

Duke Street Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	119066
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379722
Inspection dates	9–10 May 2012
Lead inspector	Andrew Stafford

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Hefferan
Headteacher	Susan Conron
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2009
School address	Duke Street Chorley PR7 3DU
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Age group	3–5
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Introduction

Inspection team

Andrew Stafford

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed two teachers, five support assistants, a trainee teacher, an apprentice and two college students doing work experience, and learning both indoors and outdoors over a total period of around four hours. Six of the sessions were joint observations with the headteacher. The inspector talked to parents and carers about their 'Learning Journals' that record their children's learning. Meetings were held with members of the governing body and staff. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at documentation that included the school's development plan, the school's self-evaluation document, data on children's progress, minutes of governing body meetings and records of monitoring by staff and the governing body. Questionnaires received from 59 parents and carers were analysed in addition to 12 from staff.

Information about the school

The school has about the same number of children on roll as other nursery schools. The children come from a wide range of social backgrounds. The large majority of children are of White British heritage. A small proportion of the children from minority ethnic backgrounds speak English as an additional language. Compared to nursery schools in the local authority the school has an above-average proportion of children who are disabled or have special educational needs. The school is promoting the 'Be Active, Eat Healthy' partnership, the Investors in People award and the Lancashire Quality award for the Early Years Foundation Stage. There have been four new members of staff since the previous inspection.

The school is integrated with Duke Street Dragonflies, run by a voluntary management committee that provides 32 places for day care. This provision was inspected in 2009 and did not form part of this inspection. Also on the campus is a children's centre that offers a range of extended services through other agencies such as health professionals, speech and language specialists and family support workers. Duke Street Children's Centre is the subject of a separate Ofsted report.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school because all groups of children, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, make rapid and sustained progress in all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Overall children enter the Nursery at three years of age with skills and abilities well below those expected for their age and leave achieving age-related expectations across their learning.
- Through accurate, rigorous and coordinated assessments, the school is highly effective in identifying and meeting the personal, social, emotional and learning needs of the different groups of children in the school. Consequently, it is highly successful at closing the gap between the achievement of different groups, especially those who speak English as an additional language and those children whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding and is exemplary at developing children’s independence in learning through building their self-esteem and self-confidence. Assessment of children’s progress is consistently robust and accurate and is used very effectively to plan activities that meet children’s needs. However, opportunities are occasionally missed to use information and communication technology (ICT) during adult-led and child-initiated activities.
- Relationships throughout the school are excellent resulting in children’s behaviour being typically outstanding. Due to the very high level of care and support, children feel very safe and develop an exceptionally mature attitude to their learning in class and around school.
- Leadership and management are highly effective because the headteacher, supported by senior leaders, has established a sustained and very ambitious drive for excellence. Leaders at all levels work in a highly collaborative way to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching regularly and hold staff to account robustly for children’s progress. The curriculum is outstanding, especially at promoting children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, due to the very creative activities planned by staff, which make an outstanding contribution to children’s personal, social and emotional development.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the use of ICT in developing children's knowledge and understanding by:
 - ensuring a variety of new technology resources are accessible for children during independent learning sessions
 - making more use of a range of technology resources in teaching sessions.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most children make outstanding progress in all areas of learning over their time in the nursery. The progress made by different groups of pupils is similar, including disabled children or those who have special educational needs. Children often enter the Nursery with skills and abilities that are at least a year behind those expected for their age, especially in their basic language, communication and mathematical skills. Due to the overall outstanding provision of the school, children make exceptional progress and leave with skills and abilities appropriate for children of their age. This often represents children making the equivalent of two years' progress in all areas of Early Years Foundation Stage learning in one year at the Nursery. There was unanimous agreement among parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire that their children make good progress at school.

Children's basic reading skills are developed very effectively through the teaching of initial sounds. For example in one lesson, the teacher had clearly labelled bags with objects beginning with 's', 'a' and 't'. Very skilful questioning from the teacher allowed the children to develop their language and reasoning skills in guessing the object. When a creature was pulled from the bag, one child successfully responded that it was a spider. Independent learning activities that followed were all highly stimulating and based on reinforcing children's understanding of the sounds made by the letters. Mathematical concepts were also included through counting the number of letters involved. This type of practice is consistent throughout the school and robustly supported by accurate assessment of the needs of individuals and different groups of children.

The school is exceptionally effective in closing the age-related expectation gap between the different groups of children, including those from minority ethnic groups or those who speak English as an additional language, and children nationally. Consequently, all groups of children make at least good progress, with most making outstanding progress.

Quality of teaching

Typically, teaching is outstanding over time because all staff know their children very well and the progress they are making, through extremely effective and rigorous assessments. Children's learning journals, containing photographs of their

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achievements and their initial attempts at writing and painting, consistently show the outstanding impact that excellent teaching is having on children's learning over time. This can be clearly observed in learning activities and in the development of their early reading skills. For example, children were thoroughly absorbed and involved during an exceptional story-telling session where all were encouraged to join in with fun actions and make shapes with their hands and arms to show the size of a supermarket trolley. However, occasionally, opportunities to use ICT are missed during both adult-led and child-initiated activities. Parents and carers who completed the questionnaire were unanimous in agreeing that teaching is good or better.

Teachers and support staff are very effective in involving all groups of children in learning activities through sharply-focused interventions, very skilful open-ended questioning and highly tailored support for disabled children or those who have special educational needs, or who speak English as an additional language. Accurate assessments also ensure more-able children are identified and their needs met. Relationships between staff, children and parents and carers are exceptional, with teaching and the curriculum making a considerable difference to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has done much to establish productive partnerships with parents and carers. For example, Polish parents and carers brought samples of traditional food, described their celebrations and taught the children some Polish vocabulary. Opportunities such as these make a significant contribution to children's appreciation of cultural diversity.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Children were observed as being very happy and feeling extremely secure in school. This is because staff know the children as individuals and are exceptionally caring and sensitive to every child's needs and feelings. Given their young age, children's behaviour is outstanding; the children show maturity and independence. They respect one another and respond enthusiastically to the gentle encouragement of staff when asked to listen and move to different activities. There was no bullying of any nature observed because the school is highly effective in celebrating diversity. Consequently, an outstanding strength of the school is the creating and maintaining of a cohesive community where all are included. This has real impact, as shown when a child, asked about how well children get on together, answered, 'If you have a black face or any face or even if you're skinny, you still hold hands.' School records confirm that instances of unkind behaviour are rare and of a minor nature.

All the parents and carers who completed the questionnaire felt that their children were safe in school. None expressed serious concerns about behaviour and the way that any bullying was dealt with. Inspection findings supported these views. The school has a log of incidents over time, but these were very few and had been dealt with effectively.

Another outstanding aspect of the school's work is its procedures for identifying and meeting the needs of children whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The school's initiatives and integration with the children's centre means that the school is

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able to work very effectively in partnerships with other agencies, such as family support workers, health professionals and speech and language specialists. Case studies show that this has a significant impact on children's personal well-being and their academic progress. The resulting outcome is that children whose circumstances make them vulnerable often make similarly outstanding progress to other groups in the school.

Leadership and management

The quality of leadership at all levels, is exemplary, particularly in striving for excellence. Leaders have maintained the outstanding overall effectiveness of the school identified in previous inspections. Members of the governing body are linked to teams that ensure that all children make very good progress and they know the school very well. The governing body is also fully involved in monitoring, evaluating and challenging the senior leadership about the quality of teaching and its impact on the school. Senior and middle leaders are very robust in their monitoring of teaching and learning and in their analysis of children's progress, especially in ensuring different groups make outstanding progress over time. The school has an extremely strong commitment to delivering highly effective professional training for all staff. The impact is seen in the sustained and consistently good, and often outstanding, teaching across the school.

The curriculum is not just broad and balanced but highly innovative and flexible in meeting the needs of different groups and individual children. There are examples where staff plan a curriculum specifically for an individual child to meet his or her emotional and behavioural needs. Every opportunity in the curriculum, especially in the dedicated areas for learning, is consistently taken to promote children's outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Just one of the many examples seen was outside when children were 'bird-watching' with binoculars. They listened to the bird-song coming from the trees. 'They are near the bird-feeder, that's a zac bird,' exclaimed an excited boy. The resulting enjoyment, awe and wonder among the children were clear for all to see.

Safeguarding policies and procedures fully meet requirements.

The very strong commitment to promoting equality and preventing discrimination is clearly shown by the fact that all groups of pupils make outstanding progress over time.

Since the previous inspection the school has addressed the area for improvement by raising the levels of regular attendance, maintained the outstanding judgements in all areas, considerably enhanced the partnership with parents and carers and adapted to the challenges of providing for a higher proportion of children with additional needs. This clearly demonstrates that the school has an outstanding capacity to continue improving.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



11 May 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Duke Street Nursery, Chorley, PR7 3DU

I know that at such a young age you will not be able to read this letter. Perhaps I could ask an adult to read it to you.

Thank you for welcoming me to your school during my visit. It was a pleasure to meet you and I enjoyed watching you work with your teachers. Your school gives you a really excellent standard of education. It was clear that you feel safe in school and that all adults would help if you had any worries. Here are some of the very good things we found at your school.

- You really enjoy school because everyone gets on well together and behaviour is outstanding.
- You work hard and enjoy learning, especially when you chose things to do or adults help you to do things like bridge building.
- The teaching you have in school is outstanding.
- You make really good progress in beginning to learn how to read, write and count.
- Your mums and dads and other adults who look after you all think that the school is really good and looks after you very well.

To help the school improve I asked the adults in charge to do one thing:

- to make better use of things like computers to help you to learn for yourselves and for teachers to use when teaching you.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Stafford
Lead inspector

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