relating to children's attainment, provision, leadership and safeguarding. Also scrutinised were the 21 responses to questionnaires received from parents and carers.

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

- How good are children's outcomes across all areas and, in particular:
  - their communication and language skills
  - how well they are demonstrating attitudes and attributes linked to the five areas of *Every child matters*
  - the quality of their behaviour
  - how well they are being prepared for the next steps in their learning and development.
- Whether the quality of provision remains as good as it was at the previous inspection and its impact on outcomes for children, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.
- How rigorously leaders, including the governing body, identify any variations in children's progress and attainment and use this information to put into place effective plans for improvement.

## Information about the school

The nursery school is part of a purpose built Early Years centre which offers full day care and out-of-school care for children aged from birth to under eight years. Attendance at the nursery school is not mandatory as the children are not yet of compulsory school age. The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day management of the nursery and the Early Years centre. Nearly all children come from the immediate surrounding area. The school holds a number of awards, including 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

Children achieve well in this good school. They are happy in their work and play and demonstrate some outstanding attributes in their personal development, particularly in their contribution to the community and in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. From starting points which are wide ranging but generally below those typical for their age, particularly in language and communication skills, children make good progress. They make particularly strong progress in their social development. Such progress is the result of good quality provision, including teaching, which engages the interest of children well. On occasions, though, the good questions adults ask to extend children's learning and development do not draw in all children, particularly those on the edge of an activity. Nonetheless, the good quality discussion between adults and children and between children themselves means their skills in communication are developing well.

All adults display a keen interest in the development and welfare of the children. Support for children is good overall with some that is particularly well focused on children whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities do as well as their peers because their needs are identified early. However, this good and accurate early identification is not always translated into clear action plans to ensure improvement. In addition, some of the plans in place are not reviewed and updated within the timescales the school has identified.

The leadership of the school is good. The headteacher, staff, and the governing body, are all committed to the work of the school and its children. Their accurate self-evaluation means they know the school's strengths and what they need to do to improve. Partnerships, including those with parents and carers, are excellent. The result of the good leadership is that children settle in quickly and make good progress. The good and sometimes outstanding outcomes attained by children coupled with the maintaining of good provision and the confidence parents and carers have in the school show clearly that there is good capacity for sustained improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the good progress made by children with special educational needs and/or disabilities by ensuring:

- the good early identification of need is translated quickly into clear plans of action to secure improvement
  - plans that are in place are reviewed and updated in line with timescales agreed.
- Ensure the already good questioning adopted by adults draws in those children at the edge of an activity.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2
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Children make good progress in all areas of their learning and development and by the time they leave the nursery have skills and abilities broadly typical for their age. They make particularly strong progress in their social development. Concerted efforts to develop the communication and language skills of the children are paying dividends. Children are increasingly confident in talking with each other and adults about what they are learning. One child, for example, pointed confidently to the word 'fire' on the fire safety signs, said it, and related this to the character 'Fireman Sam'. Other children shared happily with each other in partner work what they would include in a letter to Father Christmas. The mathematical skills of children are also developing well as seen by increased confidence in counting the numbers on an Advent calendar.

When considering the wider aspects of the *Every child matters* outcomes, children in this setting are helped to demonstrate good and outstanding attitudes and attributes for their age. As a result of concerted efforts with parents and carers the attendance of children has improved. Behaviour is good. Also good is their adoption of healthy lifestyles, as seen in their enthusiasm to take part in exercise. Children adopt very safe practices as demonstrated by the way they sensibly move around the climbing frames and 'roadway' of the outdoor area and in their insistence on wearing hard hats when pretending to be builders. In addition, the children use hand-held tools, such as toy drills and prepare the soil in the school's gardens for planting flowers. Such strong team work prepares them very well for future life.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children is outstanding. They enjoy very much celebrating each others' successes and show great care when tending plants they are growing. Children enjoy experiencing other cultures through, for example, dressing in saris. They also enjoy taking part in celebrations such as Divali, performing a Chinese dragon dance, and swinging in time to the music as the camels bring the wise men to the Christmas manger. Also outstanding, is their contribution to the community. Not only do children help to serve each other at snack time, they have also been instrumental in calming traffic on the busy road outside school through dressing up in high-visibility jackets, holding up toy speed cameras, and creating the illustrations for the road signs which now adorn the highway.

*These are the grades for children's outcomes*

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	3
Children's attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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	
<b>The extent to which children feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Children's behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	3
Children's attendance <sup>1</sup>	
<b>The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of provision is good overall. The school has in place good arrangements to keep children safe. It has particularly strong systems to support children whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. These lead to such children making progress as good as their peers in their learning and development. Outstanding partnerships with other agencies and services contribute very well to this progress and the care given to children. They also ensure children are prepared well for their next steps in education. Arrangements to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are good in terms of the early identification of need. These are not, however, always translated quickly into clear plans for improvement and nor are they always reviewed in a timely fashion.

The curriculum is also good and benefits from an imaginative outdoor area. A variety of themes such as Christmas, baking, and colours make good use of a wide range of well-planned indoor and outdoor activities which build successfully on the interests of the children. Photographic evidence of former and current children through their learning journals shows their enjoyment. This enjoyment and enthusiasm, along with the progress children make, is also the result of consistently good teaching that occurs on a daily basis. Teachers and supporting adults ask probing questions which help the children think about what they are doing and learning, be it through role play or problem solving. All adults are skilful in tailoring their questions and prompts to meet the constantly changing needs and attention spans of such young children. This good quality discussion is helping to develop children's skills in communication well. There are occasions, though, when the questioning does not draw in those on the edge of an activity.

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

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school benefits from the good leadership of the headteacher and her senior leaders. Teamwork across the school is strong and all adults work well together, sharing common values. Parents and carers are clear who their child's key worker is and they appreciate the time given to them and the approachability of staff. The school's engagement with parents and carers is excellent and the parents' group contributes very well to the life of the school, organising a range of family trips and activities, for example. Partnerships with other agencies are also outstanding and help the children make the good progress they do.

The effective governing body, like the staff of the school, are committed. They ensure requirements for the health, safety and welfare of the children are fully met. The promotion of community cohesion is good with particular strengths with the local community, the traffic calm measures for example. To extend this in more global ways leaders looking at its links with a school in China to see how the children from both schools may communicate with each other.

The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate and plans for future improvement clear. Leaders analyse how well different groups of children are doing and attending and promote equality of opportunity well. Resources are managed equally well. All-in-all, the school is in a good position to continue its journey of improvement.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>

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<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>
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## **Views of parents and carers**

Twenty one parents and carers completed the inspection questionnaire. All but three were totally positive in their views, highlighting the confidence parents and carers have in the school. All parents and carers spoken with during the course of the inspection were fulsome in their praise of the school and of the work it undertakes with their children. Inspectors share this enthusiasm.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ditton 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 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 56 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	76	2	10	1	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	76	5	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	57	7	33	1	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	57	6	29	2	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	52	9	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	57	7	33	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	62	6	29	2	10	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)	10	48	8	38	1	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	57	8	38	1	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	57	6	29	1	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	52	8	38	0	0	1	5
The school is led and managed effectively	14	67	6	29	0	0	1	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	71	5	24	1	5	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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 December 2011

Dear Children,

**Inspection of Ditton Nursery School, Widnes, WA8 8DF**

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors into your school and letting me watch you tell the story of Christmas. I did enjoy 'It's a baby!' and especially watching you sing and dance. You looked fantastic in your costumes! I also enjoyed watching you at work and play, especially counting the numbers on the Advent calendar and hoovering the floor. I think I would like you to clean my house!

I could see you enjoy your time in nursery – your smiling faces told me that. There were other things I liked too, including the way you:

- speak nicely to one another and share
- move around safely and sensibly
- behave well
- find out about different people
- care about the cars travelling outside school and have helped to slow them down.

I think you enjoy nursery school so much because the grown-ups help you, make learning interesting and look after you well. It was great to see photographs of you having so much fun on the climbing frame and dressing up as builders. To help your good school become even better I have asked that when the grown-ups find out that some of you need a little extra help they quickly put this into a plan and check how well the plan is working. I have also asked that when the grown-ups ask their interesting questions they make sure all of you are included.

It was very good to meet you all. Please carry on enjoying your time in the nursery.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Williams  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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