

The Orchards Nursery

Highfield Road, Farnworth, Bolton, Lancashire BL4 0RA

Inspection dates 3–4 December 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		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 all areas of learning. Their personal, social and emotional development is strong and they are confident and happy to learn and play.
- Children with special educational needs make at least good and sometimes outstanding progress, particularly children with very complex special educational needs.
- Children extend their knowledge and are curious to learn because of the good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching they receive.
- Children's behaviour is good. They play happily together and make a point of saying 'please' and 'thank you'.
- Parents praise the quality of education provided at the school and are confident that their child will be well looked after.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher inspire effective teamwork from all staff who are skilled in ways to help young children learn.
- Children's skills in early writing, reading and number have improved in the last two years after leaders concentrated on teaching basic skills in small groups by children's 'key person'.
- Governors are knowledgeable and involved in school life. They take their roles seriously and challenge how well children are learning and thriving.
- Leaders and the governing body are clear about how they can improve the school even further. They have built successfully on the strengths in teaching and achievement identified in the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough of the teaching is outstanding to raise children's achievement even further.
- Activities that are chosen by children do not always extend every child's learning; they are sometimes not challenging enough.
- Occasionally, next steps in children's learning are not based accurately enough on how well children have already achieved.
- Not all children attend regularly and punctually and this hinders their readiness for joining primary school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven sessions, three of which were jointly observed with the deputy headteacher, reviewed children's work and analysed their progress.
- Meetings were held with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of school records including teachers' planning, school improvement planning, self-evaluation information, records of governing body meetings, safeguarding information and the school's tracking of children's achievement.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for the inspector to analyse. The inspector reviewed parents' responses to school questionnaires. The inspector also took account of the five responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Marie Cordey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Orchards Nursery is an average-sized school providing for 130 children who attend part time.
- The nursery school is part of a federation of three schools including a primary and a special school.
- Most children are from White British backgrounds. A below average number of children are from minority ethnic background. A below average proportion of children speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs, including those supported by early years action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to further improve children's progress by:
 - making sure that activities chosen by children themselves are always challenging enough to enable them to reach their potential
 - checking that children's next steps in learning build successfully on how well they have already achieved.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - building on positive relationships with parents to further engage them in helping to improve their child's attendance and punctuality.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the nursery with a wide variety of experiences and knowledge. Overall their skills are well below those expected for their age. Children make good progress and their skills rise although they remain below those expected for their age by the time they leave school.
- Children settle happily in nursery because of a gradual introduction accompanied by their parents. A deliberate policy of attaching key workers to no more than 10 children creates a consistent and secure environment for children to thrive. This greatly enhances children's to do things for themselves as they grow in confidence. Their speaking and listening and social skills are well developed and help children improve more quickly from a low level.
- Teachers place great emphasis on reading and provide many high quality books. As a result, children are very quickly absorbed in a book and develop a desire to read and listen. Their communication and language skills are a prime focus for learning and children develop promptly skills and understanding in mark making and linking letters and sounds. This gives them a good grounding for extending their understanding in other subjects and improving their attainment.
- Staff place a great focus on improving children's mathematical language in most activities where, for example, size and shape is emphasised. Many children form numbers accurately and grasp counting skills through many practical activities. They compare large with small as well as correctly identifying triangles, for instance, through the use of music to engage children and help them to understand rhythm and shape.
- Focused sessions in small groups take place early in the morning or afternoon to stress the importance of developing children's knowledge and skills in early reading, writing and number. These are closely matched to each child's level and they make good progress as a result.
- The most-able children make good progress overall although on occasions work is not hard enough. They have begun to write in simple sentences and carry out simple sums. These children are also encouraged to learn mathematical terms and their knowledge and use of mathematical language is well-developed.
- Children with special educational needs, including early years action plus children and those with a statement of special educational needs, children from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make at least good and sometimes outstanding progress, particularly children with very complex special educational needs. Very skilled and knowledgeable staff plan work very carefully to match the unique needs of the individual child.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and enables children to make good progress. Staff know how to encourage young children to learn because of their very specific early years' knowledge and training.
- Children learn well indoors and in the improved outdoor environment because staff ensure activities stimulate them and raise their enthusiasm for learning. They encourage children to work in a group or alone and this encourages their independence and social skills.
- Staff provide activities that enhance skills across all aspects of the curriculum. For example, they develop children's hand and eye co-ordination as well as number when they aimed small bean bags at specific numbers. Drawing and observational skills are advanced as children enjoy drawing pictures of themselves and their families and took photographs of their activities.
- Children enjoy the many activities that staff provide that match their individual interests and experiences. They particularly enjoy the many opportunities to play outdoors with mud or in the construction area. Children's imagination runs riot and they create buildings, streets and characters to match stories they have listened to or read. Occasionally, children do not make as much progress when the activities teachers provide for them to choose for themselves are not sufficiently challenging. These activities do not consistently encourage children to develop their interests and skills to a higher level.

- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to provide effective teaching of basic skills by key workers as well as to cater effectively for the learning of children with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and children who come from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Staff use assessment information successfully and record their evidence well in children's individual learning journals. This shows clearly how well children are progressing and is also used to share information with parents. They form a detailed history of children's development as well as their interests. Occasionally, staff do not use the information about children's progress effectively to ensure activities build on how well they have already achieved. This is evident when tasks are not difficult enough to extend learning especially for the most-able children.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Children are exceptionally polite and grow in confidence and self-esteem. This is because they are praised and encouraged to discover as much knowledge about the world as possible. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively by caring staff.
- Children are valued because staff are all polite and respectful of them. In turn, they respond well to each other and to adults and visitors. They are taught to be polite and this is seen when children slowly and deliberately open doors for others. It is heartening to see these very small children being so careful to consider others.
- The nursery is a very inclusive environment where children feel valued and important, including those children with special educational needs. Staff model good behaviour and children learn how to behave well as a result. Any examples of behavioural difficulties are effectively dealt with on a one-to-one basis.
- Children and their parents believe that the nursery is a safe place. Children are made aware of risks but at the same time are encouraged to manage risks. They learn how to play safely and considerately with water and use the climbing equipment, for example.
- Children want to learn because their curiosity is stimulated and they are eager to discover knowledge. They are active and attentive. Occasionally, they are less purposeful in group activities when it is either too easy or too difficult for them.
- Most children attend regularly and their parents are aware of the benefits of good attendance. This is not the case for all children and some parents do not always ensure they attend regularly and promptly enough to prepare them for primary school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong and aspirational leadership. They are supported well by the middle leader, governors and all staff. Staff responses to the questionnaire were very positive about the school and its leadership.
- Both leaders and staff are proud of the way they work together. This is evident in school through a shared commitment to improving children's skills and their personal development. Improvements to the outdoor area and higher standards in mathematical skills are a direct result of whole-school actions to improve. Good achievement, teaching and behaviour support the school's capacity to improve further.
- The school knows what it does well. Actions are precise and include strategies to improve children's attendance. This has led to some improvements although there are still some significant absences and the engagement with parents is not wholly effective in securing good attendance.
- Monitoring of children's progress and of the quality of teaching are purposeful and mostly accurate. Teaching is improving although some weaker aspects in the use of assessment information are not fully resolved.
- Staff performance is judged against how well children achieve and this is linked to the quality of

their teaching. Performance management arrangements are challenging and staff are rigorously held to account for children's achievement. Training is specifically aimed at improving teaching and raising standards.

- The curriculum is planned deliberately to improve children's achievement from a low base. Activities are many and engaging. A major focus on improving children's early writing, reading and mathematical skills is a particularly effective part of the curriculum because it improves children's achievement in early literacy and numeracy and also helps children to improve in all other areas of learning.
- Very good relationships with parents are fostered by leaders and staff. Parents are pleased about the school's effectiveness and many comments were made in school questionnaires about how well their children learn and develop.
- Safeguarding and welfare arrangements meet requirements and children receive good levels of care.
- The local authority provides regular and effective challenge and support.
- The federation works well in sharing good practice and systems from the different schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Governors regularly attend training to update their knowledge and understanding, particularly of data. They use this knowledge and direct observations of teaching and children's learning to question the school's effectiveness and know what needs attention. For example, they are working to improve the website to include more details to guide parents. Governors manage finances well and link spending closely to children's achievement. They became very knowledgeable about outdoor play as they carefully considered increasing resources in this area. Governors carry out their statutory responsibilities. While they are governors of all three schools in the federation they ensure that their time is spent effectively in the nursery.

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	105145
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	426206

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	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amanda Collingborn
Headteacher	Jane Grecic
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2010
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