

# Crossens Nursery School

Preston New Road, Churchtown, Southport, Merseyside, PR9 8PA

**Inspection dates** 17–18 September 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Children make good progress in their skills and understanding and are prepared well for the next stage in their education because teaching is good. Staff make good use of talk, play and investigation to teach children in the classroom, impressive conservatory and excellent outdoor area. Children's learning in expressive art and design is a strength.
- Staff are very interested in what children do and say and why. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants have a detailed knowledge of individual children and make good use of team discussions to improve learning and teaching.
- Children are happy at nursery and behave sensibly. Staff are very supportive of children who are new to school. Parents are pleased with the nursery and comment positively on the progress that their children make and the value of their child's link member of staff.
- The school is led well and staff have successfully addressed the recommendation made at the previous inspection to improve children's level of understanding in mathematics.
- School leaders and members of the governing body have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and what needs to improve.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding learning and teaching. Sometimes, staff miss opportunities to teach children the sounds that letters make. On some occasions, staff do not ensure that all children are benefitting fully from an activity.
- Some checks on the work of the school by the governing body are too dependent upon speaking to the headteacher.
- Although the school has a good understanding of the progress that all children make in their learning, the systems for recording and judging this are too complicated. As a result, it sometimes takes too much time for leaders to reach conclusions and to explain the data to others.
- Not enough is being done to help families understand that the school expects children to attend as much as possible.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning and teaching in four nursery sessions and spoke to children. Some teaching was observed jointly with the acting headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, three members of the governing body including a parent governor and the acting Chair of the Governing Body. Other meetings were held with members of staff and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents, including safeguarding policies and procedures and children's files (learning journeys). He also looked at school data about children's progress, school records of the quality of teaching, records of staff targets and training, self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.
- The inspector considered the 14 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own annual survey of parents in 2013. The inspector also spoke informally to a number of new and existing parents.

## Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Crossens is an average-sized nursery school.
- The school was first opened as a crèche for the children of factory workers in the Second World War. It became a school in 1947 and moved to the current, purpose-built premises in 2008. It is part of a campus with a primary school and two special schools which are inspected separately.
- Children can attend a school breakfast club and a lunch club. This means that some children are at school all day, every day, while others attend for two and a half days a week or five half-day sessions.
- Almost all children are White British.
- The proportion of children who receive extra help from school staff because they have been identified as having special educational needs (school action) is below average. The proportion who are supported by external specialists because of their needs (school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs) is below average.
- The Nursery achieved Healthy School status in 2012 and was re-accredited for the Basic Skills Early Years Quality Mark in 2013.
- Two of the three teachers employed at the school are new since the previous inspection.
- At the time of the inspection, the school was led by an acting headteacher. A new headteacher has been appointed and will take up post from later this term. At the time of the inspection, an acting Chair of the Governing Body had been in post for less than one week.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding learning and teaching by:
  - ensuring that all children benefit from the learning activities provided
  - using all relevant opportunities to teach children the sounds that letters make
  - sharing an understanding of what constitutes outstanding teaching across all staff through discussion and opportunities to observe this happening.
- Improve attendance by making it clearer to all parents and carers that the school expects children to attend as much as possible.
- Increase opportunities for members of the governing body to check on the school's work through more visits to talk to staff and watch what is happening around the school.
- Further improve the ease with which leaders can make conclusions about children's progress and be able to explain this to others by making recording systems easy to use.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- A large majority of children start school with a level of development below that typical for their age. This is because many children show weaknesses in their understanding of mathematics and their personal, social and emotional development. Staff are quickly aware of this because of their good way of assessing what children already know and can do. This includes learning from parents' knowledge of their children, making a home visit and observing children closely as soon as possible.
- Next steps in children's learning are planned carefully and ensure that children experience a wide range of activities indoors and outdoors that challenge them, including in the breakfast club and lunch club. Consequently, less-able children catch up quickly with others and the more able are helped to achieve more.
- By the time that they move to primary school children make good progress across the areas of learning and some make outstanding progress, particularly in their self-confidence, speaking skills and their understanding of the world. This is because teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of what children can achieve. Staff record and celebrate children's progress skilfully in attractive 'learning journey' books.
- Staff make good use of a wide range of opportunities to develop children's enthusiasm and creativity when making marks in pen, chalk and paint. As a result, children make great strides in their creative abilities. Children's mark-making, art and three-dimensional models are then highly valued in beautiful displays around the school.
- Children who are disabled and those who have special educational needs are supported well. Their needs are identified quickly and links made with a range of workers from outside of the school. This means that support at different times of the day is tailored carefully to children's needs and as a result these children make the same good progress as others.
- Parents recognise the progress that their children make at school, for example, saying 'It's fantastic; they learn so much in the time that they're here'.
- Children's achievement in mathematics is higher than in the past. This is because staff use mathematical language and concepts frequently during their play and talking with children. It is also because children have many opportunities to explore counting, comparing, building and connecting.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and some aspects are outstanding. For example, staff listen very carefully to children and are skilled in using questions that extend children's thinking and conversation. As a consequence, children are making good progress and becoming happy, confident and enthusiastic learners by the time that they leave the school.
- There is not enough outstanding teaching in the school. This means that children could achieve even more from their time at Crossens Nursery. Where teaching is less successful, staff do not ensure that all children are benefitting from what adults are doing. While staff have undertaken training to explore children's levels of engagement in learning, using this to improve teaching by all teachers and teaching assistants is at an early stage of development.
- Children at the school benefit greatly from listening to a wide variety of stories when in their group with their key person. However, some opportunities are missed to emphasise the sounds that letters make when children see print around them or in books. At other times, children have many opportunities to develop their language well through play with staff using puppets, role-play and play with small toys and figures.
- A strength of teaching at the school is the extent to which staff respect the interests and abilities of the children. This is evident in the close attention paid to children's expressive art and design skills, supported by visiting professional artists. It also shows in the way that staff planning for

teaching and learning starts from children's interests and from what staff have observed and heard when children are playing.

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

- Children care about their classroom and help staff to tidy up. Clear daily routines help children to settle each day.
- Children have a good range of opportunities in school to learn about safe behaviours. As a consequence, they use computers, scissors and art resources, such as ink rollers, safely and take sensible risks when climbing, jumping and balancing outside.
- Children come to school punctually but some families do not always bring children to every session to which they are entitled. While the school expects notification of absences and follows these up, too little is done to make clear the expectation that children should attend as much as possible. As a result, attendance is not as high as it could be.
- The school makes good use of activities, displays, books and stories to help children to understand the world around them. Children also hear different languages spoken. Consequently, children mix well together and accept differences between people and there are no records of bullying, racism or exclusions at the school.
- Parents and carers raised few concerns about behaviour and the inspector observed that where some children were still learning about managing their own feelings and behaviour that staff managed this well. Children also show good behaviour in the breakfast club and lunch club.
- At the time of the inspection, many children were new to school and experiencing separation from their parents and carers for the first time. Staff show great patience, sensitivity and flexibility in supporting individual children to settle and introducing them to new friends, routines and opportunities. This is helped by the good key person system in the school, where every child has a named adult with whom to build a close relationship.

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

- Led passionately by the recently-retired headteacher, the school has, for several years, rightly challenged itself about how staff can show respect for children's interests and abilities. The impact of this is illustrated by the comment from one member of staff who said 'We are fascinated by what children do. We are always talking about it as a team'.
- The leadership of teaching is good and has benefitted from links with another maintained nursery school and regular visits from the local authority. Training is valued by staff and has directly improved learning and teaching. In particular, staff have gained the most benefit from opportunities to learn together as a team and receive coaching from one another.
- The school is led well and leaders and the governing body have ensured a smooth change from the long-standing headteacher retiring to appointing an acting headteacher from within the school. She is ensuring that the school continues to move forward with a sense of purpose while awaiting the new headteacher who will take up post next term.
- Safeguarding policies and systems meet requirements and all staff are trained in paediatric first aid.
- Leaders keep a close eye on how well children are doing, including each individual, group and cohort. This is used to improve the school but the system of recording is too complex and time-consuming. Consequently, analysis sometimes takes too much time for leaders to reach conclusions easily and be able to explain the data to others briefly and clearly.
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed successfully and enhanced by the celebration of festivals, trips to other places (including seeing wildlife) and by having visitors to the school.
- Partnership with parents is good. Families are informed clearly about the progress that children make and there are regular meetings to help improve parent understanding of the Early Years

Foundation Stage.

- The school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance are thorough. These procedures are underpinned by leaders' regular monitoring of teaching and learning and are made better by the contribution of the governing body. Individual staff targets are clear and their work is managed well. Feedback to staff about their work has been helpful and has led to improvement although it has not always been specific enough about how teaching can become outstanding.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - A challenge in the past week has been the resignation of the Chair of the Governing Body after many years of service to the school. Already an Acting Chair is in place and setting out clear plans for the continued development of governance. This reflects the passion and commitment of all members of the governing body to help the school to improve further. They ask challenging questions of leaders about safeguarding, teaching quality, staff performance and reward, children's progress and the approaches taken to the areas of learning of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They also undertake very careful oversight of the school finances and attend a wide range of training relevant to their roles. Members of the governing body are not complacent and acknowledge that although they visit the school regularly and check its work they are sometimes too dependent upon the headteacher.

## 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>	104845
<b>Local authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	426058

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>	54
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Joanne Barton
<b>Acting Headteacher</b>	Kim Morton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 November 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01704 228624
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