

# Ashworth Nursery School

Addison Close, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 1QU

**Inspection dates** 25–26 November 2014

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Children thrive in this welcoming nursery school because they are known and valued as individuals. They are comfortable, very safe and secure and ready to enjoy early learning.
- Everyone shares the headteacher's determination to achieve the best for every child. Staff and governors are a strong team and expectations and morale are high.
- The headteacher leads a team of highly skilled practitioners. The quality of teaching is outstanding and the curriculum is very well planned to meet children's developing needs and to engage their interests. As a result, children make excellent and rapid progress, often from starting points that are significantly below those typical for their age.
- The nursery is extremely successful in preparing its children for the next stage in their education and helping them to be confident, enthusiastic learners.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. They are pleased with their achievements and happy to talk to visitors about themselves and all that they have learnt and done in the nursery. The nursery provides a very nurturing and safe environment for the children.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs make excellent progress because they are supported extremely well.
- Children who are learning English as an additional language are also supported extremely well and they make excellent progress in all of the areas of learning.
- Staff are skilled in identifying children who are potentially very able and ensuring that activities stretch and challenge them. As a result, the achievement of the most-able children has begun to rise.
- Parents have great confidence in the nursery and say they feel very well informed. They say the nursery involves them in checking on how their children are doing. Staff also help them to support their children's learning at home.
- Leaders check on every child's progress very carefully and this helps them plan the next steps the children need to take. Since the last inspection, they have improved the way this is done, so that leaders now have a very clear overview of each child's progress.
- Work is currently under way to produce detailed summary reports each term to show the progress of all of the different groups of children in the nursery across the year. This is still work in progress.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a wide range of nursery activities over the two days of the inspection, including observations of children in activities they had chosen for themselves, in activities led by adults and in small-group sessions led by staff members. These observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector spent time with individual children looking at and discussing their 'learning journey' folders, which are records of their achievements in the nursery.
- Meetings and ongoing discussions were held with the headteacher and staff members. The inspector met with five members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority. She met with the headteachers of two primary schools that are often the next schools for children from this nursery. She also met with a representative of the local authority's Inclusion Service.
- There were too few responses to Parent View, the on-line questionnaire for parents, to report on them here. However, the inspector met with a group of 13 parents during the inspection to hear their views about the school.
- The inspector took into account the views that staff expressed in the questionnaires they returned.
- The inspector observed the nursery school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, safety and welfare and data on children's progress.

## Inspection team

Diane Auton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This average-sized nursery school provides part-time sessions in the mornings and afternoons. Children join the nursery in the term after their third birthday.
- Most children are British Pakistani, with a small minority from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. The majority of children are at a very early stage of learning English when they join the nursery.
- A substantial proportion of children in the nursery have special educational needs or disabilities.
- Temporary leadership arrangements seen at the time of the school's last inspection in 2012 have now been regularised: a new Chair and Vice-Chair of governors were elected and the acting headteacher was permanently appointed in the term after the inspection.

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

- Regularly summarise the progress of boys, girls, children with special educational needs, children who have English as their additional language and the most-able children, in order
  - to add further detail to leaders' overview of how well all the different groups of children in the Nursery are doing
  - to help to make curriculum-planning even more effectively matched to children's varying needs.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is an outstanding early years practitioner, with a wealth of knowledge, skills and expertise. She is a positive role model for everyone in the nursery, leading by example and encouragement. She sets the highest expectations for the standards of provision and for children's achievement. All of these factors have been critical in raising the nursery's overall effectiveness from good to outstanding since the last inspection.
- The headteacher is supported by skilled and effective practitioners at all levels in the nursery, by efficient and caring non-teaching staff and by extremely knowledgeable and well-informed governors.
- Arrangements to check on how well staff are performing are firmly in place, with effectiveness measured against the progress children are making. An extensive programme of staff training and professional development ensures that staff skills are continually being updated.
- The nursery has forged productive partnerships with several other schools, including the two nearby primary schools and the other two nursery schools in Blackburn. Staff have begun to share skills and good practice across the settings. The headteachers who called into the nursery during the inspection confirmed that these links and shared activities are a mutually beneficial and exciting development for all concerned.
- The local authority provides regular advisory and consultant support and agrees that this is an outstanding nursery school. The authority's inclusion service works closely with the school to help it ensure that children with special educational needs are provided with the support they need. This enhances the provision for these children. In addition, school staff have taken opportunities to widen their own expertise in this field through working alongside specialists. The nursery also has strong working relationships with a wide range of agencies that support children's health and well-being.
- The curriculum is planned extremely well to support children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In the nursery's colourful and stimulating learning environment, activities are interesting and fun for the children and this helps them to become successful learners. Zoo trips, visitors to school and events like the 'Smile for Life' dental health initiative all add enrichment for the children. Celebrations of a wide range of religious festivals throughout the year prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have a detailed picture of the progress being made by every child during the year as a result of regular checks and careful record-keeping. Staff use this information very well to plan, teach and support the next steps in the children's learning and development.
- Leaders have correctly identified the need to compare the progress of the different groups of children, including gender groups, those with special educational needs, those learning to speak English as their additional language and the most-able children. Plans are now in place to produce a termly review report on each of these groups, to further improve the overview of progress and its usefulness in planning next steps.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors' detailed knowledge of children's achievement and of the quality of teaching and learning enables them to play an active role in evaluating the school's work.
  - Governors contribute effectively to managing staff performance, ensuring that everyone is held to account for children's progress.
  - They have taken difficult decisions in recent times arising from reductions in the school's budget; in doing so, they have ensured that school funding is spent to achieve the best possible support for children's learning. They have also been proactive in seeking out funding opportunities through bids to external sources and this has helped them to make considerable improvements to the learning environment in the school.
  - Governors carry out their statutory duties effectively, ensuring that procedures to safeguard children's welfare are managed well and reviewed regularly. They ensure that equal opportunities are promoted vigorously, so that all children have every opportunity to enjoy all of the activities in school and there is no discrimination.

**The behaviour and safety of children are outstanding****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of children is outstanding.
- Children are absorbed in their play and in enjoying the activities that are provided for them. Because they are so busy and involved, there are very few squabbles.
- Children have very positive attitudes to learning and their happiness and enjoyment of nursery are self-evident. With support and encouragement from the adults in the nursery, children are increasingly able to share, take turns and interact with each other. They are learning to concentrate on an activity for extended periods and to complete a task before moving on to something else.
- Children know the routines in nursery. They respond to signals at the end of sessions and know when it is time to tidy up or move to the carpet.

Children are kind to each other and welcoming and friendly with visitors. They have a good, age-appropriate understanding of what are the right and the wrong things to do.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding.
- All necessary checks on adults are carried out and staff training in child protection is updated regularly.
- Children have trusting relationships with the staff and know that they will be looked after if they are ill or upset.
- Staff are positive role models and everyone is treated with care and respect in the nursery.
- Induction arrangements for children when they join the nursery are carefully planned and extremely supportive. Excellent transition arrangements are in place to support the children when they leave nursery to move up into the primary schools.
- The nursery provides outstanding support for children who have additional learning or medical needs or who are potentially vulnerable. Several parents spoke movingly to the inspector about their gratitude for the care they and their children have received and the difference it has made to the family.
- Bilingual support is readily available in most of the children's home languages; this ensures good communications between families and the school.

**The quality of teaching is outstanding**

- The headteacher and her staff know the children and their families very well. Parents hold staff in high regard and appreciate the care and dedication they bring to their roles. Several parents told the inspector how much their children look forward to nursery and 'can't wait to come in the mornings' because they love the activities the staff provide for them.
- Parents are, typically, delighted with their children's progress and sometimes astounded by its rapidity, especially in learning to speak English. They ascribe this to excellent teaching. Several parents spoke of improved behaviour at home since their child started in nursery and good, helpful advice they had been given by staff about behaviour management.
- Teachers plan sessions very carefully. They review activities regularly to ensure they reflect children's interests and that they support learning and progress well.
- Bilingual staff are very skilful in the support they provide for children who are learning to speak English. The nursery encourages children to develop skills in their home language as well as in English and actively fosters their development as bilingual communicators.
- The children's learning journey folders give a very detailed account of each child's progress across the areas of learning. They include photographs, examples of counting and number work and early writing. Parents meet regularly with their child's key worker to review the latest updates to the folders and to discuss the next steps.
- Group teaching is provided for children of all abilities. This ensures that everyone receives the support they need to develop their speaking and listening skills, their early literacy and numeracy skills and to make rapid progress from their starting points. At this relatively early point in the year, some of the most-able children have already started to get to know about letters and the sounds they stand for. All of the children are interested in books and in writing or making marks.
- Staff work closely with other professionals, including the educational psychologist and speech therapists, to ensure excellent support for children who have special educational needs. This is a key factor in the excellent progress made by this group of children in improving their social, communication and physical skills.

**The achievement of pupils is outstanding**

- Children start in the nursery with a range of developing skills and knowledge. Most are at an earlier stage of development than is typical for their age. A substantial proportion of the children, including those who have disabilities or special educational needs, are at very immature stages of development.
- Children make rapid progress in all of the areas of learning. By the time they leave, the skills and knowledge of a large majority of the children are now typical for their age group and they are very well prepared for the Reception class in primary schools. An increasing proportion of the most-able children are doing even better than this, especially in their communication skills and their personal, social and emotional development. All of the children make great gains in confidence and in their extremely positive attitudes to learning.
- Children with special educational needs make excellent progress in relation to their abilities and starting points. The support they receive in nursery often helps to narrow or even, sometimes, close the gaps between their achievement and that of the other children.
- Children do extremely well in developing their personal and social skills. Staff encourage them to try to do things for themselves. They respond well to this, tidying up at the end of sessions, learning to fasten up their coats and put on wellingtons to go outside. For some children, this is very challenging, but with support, encouragement and praise they are learning to persevere and succeed.
- Very well-designed programmes of support for children who are at an early stage of learning English are having a very positive impact and helping children to develop their communication skills in their home language as well as in their new language.
- The nursery gives careful attention to supporting children's physical development and co-ordination. For example, balance trail activities in the outdoor area are used very well to help children to take risks safely and successfully and this is helping children to build their confidence and skills.

## 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> | 119091                |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Blackburn with Darwen |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 448060                |

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> | 66                        |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body        |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Mark Hamlin               |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Hilda Harries             |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 29 February 2012          |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01254 263312              |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | Not applicable            |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | ashworth@blackburn.gov.uk |



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