

INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 9 OF THE  
EDUCATION (SCHOOLS) ACT 1992

BRAM LONGSTAFFE NURSERY SCHOOL  
Island Road  
Barrow-In-Furness  
CUMBRIA  
LA14 2RN

School Number 909 / 1010

Date of Inspection: 13 - 16 March 1995

Charlotte Mason Inspection Unit

Mr A C Davies  
Registered Inspector: T11717

Date: 24 April 1995

Under OFSTED contract number: 909/P/502316

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## Introduction

- 1 This inspection was carried out under Section 9 of the Education (Schools)

Act 1992. Its purpose was to report on:

- the educational standards achieved in the school;
- the quality of education provided by the school;
- whether the financial resources available to the school are managed efficiently; and
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils at the school.

The findings of the inspection will contribute to the annual report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools to the Secretary of State for Education.

#### Basic information about the school

|   |                        |   |
|---|------------------------|---|
| 2 | Name of school:        | Bram Longstaffe Nursery                                 |
|   | Address:               | Island Road<br>Barrow-In-Furness<br>CUMBRIA<br>LA14 2RN |
|   | Telephone:             | 0229 821359   |
|   | Head:                  | Ms Ann Hardy  |
|   | Type of school:        | Nursery   |
|   | Age range:             | 3 - 4   |
|   | Status:                | Maintained  |
|   | Chair of governors:    | Alan Nicholson  |
|   | Address:               | As above  |
|   | Local Authority area:  | Cumbria   |
|   | DfE LEA/School number: | 909/1010  |
|   | Registered Inspector:  | Mr A C Davies   |
|   | Dates of inspection:   | 13 - 16 March 1995                                      |

Intake of pupils and the area served by the school

3 Bram Longstaffe Nursery School has a diverse and large catchment area taking pupils from Barrow Island, South Walney Island, the Newbarns, Yarlside and the Roose areas of Barrow. Some children from the outlying villages also attend,

space provided. For the past five years a satellite class has been established nearly two miles away from the main school at Newbarns Primary School. This arrangement is to change later in 1995 with a further satellite being established in another school. The school serves the needs of 208 children who all attend part-time.

4 Bram Longstaffe has a long tradition being one of Cumbria's oldest and largest purpose built Nursery Schools. The school is situated in a designated conservation area with the Vickers Shipbuilders dominating the immediate area. The fact that the highly skilled workforce has been reduced to 6,000 from an original force of 15,000 has important implications for the community.

5 The pupils who attend Bram Longstaffe come from a wide range of socio-economic circumstances, some live in owner occupied homes, others in local authority accommodation, and rented tenement flats. 20% of the pupils live in homes without gardens. The effect of the decline of the local industry has meant that many families have the main earner working in other parts of the country or abroad.

6 As a result of 26 pupils attending the satellite class the school has set up and managed a shared learning group. This has ensured that the extra space within the main building has been used to benefit 75 pupils and parents from the local area. The shared learning group provides a family morning for parents and younger pupils. They have an opportunity to learn together through play, with qualified staff and students within the Nursery School setting.

7 Each of the eight teaching groups are made up of children who are likely to transfer to the same receiving school or are from the same locality.

#### School data and indicators

##### Number of pupils in each year group

|           | Boys | Girls | Total |
|-----------|------|-------|-------|
| Nursery   |      |       |       |
| Part-time | 105  | 103   | 208   |
| Total     | 105  | 103   | 208   |

#### Special educational needs

Number of pupils having statements of special educational needs: 1

Free school meals

Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals: N/A

Teachers and classes

Full-time equivalent teachers: 4

Pupil to teacher ratio: 26:1

Average teaching group size: 26

Teaching time per week

|         | Hours | Minutes |
|---------|-------|---------|
| Nursery | 25    |         |

Pupil attendance

|           | Boys | Girls |
|-----------|------|-------|
| Part-time | 123  | 85    |
| Full-time | N/A  | N/A   |
| Total     | 123  | 85    |

Total Full-time equivalent (FTE) pupils on roll: 104

Number of exclusions in the last 12 months

Total exclusions: None

Financial information

Total income managed by the nursery

- 1.1 In the last financial year £4835.00  
 1.2 In the current financial year £4922.00

Educational Resources

| Main areas of spending             | Spending last financial year | Allocation from current budget |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Annual Payments                    | £313.32                      | £459.00                        |
| General Fittings                   | £ 86.37                      | £70.00                         |
| Classroom Equipment non-consumable | £1121.40                     | £980.65                        |
| Classroom Equipment consumable     | £1091.06                     | £973.00                        |
| Computer Supplies and Services     | £54.99                       | £182.00                        |
| First Aid                          | £52.69                       | £62.00                         |
| Paper Towels/                      | £302.30                      | £250.00                        |
| Toilet Repairs                     | £15.00                       | £20.00                         |
| Photocopier                        | £214.97                      | £421.00                        |
| Printing                           |                              | £380.00                        |
| Stationery                         | £180.92                      | £200.00                        |
| Postage                            | £23.04                       | £75.00                         |
| Telephone                          | £388.65                      | £400.00                        |
| Contingency                        |                              | £414.00                        |

Total estimated spending on books £115.00

Record of the evidence base of the inspection

8 The inspection team consisted of four inspectors who:-

- spent a total of 50 hours observing the children at work in the nursery;
- interviewed teachers, nursery nurses and support

staff;

- spoke with parents and made use of the 43 written replies to the parent questionnaire;
- met with the chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body;
- met with several of the school governors;
- examined the school documents, curriculum plans, records and assessments as well as children's work.

### Main Findings

9 This nursery school has many strengths and offers children a good start to their school life.

10 The standards in oracy are particularly high. Children are encouraged to use communication skills in most of the activities. Their listening skills are particularly well developed.

11 The school provides a safe and secure atmosphere for all children and relationships between adults and children are good. The children readily relate to more than one adult and use language effectively to communicate their wishes, feelings, and understanding.

12 Teachers and the nursery nurse (NNEB) plan their activities well together. However, where other agencies are involved planning is less well developed.

13 In long term planning, staff work effectively together in sharing ideas and areas of expertise. However, the short term planning does not reflect the long term plan. This sometimes leads to a lack of challenging activities for able children.

14 The school is successful in promoting the social and moral aspects of children's development. However, the school is not as effective in disseminating the good work that exists in spiritual and cultural development.

15 Standards of behaviour are very good. The school policy is consistently applied and approved by parents, governors and staff.

16 The school is well led. The Headteacher has vision and is particularly clear

about how she wants to further develop the strong links that exist with the community.

17 The school's ability to monitor its work is limited. In part, this is due to the full-time teaching commitment of the Headteacher and the lack of flexibility offered to Coordinators.

#### Key Issues for action

18 To build on the good provision the school currently makes, the Headteacher and staff with the assistance of the Governors and LEA should:-

increase staff expertise and knowledge in the following areas of experience: spiritual, cultural, human and music;

- ensure that the effective liaison that occurs between staff and outside agencies is translated into better support for individual children;
- review a range of strategies to look for opportunities to disseminate, and monitor the effectiveness of, current practice and planned developments;



- develop curriculum guidance to support the short term planning and teaching in all the areas of experience, paying particular attention to the provision of appropriately matched activities which offer greater challenge for more able children.

## Standards and Quality

### Standards of achievement

19 The standards achieved by the children are appropriate to or better than national expectation in almost all the areas of experience and in over a third of the lessons the standards are high. In language and literacy, mathematics, science and technology, physical development, creative and aesthetic development standards are average or above.

20 The children make good progress in their oracy skills and communicate well with different adults. Children are particularly mature in the way that they listen, particularly to stories. In reading, they learn to behave appropriately with books and show that they are developing good early reading skills. Opportunities for writing are offered to the children but this aspect of their work is less well developed.

21 In science and technology, children are encouraged to pose questions and are given opportunities to find things out. Children are curious about the natural world and enjoy exploring it. They are able to offer sensible suggestions about why things happen.

22 The human and cultural areas of experience are not as prominent a feature of the children's life at school. There is a need to develop this aspect of the children's experience in order to offer a broad and balanced start to their school life.

### Quality of Learning

23 Children's attitude to learning is very positive. In several aspects of their work they show a maturity beyond their years. They are encouraged, by the staff, to cooperate and there are many incidents when they share resources very successfully. The children concentrate for long periods on one activity and are

able to sit and listen for long periods.

24 The calm and secure atmosphere established by the staff encourages the children to experiment and be confident with new materials. This is also reflected in the way that they are prepared to communicate with different adults.

25 Children learn individually, in small groups, and as a large group for particular activities such as story or outdoor play. There are several opportunities for children to work at an activity when not directly supervised by an adult. In these situations, learning is sustained for long periods and the adult intervention is sensitive and helpful.

26 The imaginative play environment is not always as challenging as other aspects of the experiences offered to the children. This is one area of the learning environment that would benefit from a focused review.

#### Efficiency of the school

27 The school does not have a delegated budget and much of its finances is managed by the Local Education Authority. The school has a relatively small amount of money that is allocated for it to spend on educational resources. The spending on items, such as books, stationery, equipment and materials which is within the school's control is dealt with efficiently and wisely.

28 The school's fund raising activities matches at least half the amount of money delegated to the school by the Local Education Authority. The school tries to ensure that this money is allocated as quickly as possible to benefit the children who are in the nursery during that year.

29 The school does have a Governing Body which has an influence, rather than control, over matters such as staffing and accommodation. The Governing Body is very committed to the school and works hard to fulfil its role even though this is a limited one.

30 The Headteacher has a full time teaching role. This makes it difficult for her to have as full a monitoring role as she would wish. The lack of opportunity for a flexible staffing arrangement creates difficulties in terms of monitoring new school initiatives, standards and quality of education, and for evaluating cost effectiveness. Given these limitations and the standards achieved, the school provides good value for money.

#### Pupils' personal development and behaviour

#### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

31 The school provides a secure foundation of moral education by taking account of values such as honesty, fairness, truthfulness and respect. Well chosen stories support the efforts of all staff in helping children to understand “right” and “wrong” behaviour.

32 Social development is a central feature of the school. The children are aware of, and sensitive to, others feelings and needs. There are many instances of children spontaneously taking turns, sharing, cooperating and helping each other. Relationships throughout the school are good.

33 The involvement in the community mural project has contributed to cultural development and enables children to learn more about the lives and work of people in the community. However, there is scope for children to explore ethnic and cultural traditions more widely.

34 The good work in spiritual development needs to be developed and extended throughout the school.

#### Behaviour and discipline

35 The school has worked hard to produce and effectively implement policies and procedures for positive behaviour which have the involvement and support of children, parents, staff and governors.

36 Staff have high expectations and praise children when they show controlled and thoughtful behaviour. The few instances of uncontrolled behaviour are discussed immediately with the children involved.

37 The quality of learning in the school is supported by the good standards of behaviour and discipline.

#### Attendance

38 The overall attendance at both the morning and afternoon sessions is good.

39 The need for regular attendance is well documented in the school prospectus and in the school’s policy statement. The absenteeism that does occur is generally due to the child’s sickness or sickness within the family.

40 Registers are consistently well kept and comply with legal requirements.

41 Pupils demonstrate their keenness to attend, and the majority of parents are

satisfied that the school works well to ensure good attendance.

42 The majority of pupils are punctual in arriving for the session.

The areas of curriculum experience

Language and literacy

43 The school gives a high priority to this area of experience. The majority of children achieve the national expectation for reading and writing. In oracy, a significant number of children achieve beyond the national expectation.

44 Many children show a maturity well beyond their age when it comes to answering questions and communicating in a range of situations. Children's listening skills are particularly well developed. They are very attentive at story times and they play a full part in the process of joining in and making predictions.

45 The children's high achievement in this area justifies the emphasis put on oracy in the school policy. The school believes that speaking and listening are vital features of all the children's experience in school. Staff place a high emphasis on oracy skills and activities are well planned and structured to allow children the greatest opportunities to communicate.

46 In reading, the majority of children behave appropriately with books. They are able to handle a book with maturity, making predictions and showing enjoyment. Most are able to share a book either with another child or with an adult. The majority of children are able to recognise that print is used to carry meaning. A record is kept of the books that children take home and on-going information is recorded about the way children behave with different books. Quality books appear in all classrooms although the amount of environmental print, in the form of labels, is quite low in some classrooms.

47 Writing seems to have a lower priority. Many children can and do write their names but beyond this the amount of opportunity offered to write varies. In some imaginative play, opportunities to write are limited. Where children are involved in activities that help with using pens or pencils they show good manipulative skills. The school needs to review its work in this area and ensure that all classes adopt, fully, the school's stated policy that a range of writing material should be made available in particular areas.

48 There is a coordinator for this area of experience who is a source of expertise for the rest of the staff. He is used, both on a formal and informal basis, to this end. The school is about to review its practice in this area and the

coordinator is to be central to this review. The school needs to ensure that any review builds on the strength already in place and refines practice rather than alter it.

## Mathematics

49 The children develop a sound level of mathematical skills with emphasis given to sorting, matching and counting. In some of the nursery activities, such as sand and water and the use of construction equipment, the children are successfully taught mathematical language. Songs, stories and action rhymes also contribute to children's mathematical development.

50 The quality of learning is generally good. It is best when staff are alert to the mathematical possibilities in every activity and children are encouraged to consolidate their learning of mathematics in other contexts.

51 The quality of teaching varies from sound to outstanding. The lessons are usually well planned and use the appropriate activities to support the children's learning.

## Scientific and technological

52 The overall standards of work are above average. There are examples of work of high quality. The pupils can observe carefully, predict, carry out simple tests and record their findings in an appropriate manner. Children use the equipment sensibly and are encouraged to care for tools and materials and to share resources with others. Children are encouraged to investigate and test their ideas, often working as part of a group but finding the opportunity to work on their own.

53 In some classrooms children have opportunity to care for living things. This enables them to observe these systematically and to treat them with sensitivity. A positive development for the school, would be the adoption of a consistent approach in allowing all children the chance to experience living things in their classroom.

## Aesthetic and creative

54 The overall standard of work within this area is above the national expectation for drawing, painting and modelling malleable materials. However, opportunities for children to express themselves through dance, drama and music are less well developed. The children have good control of the tools and materials

they use. The quality of drawings is particularly good with children showing mature skills in the way that they observe and then record from first hand experience.

55 The quality of learning is sound overall with good work seen in the artistic aspect of this area of experience. When the quality of learning is at its best, children are able to mix their own paint and discuss work of famous artists. The work with malleable materials, offers children a chance to experience modelling with different media. The range of materials offered, ensures that children experience different challenges. Children's attitude to their work is very good. They concentrate well and cooperate in situations that require them to share resources.

56 The quality of teaching has good features. Staff demonstrate techniques well and children listen attentively. Good question and answer techniques are used to help children develop their understanding. In some cases, children are helped to evaluate their work. The positive relationship that exists between the staff and the children is a feature of the school and is very evident in this area of experience. Good quality artefacts and appropriate resources are made available to the children.

57 There is a school policy for art and music. The headteacher is the coordinator for the artistic aspect of the curriculum. She is used as a source of expertise by the staff and is confident in dealing with this aspect of the school's work. However, the staff feel less confident in the musical aspect of the area of experience.

58 The school is about to review the musical area of its work. The review will need to help develop teachers knowledge and confidence.

## Physical

59 The children are offered a range of activities that enables them to develop their physical skills. Standards are in line with national expectation. Most children run and jump and use a range of equipment with an increasing degree of competency. Children are able to make independent use of a range of large outdoor apparatus.

60 The quality of education is sound overall and has many good features. The children show that they can cooperate very well and work with one piece of apparatus for a prolonged period of time. The staff are able to help children without being too dominant thus giving direction and enabling learning to be consolidated and developed.

61 The school has a policy for physical education and the staff is about to look

at the way they deal with outdoor play. The group of children that are based in the satellite nursery have the advantage of using a hall. This enables the staff to develop skills with the children whilst in a safe environment. In the main school, an outdoor area is used effectively to help the children develop their physical skills. The available resources are adequate but replacing expensive equipment is a problem for the school.

62 To improve further children's physical skills the school needs to review its outdoor play policy.

#### Human and social

63 The human and social area of learning did not feature significantly in the topic planned in the lessons seen during the week of the inspection. In general this area of learning receives insufficient attention in most classes.

64 The imaginative play areas set up in each classroom are used as a resource by children to develop their social and personal skills. However, in some cases these need to be developed further to improve provision in this area.

#### Factors contributing to these findings

##### Quality of teaching

65 The quality of teaching is sound overall, with many good features, several of them outstanding. The teachers and support staff work well together, meeting frequently to share expertise, ideas and ways to improve practice.

66 Activities are very well planned, prepared and delivered to the children. The staff have high expectations of children's intellectual and social achievements. Staff use the resources most effectively to help them meet their learning objectives. However, the link between long and short term planning is less secure.

67 The good work that exists in some classes relating to the spiritual and cultural aspects of the curriculum needs to be disseminated amongst the staff. Staff expertise in the human area of experience needs to be increased.

##### Assessment, recording and reporting

68 There is a comprehensive system of assessment in operation throughout the school. Parents have access to a pre entry assessment which highlights: each

child's competencies, preferences and personality facts. Parents are able to note their expectation of their child's progress during the year.

69 In all classrooms there is a strong emphasis on observation and the resulting assessment is usually used well to inform future planning for children.

70 Assessment procedures are carried out consistently throughout the school with children having opportunity to evaluate their own work.

71 Samples of children's work are kept and dated. The staff are constantly recording children's achievement on a daily basis and these are transferred to the child's assessment profile sheet. These forms of assessment are valuable but could benefit from the addition of shared observational evidence.

72 The staff conscientiously assess, record and report children's progress. Reporting to parents occurs regularly and on a more formal basis as well as the informal dialogue which takes place when parents take their children to school.

73 To promote the continuity of the child's learning development, a summative transfer record is provided for receiving schools.

## The curriculum

### Quality and range of the curriculum

74 The curriculum is broad and balanced across all the areas of experience and has an emphasis on children's oracy as well as their moral and social development. The children are therefore able to make positive relationships as well as achieve high standards in speaking and listening.

75 The school has a curriculum which is topic based and uses themes that are appropriate to enable children to experience relevant activities. In most cases, the children are given a free opportunity to choose activities that they wish to start with. Teachers keep careful records of children's preferences and also make assessments of children's contribution to the various tasks.

76 The quality of the activities is good. In each classroom different activities are operating but within the framework of an agreed whole school plan. Tasks do not always take account of the differing abilities of children. In order to cater for



individual levels of ability, many activities have a range of expected outcomes or receive additional support. Each activity is planned with a focus on one of the areas of experience with a high priority given to oracy. However, the activities are organised in such a way as to ensure that cross curricular opportunities are not ignored.

77 The link between long and short term planning is not always explicit. The long term plan is organised in subjects whilst the short term plan is set out in areas of experience.

#### Equality of opportunity

78 The school has a strong commitment to equality of opportunity. There is a comprehensive policy and all staff have been involved in awareness raising sessions to encourage and promote equal opportunities in all areas of the school.

79 Throughout the school, there are positive images of people from different groups. These include books, equipment and displays. All the staff work hard to raise the self esteem of all pupils and succeed in encouraging pupils to respect and value each others value systems.

#### Provision for pupils with special educational needs

80 The school has a clear policy statement and guidelines for identifying and supporting children with special educational needs.

81 Provision is coordinated by a designated teacher and includes contact with external support services, parents, teachers and nursery nurses.

82 Nine children have been identified as needing additional support with their learning. One child has a statement of special educational need. Some children are given additional support either in the classroom or by withdrawal. Although children have access to all the planned experiences, the work involving the support assistant is not always planned in sufficient detail to meet the identified needs of the individual child.

#### Management and administration

83 This nursery school is well managed. The headteacher and deputy offer a visionary style of leadership. They are very clear about the needs of the under five year old child and have an effective and cooperative working relationship with the

staff to achieve the schools aims.

84 The headteacher has a full time teaching responsibility which makes it difficult for her to have the flexibility that she would wish to monitor the quality of education offered to the children. The staff have a clear understanding of the role and responsibilities that they and others have.

85 Teachers have coordination duties for more than one area of the curriculum. They carry out this role effectively within the limits imposed by the very demanding range of responsibilities outlined in their job descriptions. There are regular staff meetings which focus on organisational as well as curriculum issues.

86 The school development plan is a well written and powerful document that ensures that the school further develops its work. The Governors are becoming more confident about the role that they have in managing the school. They share the headteachers belief that the school needs to increase its involvement with the community. The school aims need to reflect this wider vision of community development.

## Resources and their management

### Teaching and non-teaching staff

87 The teachers are suitably qualified and all the nursery nurses hold the NNEB qualification. The school is making effective use of all the teachers and nursery nurses.

88 The teachers and nursery nurses work in full partnership and the majority of their interactions with the pupils are very good.

89 Staff may avail themselves of a good range of training opportunities which are organised by the LEA and the school. The staff have been able to identify areas of concern and the coordinators for these areas of learning have organised appropriate training.

90 The teaching and non teaching staff demonstrate a high level of professional commitment in the way in which they carry out their responsibilities and take part in INSET.

### Resources for learning

91 The curriculum is generally well resourced. In time, the school should

consider buying more story and large picture books and aim to provide one computer per class in order to support information technology in other areas of the curriculum.

92 The resources are stored in an appropriate manner and are accessible to the pupils and support learning effectively. Outdoor space is used in an effective way for environmental science and for physical play.

93 The resources for writing are not always sufficiently accessible for all pupils in the various teaching areas and the school needs to address this issue.

#### Accommodation

94 The school building is “U” shaped and houses four classrooms all of which are used for the afternoon session to accommodate different classes. In the morning, one of the classrooms is used as a shared learning area for parents and pre nursery aged children.

95 The staff who use this classroom in the afternoon are located at the satellite nursery in the morning. At present the satellite nursery is in a primary school two miles away. However, as from next year, the location of the satellite is to change. The school works hard to ensure that the continuity between the buildings is appropriate.

96 The building is presently undergoing some refurbishment. The installation of new windows and of the entrance have recently been completed. The staff have recently been reviewing the use of the indoor and outdoor environment. The resulting documentation provides a firm basis for continuing development. Displays of childrens work is a high priority and there is a good range of examples of the way that childrens work is presented.

97 The school has an additional room which is used as a staff resource and television room. This is one area of the school that is in need of further development.

#### Pupils' welfare and guidance

98 The school is effective in providing for the welfare, guidance, health and safety of its children. There are well documented policy statements on health, safety and welfare with which all staff are conversant and put into practice. There is a formal annual review of the health and safety procedures.

99 The number of qualified first aiders is adequate. One is deployed in the satellite class and one in the main building. First aid boxes are well sited and adequately stocked.

100 The school creates a very caring atmosphere and there were many good practices seen. The focus on hygiene and the encouragement of healthy eating habits are strengths in the school. Children are treated as individuals and staff know them all by their first names.

#### Links with parents, agencies and other institutions

101 The staff build good relationships with parents, agencies and members of the community. A shared learning group is run by a qualified nursery nurse and parents. This enables parents and children to become familiar with the nursery and staff. A carefully planned introduction into nursery, involving home visits, ensures children make a smooth transition from home to school. Staff have daily informal contact with parents and the notice board in the main entrance helps keep parents informed about nursery issues. A number of parents help in the school. Parent's views on the school are sought at the end of each school year. Issues raised by parents are used as evidence to review and develop the school development plan.

102 The children transfer to a number of schools. The quality of liaison varies. The school is keen to establish close links with all schools.

103 The school forges many links with the local community. One of the most successful ventures resulted in funding to support school initiatives.