

Ribblesdale Nursery School

Queens Road, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 1EL

Inspection dates

2–3 December 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children's achievement is good. They are well prepared for their next stage of education. As a result of good teaching, which effectively follows children's interests, good progress is made in their learning.
- Children thrive in this welcoming and caring school. Outstanding care and good support for individuals are reflected in children's strong sense of security. Children behave well and are keen to learn.
- Children with disabilities and those with special educational needs are extremely well supported and make good, and at times outstanding, progress.
- Children develop a keen enjoyment of outdoor play as they enthusiastically explore the nursery's 'forest' and garden. They demonstrate an excellent awareness of how to keep safe.
- Staff have a strong commitment to meeting the needs of the individual. They recognise that some families require extra support and work very closely with the children's centre, as well as outside agencies, to provide this.
- Parents rate the school highly and trust it. Comments such as, 'my child wants to come even when she isn't well' typify the enjoyment it gives to their children.
- Outstanding leadership by the headteacher, with the good support of the deputy headteacher and governing body, has reversed a dip in school performance and gives the school a very clear direction for the future.
- Improvements to the way teachers plan for children and the accuracy of assessment give more precise information to staff to help children do even better.
- Teaching is very well led, staff are confident and dedicated. This shows in the way they constantly seek ways to improve. The school is very well placed to get better and better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are occasions when the most able children are not challenged enough when learning through play, so that they achieve as well as they can.
- Opportunities for children to develop early writing skills as part of play are not always encouraged enough.
- Parents could be further helped by the nursery to be involved in supporting their children's learning outside school and at home.

Information about this inspection

- Learning was observed on five occasions in the morning and afternoon sessions. These visits included joining children learning indoors and outdoors.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and two governors. A conversation was held with the special educational needs coordinator. A meeting was also held with a consultant employed by the local authority to give advisory support and guidance. In addition, a discussion took place with the extended services manager based in the children's centre.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's view of how well it is doing; its plans for improvement; information on children's progress and attainment; school policies; records relating to safeguarding and behaviour and teachers' planning of learning.
- Samples of children's work were scrutinised from their 'Learning Journeys' and information given to parents about their children's achievements was also considered.
- The opinions of parents were gathered from two meetings with a total of with five parents. There were insufficient responses on the online questionnaire (Parent View) to gain additional information.
- The views of staff were established by evaluating their responses to seven inspection questionnaires, as well as meeting with the staff team and talking with them throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a large nursery school. It provides government funded part-time nursery education for up to 100 children.
- Children enter the school in the term after their third birthday. Children join at three points in the year, which are the start of each term dependent on when they have their third birthday.
- During the time of the inspection, 47 children were attending.
- The vast majority of children are of White British background.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is typically above average.
- There have been staff changes since the previous inspection. A new headteacher was appointed just after the previous inspection in 2012. In September 2014 another headteacher took up post.
- The school is integrated with the Ribblesdale Children's Centre with which it shares accommodation and some staff. The childcare provision and children's centre were inspected separately. The reports are available on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Establish outstanding teaching so that children's achievement is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all staff refine their skills to consistently challenge all children, but particularly the most able, and develop their ability when problem solving, reasoning and investigating
 - enabling children to have more opportunities to develop early skills of writing as part of learning through play
 - developing the skills of staff to challenge children when learning through play by giving appropriate support and guidance that make the most of learning in all areas of development
 - securing in all staff a thorough knowledge of the best practice in early years teaching by sharing the best practice within the school and learning from other schools.
- Establish effective strategies to help parents to become successful partners in their children's education and thereby help their children to do even better.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The exceptional leadership qualities of the headteacher supported by a skilled deputy headteacher and a strong governing body are bringing about significant improvements to the school after a period of staff changes. There was a dip in the school's performance and in staff morale, which the leadership of the new headteacher has reversed. She is skilled in nurturing and supporting staff so that they feel confident to do their jobs well. This results in high staff morale and sense of ambition shared by all. Decisive actions are improving teaching and rapidly accelerating children's progress. The headteacher, supported by a strong and determined governing body, has created a recipe for continued success and sustained improvement.
- A sense of urgency permeates all that goes on to make sure that each child gets the best education they can. The effective management of staff makes sure that the efforts of staff are applauded and best practice encouraged while identifying where skills can be further developed through continued professional development. Developing links with other nursery schools are beginning to help staff to share the very best practice in other schools, as well as enabling staff within the school to learn from one another.
- The school accurately evaluates its strengths and areas for improvement that are evident in a sharp and pertinent school improvement plan.
- Swift actions have secured an accurate and reliable system for assessing the progress of all children. The thoroughness of the systems now in place enables any gaps in children's performance to be identified and closed. Leaders accurately evaluate the performance of different groups of children and put effective action into place to address any identified differences. For example, there is currently a focus on raising the achievement of the most able children.
- The school promotes equality of opportunities well. Staff work effectively to promote a positive stance where differences are recognised and celebrated. As a result, children from all backgrounds get on well together. Children learn about their wider community and are introduced to the customs, faiths and lifestyles in the school's community. Children celebrate the Christian festival of Christmas by participating in a nativity play and singing carols and also experience the celebration of the Muslim festival of Eid. As a result, they are being well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum provides a broad and interesting range of experiences which are based on children's interests and needs. The introduction of the Forest Garden has enhanced this provision. The outdoors provides a stimulating area in which all areas of learning are effectively developed. The indoor environment is generally well organised and provides well for the development of children's speaking and reading skill in particular. The promotion of early writing is not as effectively organised or inviting, however, with the result that children do not always take opportunities to explore mark making alongside other learning activities.
- Excellent partnerships with the children's centre and staff from health and educational support services contribute positively to the progress of children with disabilities and those with special educational needs. The links with the children's centre ensure swift transfer of information to nursery staff about children and their families. Effective communication with parents ensures that parents are well informed about their children's progress but they are not encouraged to be involved as much they could be in supporting their child's learning out of school and at home.
- The local authority knows the school very well. It supports the headteacher and staff in their work and offers guidance to the governors at important times, for example, during the recent appointment of the new headteacher.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body is influential in shaping the school's direction and holding it to account through good support and challenge. It understands the school very well because of the expertise its members have and through regular visits to the school. The governing body has rigorous procedures to ensure the health, safety and well-being of staff and children. The effective safeguarding procedures fully meet government requirements and are regularly reviewed.
- The improved assessment data provided by the school give a clear picture of how well children are progressing. Governors analyse the data to establish where children can do better. This knowledge helps the governors to set relevant and aspirational targets for the headteacher's performance. A close eye is kept on finances and where possible, long-term planning occurs. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching. They have a good understanding of arrangements to check the performance of staff and how performance is linked to salaries. Governors are currently seeking ways of securing the school's financial stability given a recent drop in the number of children on roll.

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

- The behaviour of children is good. Children have positive relationships with staff and one another. From the moment they arrive, the school instils in them the essential routines of the nursery, which contribute to their good behaviour. There is very rarely any aggressive behaviour and everyone gets along very well. Just occasionally, individuals are not motivated by the activities on offer if there is not a clear purpose to them and this can result in individuals being restless and interfering with others at play.
- Children respond well to expectations that they take responsibility and show initiative, for example, by tidying up. When given the chance, children like to contribute to planning their own learning, but this is not consistently available to them. Children cooperated well as they explored the way cars move down slopes.
- Children become budding ecologists by exploring the link between the earth and their own lives. They plant vegetables in the nursery garden, which they enjoy eating later. Their experiences in the outdoors through visits to the 'forest' help children to interact with nature and develop an awareness of its importance, fun and beauty.

Safety

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding. Regular training in all aspects of child protection, first aid and safeguarding ensures that all staff are aware of the statutory requirements for these areas.
- Parents who gave an opinion were eager to show their confidence that children are safe and very well cared for at all times. Children feel at ease in telling any of the adults if they do not like the way another child is acting towards them. Children are encouraged to be adventurous in using the climbing frames or running up and down steps safely. Experiences outdoors as part of their forest-based learning help them to develop their capacity to take risks within a safe environment.
- Children are given excellent routines that enable them to stay safe and healthy; they become accustomed to washing their hands after toileting and before eating.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Children benefit from the very dedicated and caring staff team. The teachers and practitioners help the children to learn at a good and accelerating rate. Where learning is most effective, children's capabilities are understood well and they are given questions set at just the right level to develop their learning. This provides challenge for children, including the most able. In a minority of sessions, chances to develop and extend learning, particularly in problem solving, reasoning and investigations, are missed, with the result that learning is not as good.
- Children respond well to opportunities to make choices in their learning by having access to a wide range of activities linked to a common theme or context. For example children are motivated to explore ways of making bird feeders outdoors. Effective use of praise and encouragement successfully develops children's confidence and self-belief and promotes their good behaviour. At times, children are not given the right sort of encouragement, suitably challenging interventions and support to make sure learning is always as good as it can be. For example, during role play in the home corner, a lack of adult intervention held back the learning possibilities for some.
- Children respond very positively to their 'key worker', who knows them well. When working with their groups, children are effectively encouraged to improve their speaking skills and are skilfully encouraged to share with the group what they have been involved in during the session. Children make the most rapid progress when part of their group led by their key worker.
- Children thrive on opportunities to develop their physical development. Children beam with excitement as they take part in the 'Play dough Disco' in which they dance to music as they pummel and shape balls of play dough. At times, children make marks and attempt to create letters and sounds but opportunities to do so are not consistently available. Children are regularly attracted to the reading areas in the room, role-playing the events of books such as 'The Gruffalo' using puppets of the characters. In so doing, they improve their confidence to speak and extend their vocabulary.
- Staff have worked very hard to improve the way children are assessed and tracked. Improvements in planning by staff enable the needs of each child to be identified and action taken to meet the needs of

different ages and abilities. Children with disabilities and those with special educational needs benefit from outstanding support, so that they are fully included in all that goes on in the nursery. Some children, particularly the most able, however, could learn more quickly. While they make good progress, which is rapidly getting faster, there are times when their learning is not as fast as it could be.

- Good use of children's 'Learning Journeys' enables the sharing and celebration of children's learning and progress with parents. The quality varies, however, in terms of how they help children to identify the skills they have mastered and particular targets for them to work towards.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enjoy their learning and are eager to attend the nursery. Most enter the school with skills typical for their age, but with a weakness in their communication and language. By the time they transfer to primary school, the children's skills are currently above those typical for their age. This represents good progress.
- Most children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and communication and language skills. Children's self-confidence and motivation in learning benefit from their experiences in the outdoor Forest School garden. Children are involved in a host of stimulating activities that captivate them when visiting the nearby 'forest'. They develop physical skills such as whittling twigs and balancing as they learn to climb boulders with adult supervision. Their curiosity is sparked by opportunities to set out on expeditions in which they roll back logs to hunt for insects, worms and other mini beasts.
- Children learn to solve problems, as they decide how much wrapping paper they will need to wrap a Christmas present, and which is the best way to construct a ramp to test their cars. They make good progress in learning to use mathematical language as they describe the size of their presents and the length of paper needed. Much of their mathematical learning is successfully achieved by discussions with staff who make timely interventions to draw the children's attention to key words and ideas such as recognising numbers, comparing sizes of objects and giving the key words for shape.
- Children develop increasing confidence in speaking and listening. They become confident to express their ideas and thoughts as they contribute in small-group settings. Children show enthusiasm for their learning when they engage in activities which are interesting and meaningful to them. For example, they enjoyed making shapes from play dough linked to sounds connected with the letter 'b'.
- The proportion of children showing confidence in reading, and in linking the letters with sounds increases quickly. Children make good progress in developing writing skills, although there are not always enough opportunities to develop mark making. They make best progress when activities are linked to real life, for example making notes in an office or creating cards to send to mum.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs, are encouraged to develop good levels of independence, influencing how, what and where they play, and learning through varied and good quality sensory experiences. These children are well supported with activities tailored to their needs and they receive effective guidance from specialist staff.
- The progress of the most able children is good but is occasionally hampered when children are playing because the activities are not always challenging enough to sustain their concentration and there are not suitable interventions from adults to extend their thinking further.

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	119089
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	448105

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	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michelle Allanson
Headteacher	Sue Allan
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2011
Telephone number	01200 423672
Fax number	01200 458277
Email address	head@ribblesdale-nur.lancs.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

