

The Limes Nursery School

Johnsons Road, Whitehall, Bristol, BS5 9AT

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2014

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.

- Since her appointment, the headteacher has quickly identified and tackled the key issues facing the school. Teaching has improved and the rate of children's progress has increased.
- Children settle into the school quickly and make good progress, particularly in developing their speaking and listening skills and in their physical development.
- Children who are disabled or have special educational needs, or who speak English as an additional language, are very well supported and often they make excellent progress.
- Parents have very positive views about their children's experience at the school, about learning, and particularly about the care adults show for their children.
- Behaviour is good. Children enjoy learning because the tasks and activities teachers plan often relate closely to children's interests.
- Children learn quickly what is expected of them; they move around between activities sensibly, and are eager to learn because they feel safe and secure. They get along well and learn to help each other.
- The headteacher has established helpful systems which allow senior leaders and governors to analyse and understand what data show about the progress of children.
- There is a clear vision for further improvement and a strong determination to bring this about. Plans for improvement are well laid out and carefully monitored so that they are adjusted as the school succeeds. This has meant teaching is now good.
- Senior leaders and governors work together to make sure that children are kept safe and that the policies and procedures for this are kept up to date.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Teachers do not always help children to know exactly what they can do to improve. Adults' questions do not always encourage children to think about other possible options.
- There are too few opportunities for more able children to develop their number and communication skills in the outdoor areas.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector spent most of his time observing learning, looking at the activities children were doing and talking to them about their learning and playing. This covered the two classes over four sessions. About a third of this time was spent observing together with the headteacher. The inspector watched children being supported in small groups and as individuals, by teachers and teaching assistants.
- He looked at a wide range of documents provided by the school, including teachers' records about the progress of children, leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, policies and procedures about learning and safety, and records of meetings.
- The inspector held meetings with the senior leaders, teachers and with members of the governing body. He also spoke to the local authority, and to a consultant providing support to the school on a regular basis.
- The inspector reviewed the 13 responses to the online survey for parents, Parent View, as well as the school's own survey, carried out recently. He also spoke to parents informally when they were picking up or dropping off their children. He also took into account the nine responses to a survey for staff.

Inspection team

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average school. There are two Nursery classrooms where children can attend morning, afternoon or full day sessions, or a combination of these. Parents can pay for additional sessions alongside those they are entitled to.
- The majority of children are White British; other children come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. More children than usual speak English as an additional language. A few of these join the nursery speaking little or no English.
- The proportion of children supported through school action is average as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- There is a children's centre on the site, run by the senior leaders and governors of the school, and on-site provision for two-year-olds in the Willow room. These are subject to separate inspection arrangements, the reports of which can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.
- The school also works closely with a number of primary schools, most closely with Whitehall Primary which is located adjacent to the nursery.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to be outstanding, by:
 - providing more opportunities for children, especially the more able, to develop their reading and mathematical skills, particularly in the outdoor areas
 - making sure that the positive feedback teachers give children more frequently focuses on what they need to do to improve
 - using questions more effectively to widen children's ideas and views.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **is good**

- Children join the school with skills and knowledge which are below those typical for their age, although there is a wide variety within this. Often their skills in communicating and language are low, and some have speech and language difficulties.
- In the past, progress has been variable, but it has improved over the past two years. Recently, progress has been good and most children reach the expected levels by the time they move to primary school. Pupils currently in the school have made good progress, particularly in their speaking and listening and physical skills.
- Some children have made rapid progress because of the high expectations and quality of teaching. However, some higher ability children are ready to learn even more, particularly in their reading and number skills. They are not always challenged as much as they could manage, especially when they are outside.
- The outside area provides a stimulating and challenging environment for children to develop role-play, as well as lots of opportunities to find out about the natural world. This contributes exceptionally well to developing children's physical skills, their awareness of being safe, and their writing skills.
- Good links with parents and the sharing of learning between home and school mean that children have very positive attitudes towards learning wherever they are. They are eager to learn all they can, and they achieve well. Parents are very pleased with the progress their children make, and the confidence they develop.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs are sensitively supported so that they, too, make good progress. Those at the early stages of learning to speak English are helped to learn key words so they can communicate what they need. The excellent support by adults and the way other children help them means their progress is often rapid.

The quality of teaching **is good**

- Teachers make sure that there are plenty of activities for children to choose from, which keeps children busy, active and keen to learn. They plan together to make sure that most groups of children are challenged to learn well. Adults are very skilled at identifying children's interests, and making the most of these to promote their learning, particularly in developing skills for writing.
- The enthusiasm with which adults approach the activities and tasks means children are very keen to try things out. For example, most children had a go at making and flying a paper aeroplane or kite, following instructions carefully and enjoying their success. Teachers have high expectations of what children can do, particularly when making things.
- Teachers and other adults take careful note of what children have learnt and this information is carefully collected together in each child's 'Learning Journey'. These also include examples of children's work, and parents value this record of their child's development.
- The systems to record children's progress enable teachers and senior leaders to have an accurate, up-to-date picture about how well each child is doing. Teachers use this information to plan the next few days' activities. Each day they reflect on how well this has gone, adapting what they will do in the next session.
- Adults develop good relationships with the children, so there is a high level of trust and mutual respect. Children feel confident to ask for help, and teachers encourage them to try for themselves, without stepping in too quickly. Often these positive comments help children to persevere. However, the comments do not always focus enough on how children could improve further.
- Teachers are good at asking questions to check how well children have understood what they are learning. However, their questions are sometimes focused on a particular idea or solution,

and do not always help children to think more widely.

- Teachers use some of the opportunities during the more formal learning, at the start and end of each session, to help children identify some of the sounds used to start the new words they have been learning.
- There are good opportunities to learn about numbers, shapes, and different sizes through the activities indoors. However, the opportunities for similar learning outdoors are not as well developed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of children is good. They get along very well, enjoy being at Nursery, and often help one another. Adults have high expectations of behaviour, and these are very clearly communicated through reminders, positive comments and through the way adults treat the children, setting a good example.
- Parents said that their children love coming into Nursery, and are very keen not to miss any sessions.
- During lunchtime, children who stay on sit in family groups, with an adult. This develops good social skills and excellent table manners.
- Children show a good level of awareness of the needs of other children, for example when others are feeling sad or have hurt themselves. They are very well trained about taking turns with resources and have a good range of strategies they can use to negotiate where they may have different opinions. However, they are occasionally impatient when they want the attention of an adult, sometimes demanding attention.
- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is good. Children feel confident they can talk to an adult if they are worried, and that they are safe because of the good security arrangements. Parents say that teachers are readily available if they need to discuss anything and they feel welcome at the start of each session.
- The staff make sure they think carefully about the risks within any activity, without over-protecting the children, so that children do not feel fearful.
- The well-established routines mean children know what will happen each day, and they tidy up willingly, helping to keep the school neat and tidy.
- There have been no incidents of poor behaviour, bullying or racism in recent years. There are appropriate systems and policies in place to ensure that any such incidents would be dealt with.

The leadership and management are good

- Following a period of turbulence, the appointment of the headteacher has improved the stability of leadership. Since arriving, the headteacher has developed a strong leadership team. Together they have ensured that the key issues at the previous inspection have been tackled: children's speaking and listening have improved; records and the use of assessment are effective; and the progress of groups of children is checked closely.
- Together with senior leaders, the headteacher has developed robust systems to collect and analyse information about children's learning, and has provided clear expectations of teachers. These systems are having a wider impact on the children's centre and the setting for two-year-old children. Working closely together, this means families are helped to give their children a good start.
- When senior leaders observe teaching and learning, they make sure teachers know what is working well, and what they can do to improve further. Teachers say that the training they have had and the opportunities to think about their practice have helped them to improve. There is a strong sense of teamwork.

- The curriculum is well established and provides children with good opportunities to explore the world around them and achieve well. It promotes effectively children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- By integrating celebrations and festivals from all the ethnic heritages represented in the school, leaders make sure that children appreciate different perspectives and experiences. For example, children routinely choose one of the many languages spoken in the nursery in which to greet one another in the morning.
- All adults and governors make sure that children are treated equally and that discrimination is not tolerated. Parents agreed, and said that the school is well led and managed. Some parents could not praise the school highly enough, and said that it had helped them immensely, as a family.
- The school has had a high level of support from the local authority in the past, helping them through considerable changes in leadership. This has reduced as the school has developed its capacity to keep up the improvements for itself, and now has ‘light touch’ support.
- The school is currently helping to research ways of using technology to record children’s progress more easily and cut down on the amount of time this takes teachers. The school also supports the training of student teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Many governors are new to this role since the previous inspection. However, they have quickly ensured that they undertake the training they need to become confident in challenging and supporting the school. They appreciate the improved quality of information available because of the systems the headteacher has introduced. This allows them to compare the performance of the school with others. They are well informed and have a good understanding of the quality of teaching, which has moved from satisfactory to good since the previous inspection. They use this information to help them make decisions about how finances are used to encourage the best teaching.
 - Governors take seriously their responsibilities for keeping children safe. They work closely with senior leaders to make sure statutory requirements are met and that arrangements for safeguarding are secure.

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	108905
Local authority	Bristol
Inspection number	439936

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	2–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	127
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicole Hambridge
Headteacher	Catherine Bolam
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 June 2011
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