

# Abercromby Nursery School

Falkner Street, Liverpool, Merseyside, L8 7QA

**Inspection dates** 26–27 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 achieve well in all areas of their learning. They make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and early reading and writing skills.
- Children from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures and those new to learning to speak English, settle quickly, make friends and learn well.
- Teaching is mainly good and sometimes outstanding.
- Excellent quality relationships support children's self-confidence and self-esteem very well.
- Children are safe and extremely happy. Their behaviour is exemplary. They have very positive attitudes to school and are eager to learn.
- The headteacher is a real driving force for success and has a clear vision for improvement. This has led to good improvements in teaching and children's progress. She has ensured that staff teamwork and morale are strong. Governors support the school well and ensure good links with the local community.
- Parents are highly complimentary about the very caring staff and the support they and their children receive.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is yet outstanding. Teachers do not always plan activities that suit the different abilities of the children or make full use of support staff in helping the children make the best possible progress.
- The outside area does not always promote children's early reading, mathematical and problem solving skills as well as indoors.
- Subject leaders' roles in improving teaching and children's progress are still developing.
- Plans to improve the school do not always make it clear how their successes are to be measured.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 sessions or parts of sessions. Five of these were joint observations with the headteacher. The inspector also observed children having their lunch.
- Meetings were held with staff, including subject leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at children’s learning files, displays of their work and records of their progress.
- A range of school documentation was examined including, the school improvement plan, the school’s own evaluations of how well it is doing, minutes of governing body meetings and the checks being made on the quality of teaching. The inspector also checked documentation on safeguarding, child protection, behaviour, attendance and health and safety.
- There were too few responses to Ofsted’s on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to properly reflect the opinions of parents. However, the inspector spoke to a number of parents during the inspection and considered responses to the school’s own parental surveys.
- The inspector took account of nine staff questionnaires that were completed.

## Inspection team

Chris Maloney, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized nursery. Children join the nursery following their third birthday and almost all complete a full year. The school provides a mix of full and part-time education.
- 80% of children speak English as an additional language, which is much higher than average. A minority of children are at an early stage of learning English. Nine different languages are spoken. Most of the children are from Middle Eastern, African or of mixed heritage.
- None of the children currently at the school are eligible for the pupil premium. This provides extra funding for children eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and children of service families.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs who are supported at early years action is average. The proportions supported at early years action plus or in receipt of a statement of educational needs are also average.
- Significant changes to the building have taken place since the last inspection including a secure waiting area for visitors, extensions to classroom space and the office and staff room. The school has also built an outdoor Eco-classroom.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and so further raise children's achievement by:
  - ensuring that all teachers make good use of what they know about how well children are doing to plan learning opportunities and activities that meet the abilities of all children, especially the more able
  - ensuring all teaching assistants are fully used in helping children learn as well as they should
  - ensuring that the outside area has more printed words and has a greater range of displays reflecting number and shape to stimulate children's learning and problem solving.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management even further by:
  - ensuring subject leaders are more involved in checking on the quality of teaching and the progress of children so that they take more decisive steps to bring about improvement
  - ensuring actions planned by school leaders to improve achievement are always clear and measurable and focused on their impact on children.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start the Nursery with skills and abilities below those typically expected for their age, particularly in their communication, language and personal, social and emotional development. They achieve well in all areas, especially in their speaking, listening and personal development. By the time they leave, children's skills are in line with expectations for their age. However, only a few children reach above expected levels for their age.
- Children from a wide range of ethnic heritages, including those new to learning English, achieve well because staff ensure they are fully integrated and their individual needs met. Children new to learning English benefit well from the bilingual support they receive, especially those who speak Arabic.
- Children settle quickly due to the very caring and welcoming nature of the staff, high expectations and well-established routines. They become increasingly independent in self-registering at the start of the day or serving themselves at lunchtime. Children show good levels of concentration and perseverance when choosing what to do.
- They develop a love of books from the many opportunities for listening to and retelling familiar stories. Good quality books are widely available for children to look at and share and children love to join in with the familiar words and sentences they remember. Children become increasingly confident in recognising simple words due to the focus on teaching basic letter sounds and word shapes.
- Children develop early writing skills well and show an interest in mark-making. Some can write their own name. Some boys particularly enjoyed the recent visit of the fire service by dressing up as fire fighters and writing about the dangers of fire as they patrolled the grounds looking for fires to extinguish.
- Children develop their number skills as they sing counting rhymes, play counting games or check on the number of children in class at the start of the day. They also confidently counted how many cake cases they will need when making Easter cakes.
- Children show good controlled movement, such as on their journey through an imaginary jungle. They develop their balance and strength as they explore the large outdoor area or build bridges in the well equipped block room. They develop fine motor skills equally well as they are confident in using scissors safely or computer keyboards.
- The outside area does not have enough printed words, such as in labels and descriptions, or displays to stimulate problem solving and the learning of numbers and shapes. This is hindering the progress of children in their reading and mathematical development, particularly when they can choose activities for themselves.
- Children who have special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress as their needs are identified early and well met through skilled small group or one-to-one support.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is nearly always good, sometimes outstanding with a very small minority that requires improvement.
- Staff know the children well and plan interesting and exciting activities for them. All staff show outstanding practice in the very caring way they develop high-quality relationships with children and their parents.
- Children are involved in deciding on what to learn next and topics are developed according to children's interests. There is a good balance between activities planned for and led by adults and those that children choose for themselves. Opportunities are planned for children to work in small groups with an adult to promote speaking and listening and social and emotional skills. This ensures good support for children who are finding learning difficult and those who are new

to learning English.

- Children are effectively taught to be independent when registering their names at the start of the day, washing their hands before eating or helping themselves to a healthy snack.
- Staff check children's progress regularly and keep detailed records of how well children are learning. They use children's 'learning journals' to record their progress and achievements at home and at school. However, not all teachers use this information well to plan activities that are carefully matched for children of different abilities. Thus, children sometimes find learning too easy or too hard and do not always make the progress they are capable of, particularly the more able.
- Teachers do not always ensure that skilled support staff are fully used throughout the whole session in questioning, prompting and supporting learning.
- Despite the very cold weather during the inspection, adults encouraged children to explore the exciting areas set up outdoors. Some outstanding teaching was seen as a teacher very skilfully engaged the interests of children at the 'story chair' in exploring a familiar story of 'The Hairy Toe'. The dramatic reading and excellent prompts and questioning by the teacher ensured all children were excited and learned a great deal about choosing appropriate describing words to retell the story in sequence or describe the monster.

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

- The behaviour of children is outstanding. They are extremely friendly, polite and sensitive to the needs of others. They talk courteously to each other and to visitors and get on exceptionally well with their key workers.
- Children are very happy due to the highly caring staff and the stimulating learning they receive. Children's behaviour is managed exceptionally well. Expectations are high and children respond quickly and positively to the praise and encouragement they receive.
- Children feel safe and are very eager to learn. This is shown by their regular attendance, happy smiling faces when they arrive and their wonderful attitudes to learning. All the parents spoken to were highly complimentary about the way the school keeps their children safe.
- Children learn to play well together and share their increasing understanding of safety. This was clearly seen when some children worked together to make road signs to help them ride their wheeled vehicles safely. When using the outside area, children move sensibly and with consideration, especially when using large equipment such as the tree house.
- They show considerable responsibility for their age in tidying up, taking turns and in handling equipment. They are helpful to others and share electronic equipment, such as computer tablets, well.
- Children show excellent levels of concentration, for example when they carefully retold stories into mini voice recorders or when weaving with coloured ribbons.
- Children show lots of curiosity in the world around them and were eager to learn how to plant peas in their extensive garden area and what was needed for healthy growth.
- The school reports no instances of bullying or racist incidents. Children of all backgrounds get on extremely well reflecting the school's excellent promotion of children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher provides very clear and determined leadership. Staff and governors fully support her ambitious drive and vision for making the school as successful as possible. Responses to questionnaires and discussions with staff confirm that the headteacher has created a strong staff team who agree that morale is high.
- Parents spoke with great affection for the highly caring staff. A typical comment was 'The wonderful staff, not only help our children to learn to read and write but also teach them life

skills’.

- The detailed school improvement plan is based on an accurate view of the school’s strengths and areas for further development. However, it is not always clear how planned actions aimed at bringing about improvement are to impact directly on improving children’s achievement. Even so, improvements since the last inspection in teaching, the achievements of the children and the quality of the accommodation clearly demonstrate that there is good capacity for further improvement.
- The headteacher uses her excellent knowledge and understanding of early childhood learning and practice to improve the quality of teaching and ensure that staff are well supported and their training needs met.
- Monitoring of the quality of teaching and the progress of children by the headteacher is robust. This information is used well to track the performance of different groups of children to ensure that they all achieve equally well. However, the role of subject leaders is still developing. They do not yet play a full role in checking the quality of teaching and how well children are doing.
- The curriculum is good because it supports children’s interests well with a wide range of visits and visitors and project work such as ‘Telling Tales’. It has been adjusted further to improve the quality of the outside provision by the building of an Eco-classroom.
- The new block room is helping children to develop their ability to build structures and test out their strength. The construction of a secure waiting area in the entrance helps to keep children safe.
- Strong partnership working with the ‘Mind Stretchers’ project has led to the excellent use of floor books to capture the interests of the children. The school has received good support from the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have a good knowledge and understanding of the school’s strengths and areas for development in teaching and children’s progress. They regularly visit the school and work very effectively with parents, ensuring that the school is firmly rooted in the community. The performance of teachers, including the headteacher is held rigorously to account. Governors ensure there is a clear link between the quality of teaching, children’s progress and teachers’ pay. Governors regularly review safeguarding procedures to ensure they meet requirements and that children and staff are safe. They promote equality of opportunity well and ensure that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

## 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>	104507
<b>Local authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	400720

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>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	61
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sue King
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sara Robb
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 April 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 709 5114
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