



Ashworth Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119091
LEA Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number 280460
Inspection dates 5 October 2005 to 6 October 2005
Reporting inspector Penny Parrish

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Addison Close
School category	Maintained		Blackburn
Age range of pupils	3 to 4		Lancashire, BB2 1QU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01254 263312
Number on roll	70	Fax number	01254 263312
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Don Rishton
Date of previous inspection	1 December 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Heather Bulcock

Age group 3 to 4	Inspection dates 5 October 2005 - 6 October 2005	Inspection number 280460
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Ashworth Nursery School is situated in a socially and economically disadvantaged area of Blackburn, in Lancashire. There are 70 children on roll, attending part-time for either the morning or the afternoon sessions. Five children have learning difficulties. The majority of pupils (87%) are of Asian background and most children (89%) are at an early stage of learning English. The children's attainment when they start school is below what is usual for 3 year olds, and well below in language and communication skills. Three full-time bilingual assistants are funded in part by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant. The school qualified for a School Achievement Award in 2003 in recognition of improvements in the children's progress and the success of the school.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ashworth Nursery is a good school where children achieve well. This includes the large number with a home language other than English and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school's assessment of itself, the views of the parents and the conclusions of the last inspection all agree with this judgement. Taking the cost, the good provision and children's good progress into account, the school provides good value for money.

Since the last inspection, the children's good achievement has been maintained, and improved in some respects. Good improvement is evident in the opportunities for learning outdoors. The assessment of the children's progress is better and teaching staff know the children and their learning needs very well. The curriculum is lively and interesting. Teaching is good, but it could be even better if the teachers made more detailed plans to guide their work and the children's learning more precisely on a day-to-day basis. The leadership and management of the school are good. The school is orderly, calm and well organised. Relationships between the staff, and between the staff and children are very good, and parents confirm that their children are happy at school. The headteacher and staff keep a close eye on the quality of provision and the school shows a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning still further by making the daily plans more detailed and their aims more explicit.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The children achieve well. Although children's attainment on starting at nursery is below average overall, and well below average for communication skills, they make good progress in all areas of learning and are on course to achieve the learning goals set nationally for the end of the Foundation Stage, except for communication and language. Despite improving well, the speaking skills of a large group of children are unlikely to meet fully the goals set for the end of the reception year.

The children's achievement is good because the school's provision is good. The high number of staff means that children are frequently engaged in dialogue with adults. This helps all children to learn well, but especially the large number of children who are learning English as an additional language. Those children whose home language is spoken by the bilingual staff make the best progress. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because they are identified early and given the right programme of support. Equally, those who learn more quickly are given extra help to extend their learning in an effective way.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The children's personal development and well-being is good. The school's good induction routines help the children to settle quickly into school. Relationships are very good and staff meet children for the first time in their own homes. The staff team sets a good ethos for the school and parents and children respond well to their encouragement and join in school activities. Consequently, the children enjoy learning, concentrate hard and show a keen sense of achievement when they do well. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Staff provide good role models for social skills and children show courtesy to others. The sense of wonder children feel in learning new things was evident on many occasions; for example, when woodlice and worms were spotted in the school garden. Staff use stories and day-to-day happenings well to develop a sensitive awareness of right and wrong. Different cultures are celebrated; for example, through counting the moons through Ramadan on the school's Eid calendar and presenting a Christmas concert for parents. The children are beginning to understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and enjoy plenty of fresh air, safe exercise outdoors, and healthy foods at snack time. Most children attend regularly but, despite the school's good efforts, the progress of some children is restricted by absence for occasional days off or for extended family holidays.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The teaching and learning are good. The staff team have a good understanding of how young children learn. Four of the staff speak some of the home languages of the children and this is a valuable asset, which enables the school to help children to settle quickly and to feel at home. All children make good progress in speaking English, mainly through lots of practice. The school's records show that children whose home language is spoken by a member of the nursery staff make very good progress.

Good assessment and record-keeping systems are linked well to teaching plans. The children with learning difficulties achieve well because the headteacher and skilled staff make sure they receive the help they need. The higher attaining children are supported well through the school's routines for planning, which include targets for the more able. Long-term planning is thorough and effective. Day-to-day planning, however, although much improved since the last inspection, does not include sufficient detail to support teaching and learning of the highest quality. This is because what the children are expected to learn is not always explicit. This means that some opportunities for learning are missed and this was evident in a lesson involving baking activities. Although children learned the names of ingredients the opportunity was missed to develop their sensory skills and vocabulary by observing and describing the differences, for example, between the flour and sugar.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets national guidance for the Foundation Stage well. Lively and interesting activities match children's needs effectively. The good number of staff means that children are engaged in talk with adults within most activities and this promotes their good progress. A good range of resources enables all areas of learning to be taught well. Since the last inspection, the outdoor area has been improved in order to promote all areas of learning. Most notably, the new range of interesting and challenging climbing and balancing activities extends children's physical development. Their mathematical development is enhanced through bright, new playground markings that promote physical activities and by games that encourage counting. Regular visits to places of interest, such as the local park and the seaside, extend the children's enjoyment and their understanding of the world. Support for charities, such as projects at the local hospital and international disaster funds, help the children become aware of hardships faced by others. The school takes an active part in local programmes for recycling waste and for litter clearance, so that children develop an awareness of their responsibility for the community and the environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of the children and takes their safety and well-being very seriously. Efficient systems ensure the safe supervision of the children at all times. The school works well with parents and professionals to make sure that all children make good progress. Their learning is tracked well across the whole curriculum and extra support is provided whenever necessary. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped through useful individual education plans, supplemented well through day-to-day discussions and plans between staff. Vulnerable pupils are identified early and appropriate action is taken. Assessment systems are good. The staff record the children's progress, share information both with parents and with the staff team. Different targets for learning are set for each activity. These match children's differing needs and provide effective guidance for staff in setting the right expectations for the children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has established a strong sense of purpose based on very good relationships, high expectations for the children's achievement and an excellent team spirit. The headteacher sets clear expectations for provision of good quality. Priorities for improvement are clear and supported well by professional development linked closely to the needs of staff and the children.

The school has a clear view of its strengths and areas for improvement. The headteacher has a good understanding of the national guidance for the Foundation Stage and the nursery has useful links with a local cluster of schools.

The governing body carries out its role diligently and ensures that all statutory duties are met. Governors represent the local community well and are keenly aware of the views of parents. The budget is not fully delegated from the local authority but money is spent wisely. The school is well staffed, and resources for learning are well chosen and of good quality.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	NA
Learners are educated about sexual health	NA
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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Ashworth Nursery School

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Blackburn

Lancashire

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6 October 2005

Dear Children,

Thank you to you and your teachers for letting me visit your nursery to see what you do. I found out all these things.

Ashworth is a good nursery and you enjoy coming to school.

The teachers and nursery nurses are very friendly and help all of you to learn the right things quickly.

You try really hard to do your best and most of you will know all the things you need for big school.

You are especially good at learning to speak better and better, even if you are learning English for the first time.

We would like remind you how important it is for you to come to school every day, except when you are not well, so that you can join in all the activities and learn as much as you can.

We have also asked your teachers to do one thing to make the school even better.

The teachers need to add just a little more detail to their plans to help them to help you even more.

Thank you for being so friendly and smiling so beautifully. I hope you enjoy your days in the nursery more and more.

Yours sincerely,

Penny Parrish

Lead Inspector

Annex B