

Bacup Nursery School

Cowtoot Lane, Bacup, Lancashire, OL13 8EF

Inspection dates 2–3 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
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.

- The headteacher is highly committed to maintaining and improving the high standard of children’s personal development and achievement. Her passion for excellence and drive to make sure the school continues to improve is shared by the governing body.
- School leaders have an in depth understanding of how well the school is doing as a result of ongoing review and evaluation of all aspects of the school’s work. As a result plans for further improvement are precise and accurate.
- Since the last inspection, improvements to the outdoor ‘forest school’ area and to the teaching of number and language skills have led to improvements in children’s achievement.
- Children are eager to come to nursery and behave extremely well. They show a strong sense of security in the welcoming and safe environment provided.
- Teaching is of high quality. Staff have an excellent knowledge of children’s abilities and are highly skilled at promoting their learning.
- The outdoor ‘forest school’ area provides a highly stimulating environment in which children learn extremely well. This area is not currently used as much as it could be to develop and enhance children’s learning.
- Children make rapid progress from their starting points in all areas of learning. By the time they leave nursery, they are very well prepared for the Reception class in their next school.
- Parents have extremely positive views about the nursery and are delighted that their children can come here. They feel valued as partners in their children’s learning and are very happy with the progress their children make whilst at nursery.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a range of sessions or part sessions, one of which was jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, the headteacher, other staff and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the nursery's information on children's current progress, planning and checks on the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- The inspector took into account 10 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). She spoke to several parents when they brought their children to the nursery and spoke to one parent by telephone. The inspector also took account of the school's most recent questionnaire to parents and the responses to staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Elaine White, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized nursery school. Children attend part time, mainly for morning or afternoon sessions, although children can attend for a full day. Almost all children attending are of White British heritage.
- The school is situated in a building shared with Buttercups Club Ltd private day nursery, which provides wrap-around care for children attending Bacup Nursery. The day nursery is subject to separate inspection and reports of its quality can be found on the website www.ofsted.gov.uk.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational need is below average. There are no children on roll with a statement of special educational needs.
- The nursery works closely with another local nursery to share good practice.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise children's achievement even further through increased opportunities for children to develop their skills and learning in the outdoor 'forest school' area.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and her drive and commitment to excellence is shared by staff. Strong team work underpins the success of the school as all share the same high expectation for children's well-being and achievement.
- In their mission to ensure that what the school provides is of the best possible quality, school leaders have established systems to make sure that all aspects of the school's work are thoroughly reviewed and evaluated. As a result leaders have a highly accurate knowledge of how well the school is doing. Priorities for further improvement are based on this knowledge and ensure that the school continues to improve.
- High-quality teaching is sustained and improved through a rigorous performance management system which ensures that staff develop and build on their skills and expertise and outstanding quality teaching is sustained.
- Children's learning is very closely tracked so that any areas for improvement are swiftly identified and action taken. Children who join nursery with weaker skills in language development are provided with support to make sure that they catch up quickly.
- Middle leadership is extremely well developed as staff undertake training to increase their expertise. Staff have ownership of their areas of responsibility and know that their contributions are valued and supported. As a result middle leaders make an active contribution to the overall leadership of school and the impact of this is seen in terms of improvements to teaching and children's achievement in mathematics and literacy.
- The school's curriculum is varied and exciting. This sustains children's interest and promotes their rapid learning. Children take part in a broad range of activities that are closely related to their interests and ways of learning. They enjoy taking part in activities relating to familiar stories and experiences such as hatching chicks. Their experiences and learning are extended further through after-school sessions in the form of cookery, mathematics and creative clubs.
- All children are very positively included at the nursery. The school ethos of warm relationships, politeness, tolerance and respect for others means that all children have equal opportunity to succeed. Children learn to behave extremely well and to be kind and respectful to others. This helps to prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- Parents feel valued partners in their children's learning and achievement. Parents speak very highly of school and their children's progress. They are actively involved through sharing home activity packs with their children. Regular events held for parents to join in, such as curriculum trails, and a session about the nursery's 'forest school' are well attended and help to further develop this high-quality partnership.
- The school has robust safeguarding policies and procedures and statutory requirements are met. Staff are well trained and the school places a high priority on ensuring that children are kept safe.
- The local authority has confidence in the high-quality leadership of the school. It provides light touch support to this outstanding school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The experienced governing body is highly effective. Governors are very committed to sustaining school's high-quality provision. They are extremely knowledgeable about how well the school is doing, including the quality of teaching. They play an active part in evaluating the school through regular visits to school, for example, to observe teaching, and to carry out reviews of safeguarding and health and safety. They know about the link between performance management and how good or better teaching is rewarded. Governors ensure that finance is well managed to promote the best possible outcomes for children. They provide skilled challenge and support to the headteacher in making sure that the nursery sustains the high quality of its provision.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is outstanding. Children thoroughly enjoy coming to nursery, attend well, and are extremely well engaged in their learning.
- Children are very familiar with the well-established routines of the nursery, which help them to feel calm and secure. They sensibly line up to move to a different room or area for small group time.
- Staff have high expectations for children's good behaviour, which they respond to well. Children know about 'good sitting' and 'good listening'. They learn to manage their own feelings and behaviour well. A

good example of this was seen during a cooking activity when they patiently waited for their turn.

- Children are polite and show care for others as they help one another to fasten coats before going outside.

Safety

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding. Children show a strong sense of security in the welcoming nursery environment.
- Children show a high level of awareness of safety and they learn to manage risks well. This can be seen in the way they carry small branches in the 'forest school' area, balance on wooden planks and climb low-level tree branches.
- Staff are vigilant to develop children's awareness of how to keep themselves safe, for example explaining to children why they wear safety helmets when using bikes in the outdoor area.
- Parents report that the school keeps their children safe.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Staff have a warm, caring approach and build highly positive relationships with children. As a result children's confidence and self-esteem is extremely well developed.
- Staff know the children's skills and abilities very well. They have high expectations for children's learning and make sure that the activities provided are used very well to move children's learning forward. For example, children who are icing and decorating biscuits learn to follow a recipe and identify numbers on scales as they weigh out ingredients.
- An interesting and stimulating learning environment is provided by staff. Indoors, children enjoy selecting their own resources and exploring, for example, glitter, foam, water and sand. Children are challenged to find 10 Father Christmas figures in the sand and match them to the correct number cards. Outdoors, children benefit from a large, well equipped area where they develop many skills.
- The school's 'forest school' area has been recently developed and provides a very exciting area for children to explore the mud kitchen, trees, log seating areas and den areas. The school's evaluations show that children benefit greatly from their time using this area, particularly in terms of improving confidence, curiosity and independence. However, at present this area is used fully one day per week for a group of children. This means that it is not used as well as it could be to further enhance children's learning.
- Highly effective questioning skills ensure children's thinking and understanding is very well developed. For instance, children estimate how many play bricks they will be able to stack to make a tower in a certain amount of time. After building their tower they are questioned to count and think how many more or less than their estimate they have used.
- Staff skilfully follow children's interests in learning. Children comment that there is no frost left outside on a chilly afternoon so staff encourage them to go hunting for frost with magnifying glasses. When they find some they discuss how it looks and feels, and what happens to it when it melts.
- Children's understanding of books and stories is well developed. Children learn what the title and author of books are. For example, when reading the nativity story, staff made very good use of models of the characters, stable and animals to bring the story to life and reinforce children's understanding.
- Staff make excellent use of practical activities to develop children's problem-solving skills. Children find out how many of them can fit in a large cardboard box, whether they could fit into a smaller one and why. They then measure the box with a tape measure and are encouraged to think what they can do when the tape measure is too short.
- Staff develop children's speaking skills very well by talking with them and modelling new vocabulary. For example, when children talk about a Christmas bauble being like a mirror, staff introduce the word 'reflection'.
- Mathematical skills are taught very well as part of everyday activities. Children confidently count how many are present at group time and give out the correct number of sweets to each child when decorating biscuits.
- Staff provide a wealth of opportunities for children to make marks and learn to write. Children happily make lists in the role play home area, make marks in glitter and chalk on the outdoor playground. They learn to write their names and to identify the letter sounds that make up their names.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children join the nursery with a variety of skill levels. Many have weaker skills in speaking and their knowledge of people and communities. Children make rapid progress in learning in all areas and leave nursery very well prepared to start Reception classes.
- Children show a high level of confidence and independence. They confidently select their own activities and resources. They concentrate very well and work independently on creative work, mark making and using a computer to develop learning.
- Children show a keen interest in books and stories. They frequently choose books to look at independently. Children were seen to confidently share an information book about birds with staff and showed excitement as they found a picture they were looking for.
- Children learn initial letter sounds and are confident to identify the first letter of different animal names at small group time. They learn to understand that print has meaning as they follow a recipe.
- Progress is also very strong in mathematical development. Children develop confidence in counting to 10 and beyond, and develop ideas of simple addition and subtraction. Children can identify three dimensional shapes, such as a sphere, and use mathematical language to describe size or weight.
- The most able children achieve extremely well. They are challenged through staff's skilful questioning. Some children learn to read during their time in nursery.
- Children who are disabled or who have special educational needs are extremely well supported by staff to develop their learning. As a result they make outstanding progress along with their peers.
- Children show a high level of progress in their physical development: they use tweezers to carefully pick up small objects and hold mark making pens correctly. They run, jump and balance confidently in the outdoor area and use wheeled toys competently and safely.

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	119097
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	448108

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathleen Holt
Headteacher	Andrea Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2011
Telephone number	01706 873856
Fax number	01706 878852
Email address	head@bacup.lancs.sch.uk

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