

# Fairfield Nursery School

Fairfield Street, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 0LD

**Inspection dates** 4 December 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Children make rapid progress in their time in the school. From below typical starting points most children reach the levels expected for their age by the time they move to Reception.
- These excellent outcomes are the result of outstanding teaching. Staff are skilled at providing a wide array of activities that capture the children's imaginations. Children develop quickly and most become confident in learning.
- Children quickly improve their speaking and communication skills. When they leave, most read and write at levels typical for their age. At times, staff do not take advantage of opportunities to extend the children's awareness of letters and sounds.
- Original and very effective strategies are in place to assess and record the children's progress. These involve working very closely with parents so that an agreement is reached about their children's level of development.
- The promotion of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. All children are treated equally and discrimination is not tolerated. This contributes to excellent behaviour and safety. Children from different backgrounds learn and play together well and almost never fall out.
- The equipment for children's learning is of a high quality. Activities are extremely well organised to enable children to follow their own interests. Outdoors, children can cycle, climb a tree-house, and learn about wildlife by looking at the two hens.
- Classrooms inspire children to learn. Books are always available, and play areas carefully devised to encourage learning. There are regular opportunities available to build, construct and paint and learn how to mix colours.
- Excellent partnerships with the children's centre and also other schools benefit children and their families.
- Highly effective systems enable leaders to keep an eye on the effectiveness of staff. Imaginative approaches to staff training keep everyone up to date and encourage ambition.
- Underpinning the school's success is the excellent leadership of the deputy and headteacher supported by a dedicated governing body. The school knows precisely where it has strengths and where it can do even better.
- All decisions for improving the school are rooted in a deep understanding of the school and the needs of its children and families.
- The school is very well placed to continue to improve.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching indoors and outdoors on eight occasions. Discussions were conducted with the staff, three parents, the Chair of the Governing Body and two governors. In addition, discussions were held with a representative of the local authority and the headteacher of a local primary school to which some children transfer.
- In planning the inspection, and when forming judgements, reference was made to any comments placed by parents on the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). In addition, questionnaires from four staff were analysed.
- A range of school documentation was evaluated. These included the documents relating to safeguarding, the improvement plan, the school's view of its performance and also the records of children's attainment and progress.

## Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila O'Keeffe

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized nursery school. The vast majority of children join the school in September and attend either five mornings or five afternoons for three terms.
- The large majority of children are of Pakistani heritage. A high proportion speak English as an additional language.
- Many children from all backgrounds and heritages have special educational needs related to difficulties with speech and language and communication.
- The school is part of a Sure Start children's centre, sharing the same building and at times some staff. The children's centre and its day-care provision (the Duckling Club) are inspected separately to the nursery school.
- In 2011, the school received funding for two years from the Department for Education in relation to 'Improving Outcomes for Children, Young People and Families'. This is for the school to act as an Early Years Teaching Centre, as part of a consortium with two other nursery schools and Children's Centres, to train and support staff in other local early years settings.
- During the inspection, the school was led by the deputy headteacher as the headteacher was unavoidably absent.

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

- Make sure that all staff take the opportunities that present themselves during learning activities to promote the children's awareness and understanding of sounds and letters.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- The large majority of children joining school each September have abilities that are well below those that are typical for their age. Children make rapid progress in all aspects of their development and, in particular, in personal and social and emotional development, communication and language, and physical development. Children are very well prepared to take advantage of their move into full-time education.
- Rapid progress occurs in the children's personal and social development. Children who speak English as an additional language make the most rapid progress in this area and within the year get to levels typical for their age. Children play together and most share and cooperate, for example, when playing outside in the excellent 'mud-kitchen'. As they settle into school, children quickly gain in confidence and develop positive relationships with other children and adults. The large majority show concern for others and generally help out where they can.
- The large majority of children make excellent improvements in their communication and language. They very rapidly expand their knowledge of English. Excellent support from skilled staff increases the children's confidence to talk. By the end of the year, most children speak and communicate at levels typical for their age. In literacy, all children make great strides in developing early skills in reading and writing and many reach levels typical for their age. They develop a love of books, and an understanding of traditional tales and nursery rhymes. Children start to recognise sounds and letters, for example in their names, and begin to make marks to represent words.
- Children who speak English as an additional language benefit from excellent support which includes regular guidance from bilingual staff. There is rapid improvement in their knowledge of English and in their speaking and listening skills. By the end of nursery, their overall levels in communication, reading and writing, however, are not quite as good as those of other children.
- Children with special educational needs also benefit from high quality support and progress quickly towards their individual targets. Children with speech and language difficulties benefit from skilled support and guidance received from speech and language therapists when required.
- The essential aspect of physical development is skilfully promoted by staff. Children develop their sense of balance and coordination by using the excellent and very safe outdoor learning area. They climb the tree-house, cycle energetically on trikes and learn to direct water into shoots. Many opportunities are provided for them to develop manual dexterity by, for example creating play-dough and clay models. They paint on invitingly large easels and quickly gain the confidence to cut, stick and build models.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The teaching team is a highly skilled and finely tuned unit. As a result of excellent leadership, all staff are very well trained, have high morale and enjoy their jobs.
- All staff have very clearly defined roles. This includes the 'key worker' system where a member of staff takes responsibility for around eight pupils. This structure is highly effective. It gives children security, enables parents to have a regular contact point in the school and enables staff to mentor each other.
- Equipment is very wisely arranged to enable children to play and learn independently. Distinct areas in the classroom encourage learning and play in each of the key areas of development.
- An excellent balance is struck between adults supporting children directly and children being able to choose what they wish to do. This helps them to develop the ability to work with others as well as on their own. Time is taken to establish the children's interests and then steps are taken to provide for this. For example, children excitedly explored dinosaurs as part of their large play activity using wooden blocks, others enjoyed being 'princesses' in the 'castle' and more

explored the puddles and waterfalls outdoors.

- Literacy skills are given a good amount of time and effort. Staff work hard to develop children's speech. The support from bilingual staff adds to the rate of learning of children who speak English as an additional language. Nursery rhymes and traditional stories are skilfully used to encourage children's understanding of books, words and the order of events. Mathematical development is promoted through a range of activities such as counting up money in 'Freddy's Takeaway' or by matching numbers to shapes. At times, some staff do not exploit opportunities during play to highlight to children recognition of sounds and letters.
- Staff welcome innovation; they have quickly adjusted to the new curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Imaginative approaches are in place to assess the children's ability and progress. For example, children are videoed to give staff an insight to their performance. The Early Years Foundation Stage scales of development are used by staff to create a dialogue with parents about their children's ability. The knowledge this process gives to parents about the curriculum and their children's progress is remarkable. It is a key in the children's excellent progress.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Children are exceptionally safe because of the excellent levels of care within the Nursery. They are aware of their own safety and behave sensibly at play and, for example when exercising energetically outdoors.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Every child is treated equally. The high levels of respect given by staff to each child are reflected in the children's excellent behaviour. Incidents of aggressive or abusive behaviour are almost unheard of.
- The range of cultures within the school population is celebrated. The recent Eid Mubarak has been valued in school activities and currently children are enjoying working on tasks linked to Christmas.
- Children develop a good understanding of how to be healthy by enjoying healthy snacks and exercising regularly outdoors. Their awareness of personal hygiene is successfully promoted by expectations for them to wash their hands and keep surfaces clean.
- A very productive partnership with children's centre staff enables visits to the homes of children in the term before they start school. This gives a very good insight into the stage of development of each individual child and alerts staff to any particular needs s/he may have.
- Great effort is given to promoting attendance. Absence is higher than the school would like. Much is done to inform parents of the benefit of regular attendance. At times, absence is increased by children being taken on extended holidays for cultural reasons.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- An excellent partnership between the headteacher and deputy headteacher provides a crystal clear vision for the school. Highly innovative and effective systems give children the best possible start to their educational lives.
- Very astute decisions have been implemented to improve the quality of planning for children's learning and for assessing and recording their progress.
- Excellent strategies enable regular checks on the quality of teaching. For example, the videoing of staff is an excellent tool for recognising the many strengths while opening debate about how to get even better.
- The school rightly places a high value on training staff. Many staff have taken opportunities to advance their professional qualification, for instance by gaining a first class degree in education. This ambition shared by staff is a key factor in enabling the school to continue to improve and develop in future.

- Staff are ready to learn from, and with, others. This is demonstrated by the way the school has worked with other schools to develop early reading skills. An excellent partnership with the children's centre benefits the school because of the community links it establishes.
  - The school works very closely indeed with parents. The quality of communication is excellent. High quality 'learning journeys' are an excellent record of key events in the children's lives at Nursery.
  - The curriculum is intelligently planned. All decisions about how and what children should learn are underpinned by a deep knowledge and understanding of the way young children learn. All activities are very well planned and regularly reviewed to fine-tune what goes on and improve where necessary.
  - The local authority is supportive and recognises the school's many strengths. Much of its practice is shared with other schools. The headteacher is valued as a key person in developing strategies for the Early Years Foundation Stage across the region. The deputy headteacher is also highly regarded and contributes to conferences and meetings.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body keeps a close eye on how well school performs. Training is taken where available to keep governors up to date. Regular discussions with staff and visits to the nursery add to its understanding of the school's effectiveness. Care is taken to make sure that safeguarding complies with legal requirements. The performance of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is regularly reviewed. Governors ensure that regular reviews of staff performance are also carried out.
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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119086
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401807

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

<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>	92
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jeff Scales
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Klavins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 April 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 231589
<b>Fax number</b>	01254 872198
<b>Email address</b>	head@fairfield.lancs.sch.uk



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