

The Gill Blowers Nursery School

Mossdale Court, Leventdale, Luton, LU4 9JL

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children make good progress, particularly in their physical, personal, social and emotional development, communication and language development and in early reading skills.
- Good support for children who are disabled or who have special educational needs enables them to make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Teaching of early reading including the relationship between letters and the sounds they make is good. This has been introduced very recently and is already showing clear benefits in children's learning and development.
- Children's behaviour is excellent because all staff use a consistent approach to behaviour management.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and what needs to be done to improve it further.
- Links with parents and professional agencies are good and have a very positive impact on the way children settle into school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- On occasion the quality of teaching is not at the usual high standard because teachers' planning for various activities is not precise and explicit enough in its links between each child's prior attainment and the learning aims.
- Leaders monitor the work of the nursery, including teaching rigorously, but do not systematically highlight the specific aspect they will be focussing on in their observations and share these with staff.
- Teachers praise children for their successes, but do not consistently involve them in talking about how they could improve their work still further.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching of all teaching staff on both of the school sites in five lessons, of which two were shared observations with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with representatives of the senior leadership team, staff, children, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- The online questionnaire (Parent View) did not indicate enough responses to provide results, however school questionnaires completed by parents were looked at, a number of parents spoken to during the inspection and 23 responses to the staff questionnaire taken into consideration.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including those relating to safeguarding, planning and monitoring, records relating to children's behaviour and attendance, and the school's own data on children's progress.

Inspection team

Sheelagh Barnes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average.
- It is based on two sites, about a mile apart. The accommodation on both sites is at the base of a block of flats.
- Day care is provided on both sites for children from two years old. This is inspected and reported on separately.
- Children attend part time, for either a morning or afternoon session.
- There have been changes to staffing since the previous inspection, including a new teacher and new support staff.
- Around half of the children come from White British backgrounds, the rest come from a range of minority ethnic groups.
- A higher proportion of children than nationally speak English as an additional language and some are at early stages of learning to speak English.
- The school has specially resourced provision, which provides up to eight part-time places for children with severe and complex learning needs.
- The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs who are supported at 'school action' is broadly average, as is the proportion of children supported by a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of children who are at 'school action plus', which involves external advice and support, is above average.
- The school works closely with two children's centres which are situated nearby on the two different estates.
- There are no children for whom the school receives the pupil premium.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency in the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that teachers' planning is always explicit in its links between the areas of learning for the Early Years Foundation Stage being promoted and what the children concerned already know and can do and the gains expected
 - making sure that when staff feedback to children about how well they have done, they not only praise them for their achievements, but also more consistently discuss with them how they can improve their work still further.
- Strengthen leadership and management by making it clear to staff what the focus is when monitoring and systematically assessing each of the different aspects of teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- A very large proportion of children start in the nursery with levels of attainment below those expected for their age, particularly in the three core areas of learning for the Early Years Foundation Stage of personal, social and emotional development, physical development and communication and language.
- Children from all groups are helped to catch up and make good progress in these and the other areas of learning and especially in their personal development. They quickly settle into routines and are happy and relaxed. This is as a result of the consistently positive messages they receive in words and actions from staff, which enables them to gain confidence and focus fully on successful learning.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs make progress at the same good rate as other children, because of the well planned programmes for supporting their learning, based on their particular needs.
- Children learning English as an additional language settle quickly and are supported and included in all activities by adults, who are very experienced in using regular routines, gesture and action to provide clear and unambiguous messages. These help children to quickly build new language and comprehension skills.
- All adults are aware of the importance of developing children's language and the nursery is generally filled with happy chatter, except for times when children learn to take turns to speak and listen to others.
- The relatively new focus of teaching children about letters and the sounds that they represent is already resulting in many children being able to recognise which letters are at the beginning of words, such as 'strawberry' and 'teapot'.
- Children's physical development is developed effectively by staff providing regular opportunities for them to handle equipment and to climb, balance and take part in energetic play.
- By the time children transfer to the next stage in their education, their attainment is generally in line with that expected for their age and on occasion attainment is above this.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is usually at least good and often excellent. Adults ensure that the environment is attractive and stimulating, appealing to the interests of all of the children. As a result, children make good progress in their learning and achieve well.
- All staff have good levels of awareness of each child's individual achievements and teachers' planning allows for activities to be suitable for children's individual levels of prior skill and knowledge. However, this is not always explicit enough to guarantee that all adults who work in support of children's learning elicit the very best possible progress from individuals at all times.
- Children's spiritual, moral and cultural development is good, their social development is

excellent. Adults consistently place a strong emphasis on respecting and acknowledging the beliefs and celebrations of different groups in the community. As a result, children quickly gain a deeper understanding of the richness of the cultures in the area as they take part in dancing, preparing food and dressing in special clothes.

- Teachers select topics to base learning on that inspire the children and allow them to use their imaginations. For example, on one site children were enthusiastically enacting the role of a 'fire-fighter', putting out imaginary fires and in so doing gaining in their knowledge about how to keep safe. While on the other 'dragons' chased 'knights' and 'princesses' around the garden, based on a story they had created with their teacher. This caused breathless screams of pretended terror, and much laughter.
- Teachers have high expectations of the children and use praise well to point out to children when they have mastered something new. For example, when children matched objects to the letters representing the initial sound of a word, such as 'alligator'. However, there is less consistency in discussing with children how they can improve their work still further.
- Staff plan together well to support those who have particular disabilities or special educational needs. Children who are learning English as an additional language have their needs assessed accurately and addressed effectively. As a result, these and other children all make similar good gains in their learning and achieve well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of children is outstanding, because of the very high focus placed on this by leaders and the consequent consistency of responses to managing behaviour positively by all adults in the school. As a result, children hardly ever get to the stage where they need to be told off.
- Praise for each small improvement is given readily and staff are alert and highly aware of each child's next step, such as remembering to wave goodbye to their parent or carer.
- Children are relaxed, happy and confident in school, as shown by their attitudes, body language and behaviour.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs, including those with severe and complex learning needs are supported extremely well by all adults, so that they overcome personal challenges and are enabled to take a full part in all activities and enjoy what the school has to offer.
- Children who speak English as an additional language, some of whom are at an early stage, are supported effectively, so that they quickly learn routines and make good progress in their personal and social development alongside building new language skills.
- The children develop very positive attitudes to learning. They concentrate for considerable lengths of time to complete a task, such as a jig-saw puzzle, or preparing fruit for snack time.
- Children quickly learn to treat others with the respect with which they themselves are treated. There have been no exclusions.
- Aggressive and bullying behaviour is not tolerated and school staff are extremely effective in ensuring that discriminatory or derogatory language is not used.

- Parents who spoke to the inspector are all very pleased with the school and the behaviour of the children. They are full of praise for the support of school staff and the fact that they and their children feel the school is a very safe place at all times.
- Punctuality is good and absence is rare, because school staff maintain regular contact with parents and carers and check up on any lack of attendance swiftly.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has worked effectively to ensure that there is consistency in provision within and across the two school sites. This is combined with her high expectations for maximising the progress of children from all groups. As a result of her sustained focus on improvement, there is assured equality of opportunity for all children in the nursery to succeed.
- School leaders have a clear vision of how they want the school to improve further and what they need to do to achieve this. Self evaluation is accurate and rigorous. The Headteacher carefully tracks and analyses the progress made in the seven areas of learning for young children.
- She monitors the quality of teaching regularly and effectively, by visiting classrooms and observing children's work. Providing feedback to staff on how they can improve still further. Currently, however, this monitoring does not indicate to teachers the particular focus on the next most important issue for them to address as a whole school in order to raise the quality of teaching still further.
- The school has developed good links with the two local children's centres, nearby schools and other agencies. These links benefit children and their families in many ways, including building good knowledge about families and in providing support when children transfer to other schools.
- Links with parents are strong as a result of school leaders regularly taking time to ask parents what they think and what they want. Parents are fully involved and their views are regarded as important, because of this, parents say that school staff are always easy to approach and talk to.
- Safeguarding policies and practice fully meet requirements. Due regard is given to the care and welfare of each child. Parents know this and say that when they leave their children at school, they will be looked after well.
- The local authority has provided a good level of support for the school. In particular with regard to training. As a result, the gap between the performance of the lowest achieving 20 per cent of children and the rest is steadily being closed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. It is involved fully in school self-evaluation and development planning. Several governors have significant expertise in the needs of young children and, as a consequence, governors are confident to ask questions and challenge the headteacher. Governors ensure that the effectiveness of the teaching staff is monitored and that performance is linked to salary progression. Governors who have expertise in specific areas, for example finance, are allocated to committees where their knowledge will be most useful.

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

Unique reference number	131175
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	402449

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Roden
Headteacher	Deborah Harmon
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2010
Telephone number	01582 575100
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