

# INSPECTION REPORT

**TURNCROFT NURSERY SCHOOL**

DARWEN

LEA area: Blackburn with Darwen

Unique reference number: 119099

Headteacher: Mrs P. Rudd

Reporting inspector: Michael Hewlett  
1569

Dates of inspection: Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> June – Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2000

Inspection number: 190081

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Highfield Road Darwen, Lancs.
Postcode:	BB3 2DN
Telephone number:	01254 701534
Fax number:	01254 701534
Appropriate authority:	Blackburn with Darwen Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Bent
Date of previous inspection:	21 <sup>st</sup> October 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Michael Hewlett	Registered inspector
Jane Hughes	Lay inspector

The inspection contractor was:

**MICHAEL HEWLETT**  
**Thatchways**  
**Elworth Avenue**  
**Widnes**  
**Cheshire WA8 9JW**

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Turncroft Nursery School is an average sized nursery school providing part-time education for 100 children aged between three and four years. Since the last inspection, there has been an increase in admission numbers to meet local needs. No children have statements of special educational need but ten are identified by the school as requiring additional support. Seven of the current intake come from homes where English is not the first language. Most of the children come from the immediate area of the school. They live in a mixture of owner occupied and rented accommodation of different types. The school uses the local authority screening test to check children's attainment on entry. Increasing numbers are arriving with limited speaking skills but overall, attainment is in line with that expected of children of this age.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very good school with some outstanding features. Children achieve standards which are above average in all areas of learning and they make good progress during their time in nursery. This can be attributed to the high levels of very good teaching, effective management and the strong sense of teamwork. The school is very well led and provides a very good basis for children's future learning. The school does not have a delegated budget and, therefore, no judgement is made about value for money. The very many significant strengths of the school far outweigh those areas that could be improved.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards are high in all areas of learning.
- The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school and this enables children to learn quickly.
- The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and governors.
- Children have very good attitudes to school and are developing positive values. They show high regard for one another. The quality of relationships established between children and with adults is a strength.
- Staff are very committed to the well being of the children and pastoral care is of a very high standard.
- The school has established very strong links with parents and the local community.

#### **What could be improved**

- The level of financial information included in the development plan and ways of checking the effectiveness of spending decisions are not sufficiently detailed.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1996. Since then it has made good progress in many areas. High standards have been maintained in the intervening years and some areas have been improved. The level of very good teaching is much higher. Children's work in the outside area has improved greatly now that the grounds have been imaginatively redeveloped. A much better range of equipment is available for them to use and the curriculum is more interesting. Children have greater access to computers now. They are more confident when they use them and staff have provided a better range of software which is suitable for children of this age. The school has set clear and realistic targets for the future and is well placed to make further improvements.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about the achievements of children in relation to the national early learning goals by the time they leave the school.

<b>Performance in:</b>		<b>Key</b>
language and literacy	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	B	
personal and social development	B	
other areas of the curriculum	B	

The majority of children are likely to achieve higher than average standards by the time they leave nursery. Standards are consistently high across all areas of learning. This is because children are very keen to learn, they are encouraged to be independent and are very well taught by staff who understand their individual needs. Children with special educational needs are very well supported and make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Personal development is very good. Children collaborate readily in activities; they are beginning to appreciate each others' needs.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Children really enjoy coming to school; this is reflected in their very good levels of attendance. Children are confident and chatty and participate eagerly in group work and purposeful play.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good both inside and outdoors. Children understand the high expectations set by staff and are familiar with the daily routines.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. Relationships are a strength and the school functions as a very happy community.
Attendance	Attendance levels are very good for nursery age children and are consistently above 90%.

These very positive aspects of the children's response are firmly linked to the very strong role models provided by the headteacher and staff. Children approach activities with great purpose and increasing levels of independence.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	
Lessons seen overall	Very good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The overall quality of teaching is very good. Almost six out of ten lessons observed were judged to be very good. Most of the remainder, almost three out of ten lessons, were good. None were judged to be unsatisfactory. This high quality teaching is seen across all areas of learning but teaching of language, literacy and mathematics is particularly effective. Teachers demonstrate very good knowledge of the learning needs of nursery children. The teaching is so good because all staff combine to prepare thoroughly and imaginatively, set demanding work for the children to do and they form very good relationships.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a very good range of stimulating learning activities both indoors and out. The curriculum is well planned and this helps to support the teaching by making sure that all children have equal access. Visitors to the school are well used to extend children's understanding of the wider world.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision is made for children who have special educational needs. The support offered by the school is well organised and helps to ensure that children make consistently good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Children learning English as an additional language are also well supported.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision overall, with very good provision for children's moral and social development. Staff provide a clear moral framework for the children to follow.
How well the school cares for its pupils	All staff are very conscientious in their duty of care; all aspects of provision for children's well-being are very good.

There are very effective arrangements to meet the needs of all children and staff are very careful to ensure individual requirements are considered and addressed. The school pays particular attention to ensuring children experience a range of group sizes which prepares them very well for primary school.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The quality of the leadership and management of the school is very good. The headteacher has created a positive ethos within the school and provides a clear vision for future development. There is a commitment amongst all staff to achieving high standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors play an active part in the life and work of the school. They discharge all their statutory responsibilities and are very effective in promoting the school's interests. They visit regularly and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good systems are in place which ensure that the school regularly reviews its own performance. Children's progress is regularly checked and detailed evaluations are completed. These are well used to monitor the effectiveness of the teaching and measure how much children are learning.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of the available resources. However, financial information in the development plan and systems for checking the effectiveness of spending decisions are not detailed enough. The school has been very successful in attracting additional resources through grants and fundraising activities.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards are high and the teaching is good</li> <li>• Children like school and they behave well</li> <li>• Self confidence and independence are encouraged</li> <li>• Children make good progress</li> <li>• Staff are approachable and friendly. They respond positively to any concerns that are raised and are keen to help</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside of lessons</li> </ul>

Inspection findings agree with the parents' positive views. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school which enables a very good dialogue to exist between school and home. Very good quality written information is provided about the school and children's detailed Records of Achievement are available to parents throughout the year. Very effective personal contact between staff and parents is routine and ensures problems are quickly solved and individual needs of parents and children are sensitively met. A small number of parents indicated in their completed questionnaires that they would welcome a range of activities outside of lessons. The school provides a range of activities similar to that found in most nursery schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Standards are high in all areas of learning**

(1) Children arrive in nursery with attainment levels which are average. By the time they leave, they are likely to achieve standards which are above the national average. Their learning is very effective in all the areas of learning and this results in them making good progress. Overall, these are better standards than when the school was last inspected.

(2) Standards are high because the teaching is so good, the curriculum is very well organised and the children are keen to learn.

(3) Early language skills are given a high priority by all staff. Children are able to practise their writing through a range of opportunities. A very good example of this is the way in which children were encouraged to write captions to describe their pictures. Many were able to write their words clearly and they took a great deal of time and care to ensure that their finished “product” was the best they could achieve.

(4) The school provides an exciting and stimulating environment for the children. Most are able to recognise their own names and they have a great love of books. Most are able to talk confidently about books they have enjoyed and what made them special. Indeed, their ability to talk with confidence and use an increasingly mature range of words is especially noteworthy. For example, during a story time, children listened attentively to an adult who read “The Tiger who came to tea” to them. They were able to make predictions about what might come next and describe accurately their feelings and emotions if they were in such frightening situations. Many could also explain how the reader of the story built up the tension by saying the words in a particular way.

(5) Mathematics is also well represented in the curriculum and children achieve well. This is because they are given tasks which staff plan carefully to meet their individual needs. Children enjoy their lessons but tasks are demanding and they are expected to work at a fast pace. This helps them to make quicker progress in their learning. A good example of this was seen when a group, working with an adult, was asked to complete jigsaws of increasing difficulty. They worked quickly and accurately and were given more complex pictures to complete when it became apparent to the adult that they were able to cope. Children were able to recognise patterns in the jigsaws and talk about shapes they knew, using the correct mathematical language. They were then able to apply what they had learnt in other practical situations. For example, the same group built models using large wooden blocks and understood that the foundations needed to be solid and regular in shape if it was to remain stable.

#### **The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school and this enables children to learn quickly.**

(6) The quality of the teaching shows an improvement from when the school was last inspected. Almost sixty per cent of the teaching is now very good.

(7) Teachers and nursery nurses have a good knowledge of the curriculum for under fives and this enables them to plan a good range of stimulating activities that captures children’s enthusiasm and makes them keen to learn. Activities are practically based and the weakness identified at the time of the last inspection in the use of information technology has been tackled successfully. Staff are much more confident and this helps them to guide the children successfully, using a better range of software.

(8) Time is used well and sessions move at a brisk pace. An example of this is the way in which snacktime, an enjoyable social occasion, is also used to check on activities children have experienced during the session. Staff ask questions which encourage children to express themselves accurately and confidently. They are skilled at ensuring that every group member is able to make a worthwhile contribution. Features such as these contribute significantly to the high standards achieved and good progress made by the children.

(9) Staff are also confident enough to adapt their plans if the situation demands it. For example, a group using big blocks to construct models, completed their task successfully and quickly. The adult working with the group saw the mathematical opportunities available. She encouraged the group members to talk about the shapes they were using, decide which ones could offer more stability to their models and introduced a good variety of mathematical vocabulary into their discussions. When lessons proceed in this way, children's learning is more effective and they make better progress because the work is more closely matched to their individual needs and requirements. Another very positive feature of the best teaching is the high expectations that staff have for children to achieve and behave well. In one lesson, the teacher was working with a large group telling a story. Her descriptions and use of language held the group spellbound. She created a sense of anticipation which all the children enjoyed and encouraged them to predict which way the story would end. The skills of the teacher made sure that everyone took part and that children's understandable excitement did not slow their learning.

(10) Children's activities remain purposeful because the adults working with them carefully monitor what they are doing. They keep detailed records and note progress that is made so that the level of work can be adjusted in the future. Children with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language are very well taught. Lessons are carefully planned to suit their individual needs, often using resources which have been specially prepared for them.

### **The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and governors**

(11) The headteacher, staff and governors combine effectively to make sure that the school's agreed aims are reflected in its daily life. Their success in this area and the positive climate that has been created make a significant contribution to the high standards that are achieved. There is a commitment to enabling all children to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment levels and very good systems are in place to make sure this happens. The headteacher, using the school's agreed procedures, is actively involved in planning the work, checking it has been taught properly and then monitoring how much children have learnt.

(12) Another feature of the school's management style is that all staff feel confident to make a contribution when decisions are being made and know that their views and opinions will be valued and listened to. A good example of this is the way in which priorities are decided when the school development plan is constructed. Everyone is invited to contribute, the responses are debated and action plans carefully drawn up. The excellent development of the outdoor play area illustrates how the outcome of this process can be so successful. The provision for this area was criticised in the last inspection report but the school responded imaginatively. The headteacher was successful in attracting funds from various sources and then arranged for detailed plans to be drawn up. The result is a self contained, secure and stimulating area which allows children to explore the whole curriculum in an interesting way. Staff have established "trails" which children follow. In one example, a group led by an adult were able to identify some of the trees and shrubs that had been planted. Their learning was enhanced because they could apply their knowledge in a practical, first hand way. The governors of the school play a full and active part in its life. They visit regularly and are very supportive of the staff and children and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They achieve this by meeting regularly and organising visits to school in a structured way. A good example of this was seen when the chair of governors, who is also governor responsible for language and literacy, spent a morning observing children working in this area of the curriculum. He had a good understanding of

the policy and planning for this area, following a briefing by the co-ordinator and was able to discuss what he had seen with her. The visit was followed up when he then talked to the rest of the governors about his experience in school. Such a detailed understanding of the curriculum organisation and the way in which subjects are taught enables governors to have a strong evidence base when accounting for the performance of the school.

**Children have very good attitudes to school and are developing positive values. They show high regard for one another. The quality of relationships established between children and with adults is a significant strength.**

(13) The welcoming and cheerful atmosphere in the school helps children to make the most of the time they spend there; they really enjoy themselves. They become confident and eager learners who are just as happy working individually to create a picture of a lion or tiger as they are singing their way, enthusiastically, through an extensive repertoire of songs and rhymes with the rest of the school. They are eager to chat about their experiences and make the most of any opportunities to discuss their holidays or days out with their parents. Snacktime often provides a good opportunity for staff to chat informally with children about what they have been doing out of school or during the course of the session.

(14) Children are very familiar with the high behaviour standards set by staff. Individuals react immediately when they are quietly reminded that some types of behaviour are just not what is expected. Children are full of pride as they collect effort, behaviour and achievement certificates at the end of the day and show them eagerly to their parents. Children are learning to react appropriately in a variety of social settings: they let off steam outdoors on the wheeled vehicles but also play purposefully as they help to steer one another around the marked route. Many children capture great authenticity when playing in the role-play cafeteria. They know to put the “milk” back in the refrigerator and that the packet of frozen fish has to be stored in the freezer. Tea is very carefully served with a cup, saucer and teapot and a cheese sandwich painstakingly prepared for an eager customer. Every employee has their own “job” – waiter, cook, customer or cashier.

(15) There are high expectations from staff that the children can be trusted to behave and work sensibly. The well planned induction programme ensures children and parents have a clear understanding of the school’s philosophy. Children become self confident and independent learners during their time at Turncroft Nursery. They put on coats and aprons and tidy away at the sound of the bell. They give each other a helping hand without being asked. For example, during a whole school singing activity, most of the children were happily joining in with the actions to “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star”. One little girl however, got a bit lost and was not keeping up with the actions. Her neighbour gently took her hand, linked fingers and guided her actions to the end of the song and both ended up very happy. Children automatically say “please” and “thank you” to each other and to staff and routinely put their straws in milk cartons and the empty cartons in the bin at snacktime.

(16) Relationships between staff and children are very good; staff are kind and sensitive and children respond positively to their warmth. They always try their best and are encouraged by the very positive feedback they receive from adults in the school. Parents are very complimentary about the positive attitudes the school fosters and inspection findings confirm their views.

**Staff are very committed to the well being of the children and pastoral care is of a very high standard.**

(17) Procedures for child protection are very good and all the staff are very conscientious in their duty of care. Expectations are made very clear to parents and arrangements are well established. Very good attention is paid to all matters concerning health and safety and children are encouraged to follow basic hygiene rules; they do so automatically. Medical requirements are given careful attention and staff are kept fully informed of any concerns as they all work with each child at some stage.

(18) The school is extremely successful in meeting its clear Mission Statement to foster “loving, caring, growing, sharing, developing, nurturing and learning through your child, you and us”. Staff create a warm and very happy atmosphere in school where children feel secure and are surrounded by examples of their carefully displayed work. Staff value each child and encourage them all to develop their maximum potential during their time at the school. Staff are particularly considerate about the individual needs of each child. They provide everything a child requires to gain the most from each session with sensitive support for those who have special educational needs. Detailed tracking of individual children enables staff to target specific help and to tailor that help according to the ongoing needs of each child. Support from outside agencies is welcomed and recent links with the Speech Therapist have proved very beneficial to several children. All children attending the school benefit from the carefully considered and consistent approach used by all the staff. The headteacher ensures that above all, children experience a happy and purposeful learning environment in which they can develop socially and intellectually.

**The school has established very strong links with parents and the local community.**

(19) Parents are overwhelmingly positive in their views of the school. They feel very involved in their children’s education and feel well informed of the progress they make. They particularly appreciate the very detailed Records of Achievement compiled throughout the year. They enjoy coming into school and many spend time at the start and finish of a session looking around the classrooms or watching their children work and play.

(20) The headteacher is very keen to involve parents as much as possible in their children’s education and the school encourages parents to come in to help in the classrooms. There is recognition that many parents are unsure of how best to help their children’s learning and the headteacher has run an extremely successful “Parents as Educators” course this year. The parents who completed the course benefited enormously from the experience and have been able to apply what they have learnt to their own personal situation. Curriculum evenings to be held in the latter part of the year will consolidate this parental involvement even more. Staff make great efforts to ensure all parents are able to attend the various concerts the children perform – for example, there are four performances of the annual Christmas concert.

(21) Parents make a significant contribution to children’s learning through the fundraising they organise and the hard work they undertake on practical tasks around the school. An excellent example is the vastly improved outdoor learning environment which has been radically altered since the last inspection. Children are now reaping the benefits of seasonal trails around the grounds. During the inspection, a group followed a mathematics trail, identifying shapes, colours and numbers painted in murals on the walls and playground.

(22) The headteacher ensures the school is outward looking and establishes effective links with a large number of local schools and colleges. Many students attend the nursery on a variety of work placements. The children benefit from the fresh approaches they bring and staff are able to work with a number of education professionals. Particular attention is paid to the needs of local young mothers and

the headteacher meets regularly with them to discuss nursery education. A number of community members come into school to talk about various areas of expertise and to give the children an increasing understanding of the wider world. Visits to places such as Blackpool Zoo provide countless opportunities for the children to revisit such experiences in the many follow up, school-based activities such as painting and modelling. The school is certainly an ambassador for education in the local community and ensures no opportunities are missed to improve the contribution community members can make to children's learning.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**The level of financial information included in the development plan and ways of checking the effectiveness of spending decisions are not sufficiently detailed.**

(23) The school development plan is a much better document than the one in place when the school was last inspected. It contains greater detail and more people are involved in its production. All members of staff have a chance to make a contribution and this level of openness helps to build a strong sense of teamwork where everyone feels valued. Action plans list priorities to be achieved but too few of them are accurately costed. This makes it difficult to forward plan effectively or to work out how much some of the improvements will cost. There are informal systems in place which are beginning to measure how successful spending decisions have been and what impact they have had on the standards that children achieve as a result. An example of this is the way in which the headteacher is attempting to measure children's progress as a result of the improved facilities outside. Nevertheless, more work still needs to be undertaken so that there is a closer link between what the school spends and the impact it has on children's learning.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

- Improve the quality of the school development plan by:
  - (i) Providing more detail about the financial implications of any development.
  - (ii) Measuring the impact of any spending on the standards that children achieve and the quality of education the school provides.  
*(paragraph 23)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	16
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	57	36	7	0	0	0

*The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	50
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	na

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	Na

*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### *Teachers and classes*

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	120

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### *Financial information*

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	28210
Total expenditure	28210
Expenditure per pupil	564
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	0

The school does not have a delegated budget



**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	100
Number of questionnaires returned	30

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	97	3			
My child is making good progress in school.	80	20			
Behaviour in the school is good.	70	23			3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	13	3		10
The teaching is good.	83	17			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	93	7			
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	93	7			
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	33			
The school works closely with parents.	80	17	3		
The school is well led and managed.	93	7			
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	83	13			
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	77	7	7		3

**Not all categories received a response so some rows do not total 100**

**Summary of parents' and carers' responses**

Very good support for children.  
 Teachers are very pleasant and helpful, they listen to parents.  
 Each child is treated as an individual and becomes confident.  
 Parents are made to feel very welcome.