

Plym Bridge Nursery and Children's Centre

Miller Way, Plymouth, PL6 8UN

Inspection dates 19–20 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Not enough children are making good progress taking into account their starting points on entry to the Nursery.
- Too much time during the sessions is spent in planned groups led by an adult, restricting the opportunities for children to be actively involved in activities that they have chosen.
- Some adults do not use questions skilfully enough to enable children to explain what they are learning and so develop their learning and skills further.
- Some adults do not have high enough expectations of what children can achieve or enable children to be involved in imaginative, creative role play that develops a full range of skills.
- The recording of children's progress does not demonstrate high quality observations of children's independently chosen activities.
- The records about the progress groups of children are making are very recent and do not yet show whether all groups are making good enough progress.
- Senior leaders have not used planned observations frequently enough to coach staff to improve the quality of teaching.
- Governors have not ensured that the management of the performance of staff is rigorous enough to ensure teaching and achievement improve quickly.

The school has the following strengths

- Parents really value the work of the Nursery. They say their children 'love it', enjoy coming, are happy and safe. They appreciate the relationships they have with staff and the support that is provided to the whole family.
- Children behave well, get on well together and are safe. There are examples of rapid improvements in behaviour for disabled children and those with special educational needs.
- Current leaders and the governing body are taking the right actions to improve the Nursery.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 12 sessions or part sessions of teaching and learning activities in the Nursery, spending a morning undertaking joint observations with the headteacher and conducting a joint observation with the assistant headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, and the Chair of the Governing Body, and there were informal discussions with children and parents.
- There were seven responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) which were too few to be viewed. The inspector took account of feedback from parents' questionnaires undertaken by the school.
- The inspector looked at the Nursery's documents, including records of assessment and children's progress, planning for improvement, monitoring of teaching and records about attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Janet Dinsmore, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The maintained Nursery provision inspected is known as 'big Nursery' and is part of the Plym Bridge Nursery and Children's Centre. It is an average size for schools of its type.
- Plym Bridge Nursery and Children's Centre provides a range of services including day care for 0–2 year olds and parent groups.
- Children participate in five morning sessions, 9.00am–11.30am or five afternoon sessions 12.45pm–3.15 pm. In addition, parents choose whether their child will join breakfast, lunch or after-school club on some days to meet the 15 hours requirement for 3–5 year olds. The breakfast and after-school club are also available to children at the neighbouring primary school when there are sufficient spaces.
- The governing body has undergone changes very recently. Governors were part of a federated governing body but at the time of the inspection were part of an interim governing body of the Nursery school and Children's Centre.
- The current headteacher is shared with a Nursery in another part of the city, on a temporary basis for one year. He started in September 2012 following the retirement of the previous headteacher.
- Almost all children are White British. The proportions of disabled children and those with special educational needs, with a statement of special educational needs or supported at early years action plus are average as are those supported at early year's action. At the time of the inspection no children were receiving pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority or from service families). The proportion of children in these groups is average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that:
 - there is a greater proportion of time and more opportunities in each session for children to be actively involved in activities that they choose
 - all adults are fully involved in extending children's learning by improving the way that they question and enable children to talk about their learning
 - all adults develop children's imaginative and creative role play to provide rich experiences that promote many areas of learning and development
 - observations and accurate recording of children's development are clearly focused on children's chosen activities from a richly resourced environment
 - there are high expectations of what children can achieve.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - there are regular observations of teaching by senior leaders that are used for the coaching and management of the performance of staff
 - recording of children's progress is checked regularly and accurately to give senior leaders a clear view of how to improve progress further.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The majority of children start in the Nursery with skills that would be expected for their age. They leave with skills that would be expected for their age. Not enough children make good progress. More-able children do not have enough opportunities to further develop the full range of their skills.
- Children do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their communication skills. The reason for this is that conversations with some adults are limited and do not extend children's understanding and vocabulary. Children who need more support with developing these skills have limited opportunities in group situations.
- Children learn to listen well but the size of the groups for stories restricts the opportunities for quieter children to be involved in answering some questions or contribute comments.
- Children have opportunities to run, climb and use pedalled vehicles which they enjoy but opportunities are missed to extend children's learning by developing numeracy and literacy skills while they are doing this.
- Children learn to count but children are not always encouraged to explore complex shapes and early calculation skills. Adults do not always develop children's imaginative, creative role play.
- Children who are disabled and those with special educational needs settle quickly and in some cases make good progress as they learn the routines and expectations of behaviour in the Nursery.
- Children enjoy stories and reading books, they take books home weekly and incorporate their knowledge of stories and themes that have been used in their play, for example recalling all the animals and fruits involved in 'Handa's Surprise'
- Children are becoming familiar with recognising initial letter sounds and shapes but sometimes there are low expectations of children's ability to record these, limited to copying and tracing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Planned activities for 'group times' and story times do not allow enough time during the session for children to pursue and develop their own learning. Too many of the activities are initiated and led by an adult and restrict the opportunities for all children to be actively involved. They spend too much time 'waiting for their turn'. For example, children watched while an adult demonstrated planting seeds. Their suggestions for how this could be done were not fully incorporated. There was no opportunity at this time for all the children to try the whole activity for themselves.
- When children are enjoying 'free play' time some adults do not actively involve themselves in children's learning. They are largely supervisory and provide a commentary on what children are doing rather than the careful questioning that will encourage children to develop more rapidly. Many opportunities are missed to follow children's interests, to rearrange resources and be involved with children in creative role play.
- There is a range of good quality resources but these are sometimes underused and lack imagination and creativity. Activities are planned to provide a specific piece of evidence for checking children's achievement rather than allowing children to extend and develop their own ideas in many areas of learning. This therefore limits some adults' expectations of what children can achieve and of what the next steps in learning will be and how to promote these.
- Staff do plan activities each day that follow the interests children have shown the previous day but these are frequently limited and restrict learning and development because they are not used well enough by all staff to enable children to demonstrate a full range of different skills through one activity. For example, paint colour mixing was restricted to children being encouraged to make sample circles on a page. This restricted children's creativity, understanding of colours of objects and the opportunity to represent them.

- Checking of the progress that children make is recorded in learning journey records. Discussions between staff are limited and many of the examples used are the result of activities adults have provided. They do not record enough high quality observations of children learning as they play or notes relating to the amount of adult support or the next steps in learning.
- There are individual examples of staff who in 'free play times' do actively promote children's learning through becoming involved in children's play, use questioning well and ensure that disabled children and those with special educational needs can be involved in play with their peers. For example, they support children as they use puppets to tell a story and give out tickets to the audience, and discuss the results of letting cars run down a slope.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Children usually behave well and play well with each other. They say, 'You are my friend and you're my friend too' as they play with the water tray. They are beginning to learn to negotiate and take turns because adults demonstrate this well for them. They enjoy taking their friends for a ride safely on tandem trikes.
- They understand the routines and rules of the Nursery well, for example how many children can use the water tray at one time. Everyone joins in to tidy up the equipment.
- Children know how to stay safe in the Nursery and assess risk for themselves, for example when using the fireman's pole, walking on balance bars and jumping onto mats. They are keen to demonstrate their achievements with this equipment.
- Children feel safe and there are no incidents of bullying or poor behaviour because there are good relationships between children and adults.
- Staff know children and their families very well and there are good relationships with the children so children are safe and talk to adults that they trust. Parents comment that their children really enjoy the Nursery and are cared for very well by staff. Parents also comment that staff have really helped them through difficult times because of the understanding and support they provide.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The performance management of teachers has not yet been effective in securing the necessary improvements to teaching as the new teachers' standards have not yet been fully implemented. Observations of teaching and feedback to teachers and other staff are not regular enough for teaching to improve quickly. The systems for checking the progress for different groups of children within the Nursery are at an early stage of development and have not been in place long enough to demonstrate good progress for all groups. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and know what needs to be done to improve it.
 - The local authority has provided support to the current headteacher when it has been requested, particularly for the proposed restructuring of the staffing and providing training for staff.
 - Statutory requirements for safeguarding are met. There is equality of opportunity especially in ensuring that disabled children and those with special educational needs receive support. There is no discrimination. Parents comment that they are pleased with the way that the Nursery staff support their children, particularly those who have more difficulties with speech development.
 - Self-evaluation by the current headteacher and assistant headteacher are accurate and have resulted in appropriate plans for necessary improvements.
 - The current headteacher in partnership with the governing body is demonstrating the capacity to improve the Nursery because there are now well-focused plans to ensure the financial stability of the Nursery and actions are in place to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to check the progress of the children. Improvements can be seen in teaching and children's progress.
- **The governance of the school:**

- The small interim governing body at the time of the inspection is ambitious to improve the Nursery. Governors know that the quality of teaching and children’s achievement requires improvement because of the professional skills of the Chair of the Governing Body used in visits and observations. They check the records of children’s progress while they are at the Nursery. They ensure that the performance of the headteacher is well managed in conjunction with the governing body of the other Nursery of which he is the headteacher. They are in the process of taking decisions about restructuring staffing that will secure the financial stability of the Nursery. They have worked together with the local authority to make the temporary appointment of the current headteacher to bring about the improvements that are necessary.

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	113052
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	401337

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	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Holwill
Headteacher	Brian Lee
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 September 2009
Telephone number	01752 786444
Fax number	01752 793495
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