

# Longshaw Nursery School

Crosby Road, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 3NF

## Inspection dates

17–18 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- The school has serious weaknesses because governors have failed to ensure that suitable, stable leadership arrangements are in place. The school continues to run on a day-to-day basis due to the dedication of the lead teacher.
- Governors have focused on improvements to the childcare centre at the expense of improvements to the nursery.
- Governors are trying to lead the school but do not have the skills to do so.
- There is no shared vision. Leaders and governors do not have common goals. As a result, capacity for further improvement is poor.
- The achievements of boys lags behind that of girls.
- The most able pupils are not routinely challenged to excel in reading.
- Improvements to the quality of teaching have not been sufficiently rapid. The areas for improvement from the previous inspection have not been addressed adequately.
- Strategies to check improvements to school are weak. The plans for school improvement which are in place for teaching and learning do not focus on children's outcomes. There are no plans in place to improve leadership and management, staffing or financial management.
- Background checks on the suitability of staff to work with children had not all been completed at the start of the inspection.
- Financial information is unclear. There is no information to show that governors consider the nursery school budget carefully.

### The school has the following strengths

- Under the strong direction of the lead teacher, the nursery runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Children enjoy attending and parents are very happy with the work of the school.
- Teaching, under the direction of the lead teacher, is good. As a result, children make good progress.
- The behaviour of children is good. Children show care and respect for one another and for adults. Relationships are strong between children and adults in the school.
- Well-managed provision for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that these children make strong progress.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

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

- Strengthen leadership and management, and therefore the capacity to improve, by:
  - as a matter of urgency, appointing a person to fulfil the role of the headteacher or equivalent
  - as part of any review of governance, ensuring that governors are clear about their statutory duties and hold leaders to account
  - using the wealth of information about the school to produce and then follow an improvement plan which focuses on leadership and management, staffing and finance
  - ensuring that improvements to teaching and learning focus on children's outcomes
  - ensuring that members of the governing body discharge their financial duties more effectively so that financial information is clear and understood by key leaders
  - considering the financial situation of the school more carefully.
- Improve the effectiveness of school leaders in increasing the rate of improvement in teaching and, consequently, in children's progress by:
  - improving the skills of staff and governors to evaluate accurately the impact of the work of the school on children's achievement
  - measuring the impact of the school's work using information about children's outcomes
  - ensuring that checks on the school's work are frequent enough to identify slow improvement quickly.
- Improve outcomes for boys in reading and writing by:
  - providing more opportunities to write in different areas of the classroom which appeal to boys
  - providing imaginative reading opportunities which entice boys to read.
- Ensure that the most able children are challenged consistently in reading.

An external review of governance should be undertaken, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Following the departure of the acting headteacher in 2016, the lead teacher has brought stability and confidence to the staff and the school community. She has ensured that the day-to-day operation of the school is smooth and that children benefit from effective teaching each day. However, the quality of leadership of the school has declined since the previous inspection. The school does not meet the requirement to have a headteacher in place.
- Governors have not made a decision about the future leadership of the school and no firm plans are in place to recruit someone in the role of headteacher or equivalent. As a result, staff do not fully understand their responsibilities and some statutory duties have not been fulfilled. Governors have tried to take on some leadership roles. This is hampering further progress.
- At the start of the inspection, some checks on new members of staff had not been carried out. Leaders carried these out during the inspection. This means that leaders are now assured that staff are suitable to work in school. Nonetheless, this tardiness in meeting statutory requirements is symptomatic of the endemic weaknesses in governance.
- At the start of the inspection, the website did not provide the required information. Some policies were missing and there was no report on the school's work to support children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Governors had not ensured that the information about how the school has spent the early years pupil premium was up to date. There was little information relating to the curriculum. As a result, the area identified at the previous inspection to improve the quality of information for parents on the website has not been remedied.
- Improvement planning is weak. The school has identified some improvements that need to be made in relation to teaching. However, the specific desired impact of each of these improvements on children's achievement is not clear. Leaders, including governors, are therefore unable to check the effectiveness of these developments.
- Financial information is unclear. There is no information about governors' decisions relating to the budget for the nursery school. Members of the governing body have not discharged their core duties around finance effectively. A symptom of this weakness is the lead teacher's limited knowledge of the school's budget, which hampers her ability to manage the school's resources efficiently.
- Systems are in place to check on the performance of teachers. However, governors have not ensured that suitable performance management arrangements are in place for the lead teacher. This is the result of the lack of clear leadership and weak governance.
- The lead teacher has maintained the quality of teaching in the nursery school. She is responsible for the planning, assessment and monitoring of teaching and learning. As a result of the good teaching children receive, outcomes continue to be good.

- The lead teacher supports the other teacher in school well. She leads by example and provides relevant training for the staff in the nursery school.
- The lead teacher has ensured that children receive a broad and balanced curriculum that reflects all areas of the early years framework.
- Support for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. This aspect of the school is managed very well. The lead teacher monitors children's welfare and achievement closely, and any additional needs are identified quickly. The lead teacher works well with outside agencies to make sure that other adults receive good guidance on how to support this group of children. The additional funding the school receives for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is spent well.
- The early years pupil premium is spent carefully. The lead teacher quickly identifies where additional support is needed for these children. Adults provide individual and small-group support where necessary, including for the most able children.
- British values are promoted well. The lead teacher plans effectively for this. As a result, children show good levels of respect and tolerance for one another. They understand the basic rules of democracy, for example when voting for the snack they most wanted the next day.
- Parents who chose to complete the inspection questionnaire or spoke to the inspector were pleased with the school. Comments were particularly supportive about the caring and nurturing approach of the staff.

### **Governance of the school**

- The members of the governing body have given too much of their time and attention to developing the childcare setting attached to the school. Insufficient focus has been placed on the nursery school. Governors have not made the responsibilities of staff clear, including the role of the lead teacher. This oversight has had a negative impact on the progress of the nursery school since the last inspection.
- Governors do not use their knowledge of the school to produce improvement plans to address all the important areas of the school. There is no strategic planning in place for leadership and management, finance and staffing. The improvement plans for teaching and learning do not focus on children's outcomes.
- Governors have not reached a decision about the future leadership of the school and no firm plans are in place to recruit someone into the role of headteacher. As a result, lines of accountability are unclear and there have been several oversights of statutory duties.
- Governors have put in place a lead teacher with responsibility for teaching and learning. However, they have not involved her in establishing a clear strategic direction for the school. This has slowed progress. Governors do not ensure that the performance of the lead teacher is monitored.
- Governors want the nursery school to succeed. They receive good-quality information from the lead teacher and discuss the areas identified to improve teaching. They are

knowledgeable about the quality of teaching in the nursery and are keen to develop this further.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Adults know and understand the procedures to keep children safe. They recognise potential signs of abuse and are vigilant.
- Records relating to keeping children safe are clear and managed well. However, because of a lack of clear leadership, some safeguarding checks had not been carried out at the start of the inspection. The situation was rectified during the inspection.
- Key staff are appropriately trained. However, some records relating to staff training could not be located.
- Through the curriculum and discussions, staff make children aware of the importance of keeping themselves safe, for example when using equipment.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The lead teacher plans effectively for all groups of children, including the most able. She uses her knowledge of the children and the information from assessments in learning journeys to inform this planning.
- Adults' use of questioning to check children's understanding has improved since the previous inspection. Adults follow up on children's responses to find out more about what children understand. However, staff do not consistently give children enough time to think and respond to questions.
- Adults model language well. They reinforce correct language when interacting with the children. For example, while making a train track with a group of children, one adult reinforced the children's understanding of 'longer', 'more' and 'too many'.
- The indoor and outdoor environments encourage children to learn and explore. Resources are selected carefully and are easily accessible. There are opportunities to read, write and develop number skills within the indoor environment. However, few boys choose to read or write without adult direction.
- Children are given opportunities to practise new skills and abilities through regular reinforcement of learning. For example, children were taught how to mix colours as part of an adult-led session. Adults then set up equipment so that the children could continue to experiment with this as part of their own learning.
- Adults use their good subject knowledge, particularly of phonics, to support children. As a result, little learning time is lost and adults maximise learning opportunities. Children are encouraged to persevere with tasks and to sustain their play. As a result, children remain engaged in tasks and explore learning thoroughly.
- Children are excited to learn because of the fun activities on offer. They are keen to explore and find out more about the world around them. Adults help children to follow their own lines of investigation and exploration. For example, the inspector observed a group of boys making a swing for their small toy people. They were unsure how to

make it swing. The teaching assistant asked them several challenging questions about how this could be done. This interaction kept the boys' attention and led them to consider possible solutions. However, at times, the structure of adult-directed learning is not clear and learning slows.

- All children are given equal opportunities to take part and succeed in learning. Learning is structured to take account of the differing needs of the children.
- Parents receive regular communication from the online assessment system. They value this and say that it helps them to support their children's learning at home. Parents contribute to their children's assessment and are encouraged to comment on learning within the classroom.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote children's personal development and welfare is good.
- Children skip happily into nursery. Parents do not stay long because children settle quickly.
- Children want to learn and to share their successes. They were happy to show the inspector what they were doing and to explain what they were going to do next. As a consequence of these positive attitudes, children concentrate on their learning and this has a positive impact on their progress.
- Children care for one another, and the opinion of their friends matters to them. They are happy to compliment and support each other.
- Children are safe in this caring environment. All adults know the children well and demonstrate high levels of care and respect for all children. Children know who their key person is, and adults have established good relationships with the children.
- All adults promote independence. They support children to take care of their own needs. Children are encouraged to put their own coats on and to tidy up after themselves.
- The monthly 'café' gives children opportunities to understand the importance of healthy eating as well as developing social and mathematical skills. For example, children were taught how to use a knife safely to butter crackers. When they had finished eating, they were given money and asked to 'pay' for their food. The most able children were given a mixture of one and two pence coins to pay with.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Adults encourage children to think about their own and other children's actions and the effect these actions have on others.
- Because of the children's strong personal development and their positive attitudes to learning, they are prepared well for their next steps in education. Close links have been established with the nearby infant school, which the children visit regularly. This ensures that the transition to their primary school is smooth.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is good.
- Children show a good level of respect for adults and for one another. There are few instances of poor behaviour and, where there are, adults manage these sensitively so that they are not repeated.
- Children respond well to adults. Children change over from one activity to another in a smooth and orderly way because of the routines adults have established. At times, communication between adults is slow, so that instructions are not relayed quickly enough to children. This results in confusion, with some children finishing their activity while others continue working.
- Children enjoy nursery. They say that it 'is fun' and that they have lots of friends. Parents comment that their children are happy and want to attend.
- Overall, attendance levels are similar to those seen at the previous inspection. Adults remind parents of the importance of their child's attendance whenever possible, including through newsletters. However, leaders have not been imaginative in their approach to improving attendance. They have not looked at approaches which would encourage parents to send their children to nursery more regularly. This area for development from the previous inspection has not been tackled well.
- There are times when children do not look after equipment as well as they should. The lead teacher says that books are not put outside for children to read because children do not look after them.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Children who have attended the childcare setting start with skills and abilities broadly typical for their age. Some children start with skills and abilities below this.
- The school's records of achievement, children's learning journeys and the inspector's observations of what children can do confirm that the majority of children now have appropriate skills and knowledge for their age. Some are exceeding these. This represents good progress over the year across all areas of learning.
- Many children have learned to communicate well for their age on a personal and social level. They are learning to recognise letter sounds and numbers and they are gaining control over equipment and materials. This means that children are well placed to start the Reception Year in primary school.
- Longshaw Nursery School's close attention to children's personal and social development has a good impact on children's outcomes. By the time they leave, children have learned to choose and make decisions for themselves. They are creative and can explore their ideas. They have acquired good concentration skills and are motivated to try hard.
- Children, including those in receipt of the early years pupil premium, make good progress in all areas of learning. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the swift identification of any additional needs and the tailored support they receive. Children who have speech and language

difficulties make particularly good progress because of the close links made with specialist services.

- The most able children do not make as much progress as other children in some areas. They make less progress with reading and do not always reach the higher developmental levels of which they are capable.
- Outcomes for girls are higher than for boys. This is because adults do not provide activities which entice boys to read and write. No boys wanted to read with the inspector. The outdoor environment lacks exciting opportunities to read and write.
- Children enjoy listening to stories. They listen attentively and understand that it is the print that we read. Children can talk about characters in stories. For example, when listening to a story about a crocodile, they could say why the other animals might be afraid of this character.

## School details

Unique reference number	119084
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10032225

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sean Rogers
Lead teacher	Lisa Wade
Telephone number	01254 698832
Website	<a href="http://www.longshawnurseryschoolandchildcarecentre.ik.org">www.longshawnurseryschoolandchildcarecentre.ik.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@longshawnursery.blackburn.sch.uk">office@longshawnursery.blackburn.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	30 April – 1 May 2014

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum on its website.
- This is an average-sized nursery school. It is staffed by one full-time teacher and one part-time teacher and four early years workers.
- The nursery school provides 80 part-time places for children in morning and afternoon sessions.
- There are few children from minority ethnic backgrounds. However, the proportion of children who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language is increasing.
- The proportion of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that seen nationally.

- Longshaw Nursery shares its site with Longshaw Childcare Centre. The children's centre is inspected separately.
- The nursery has close links with a neighbouring infant school.
- Since the previous inspection, the acting headteacher has left. There is no headteacher currently in post.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector held meetings with the lead teacher, governors, a link adviser and the head of service from the local authority. Informal discussions were held with parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning across the nursery school. Joint observations were carried out with the lead teacher.
- The inspector spoke to children and listened to them read.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, reviews on how well the school is doing, plans for the future, information on children's outcomes and reviews of the quality of teaching.
- The inspector took account of comments made by seven parents, given through Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Tanya Hughes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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