



Blagdon Nursery School and Children's Centre

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109748
LEA Reading LEA
Inspection number 285171
Inspection dates 10 July 2006 to 10 July 2006
Reporting inspector Bernice Magson AI

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Blagdon Road
School category	Maintained		Whitley
Age range of pupils	3 to 5		Reading RG2 7NT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01189 015425
Number on roll	81	Fax number	01189 015425
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Neil Barr
Date of previous inspection	11 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Mitchell

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 5	10 July 2006 - 10 July 2006	285171

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Blagdon Nursery is part of 'Blagdon Nursery School and Children's Centre' which serves a culturally diverse community in a suburb of Reading. The Centre provides education and care for children from birth to five years.

This inspection focuses on the provision for three to five year olds. Eighty-four children attend the nursery full or part-time. New entrants are admitted each term. When children start nursery most are working well below expected levels and about a third are identified with learning difficulties. A few children are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a very small minority speak English as an additional language. There has been some instability in leadership. A new headteacher was appointed in May 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The nursery provides a satisfactory education, although its own view is that it is good. Standards are below average overall, although children make at least satisfactory progress. Those with learning difficulties and those speaking English as an additional language achieve as well as others because of the good support they receive. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Children benefit well from the partnership with other areas of the Children's Centre. Children settle well in the nursery because of the good links between each provider. They behave well and are eager to learn. The care and support of children is good and their personal development is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Where the teaching is of a high quality children are encouraged to become independent learners. Teachers challenge the younger children effectively, but the rates of progress of older children are slower because activities do not always challenge them sufficiently. Tasks are beginning to match children's ability more accurately as new systems of assessment begin to have an impact. The curriculum is satisfactory and with many opportunities for enrichment. However there is a lack of challenge in some of the outdoor activities.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is providing a positive direction for the school and has been instrumental in improving the quality of provision through her leadership and management. She has created a united staff team who have a good capacity to improve the school further. However governors rely heavily on the headteacher to lead and direct them and do not yet hold the school fully to account. Some statutory responsibilities are only partially fulfilled. Nonetheless the school has successfully tackled the issues from the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers provide work that closely matches the needs of older children
- Develop curriculum opportunities for the outdoors in all areas of learning
- Strengthen the capacity of staff and governors so as they can undertake their roles in the leadership and management of the school more effectively

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Boys and girls of all abilities achieve satisfactorily. When they start nursery children's knowledge, skills and understanding are well below those expected for their age. Children make good progress in personal, social and physical development and parents are pleased with this. 'Speech and social skills have been dramatically increased in a short space of time' stated one parent. In all other areas of learning progress is satisfactory and older children are not always challenged sufficiently. By the end of their time in nursery children attain expected goals in personal, social and physical development but below national expectations for their age in other areas of learning.

Good attention is given to those children with learning difficulties and they attain the targets in their individual education plans. The very few children at an early stage of speaking English achieve as well as others because of good support focused on their specific needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The children's personal development and well-being including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. Parents strongly confirm that their children enjoy school. All children settle well because of the good procedures which help them to feel happy and secure in a new setting. Attendance levels are average.

Relationships between staff and children are good and as a result children gain in confidence and are developing as independent learners. They behave well and have a good understanding of right and wrong. Most children have satisfactory attitudes to learning. They say that they particularly enjoy playing outdoors. Children are beginning to understand the benefits of healthy lifestyles and healthy food and are gradually improving their knowledge of safe practices. Most children have some understanding of different cultures and traditions. They are gradually increasing their knowledge of basic skills which helps to develop their economic well-being and prepares them for their next school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, including the teaching of children with learning difficulties and those speaking English as an additional language. Where the teaching is good teaching styles, methods and resources are used well to motivate and stimulate the children's interest in learning. The staff plan satisfactorily and work together well for the indoor settings, but activities outdoors provide less challenge. Indoors there is a planned balance between direct teaching and giving the children the opportunity to explore, make choices, or decisions about their work. Good use is made of 'talk' in group sessions and subject vocabulary is introduced well. However in some lessons there are missed opportunities to challenge older children to higher levels of achievement and development of skills. Improved systems of assessment are beginning to provide clearer information about the progress of older children and fully support teachers in planning the next steps in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Staff have a good understanding of what young children need and lessons are imaginatively planned to motivate them to learn. The indoor classroom areas cover a wide range of interesting activities and experiences and make

a positive contribution to the children's personal development as well as academic achievement. Children have regular access to computers. However, in the outdoor learning environment the curriculum lacks creativity and imaginative use of resources. As a result older children are not challenged sufficiently. The good provision for children speaking English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties ensures that they can participate fully in all aspects of the curriculum. The school offers pupils a good range of enrichment activities and visits and encourages visitors to the school. A trip to Bournemouth is enthusing children to learn and encouraging them to explore the wider world. Children are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a good level of care, guidance and support. Adults have created a warm, secure and safe environment and skilfully they help and nurture all children so that they can succeed. The school values its involvement with its community. The partnership with other agencies is strong and used effectively to help children learn. Staff know children and their families well and they give them good support. Parents are full of praise and appreciation. Their views are summed up by one parent who commented 'The staff are compassionate and committed to every child and its family'. Extended services are provided before and after school and in the holidays and children are encouraged to meet and make new friends. Procedures for health and safety, first aid, risk assessments, security and child protection are all in place. There are effective procedures for observing, assessing and tracking the progress of the younger children. However assessment arrangements are not yet fully embedded for tracking the progress of older children as they have only recently been introduced.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The strengths and weaknesses identified by the inspection team are the same as those identified by the new headteacher. She has gained the trust of staff, governors and parents who appreciate her strong leadership and clarity of vision. Together they have a satisfactory capacity to improve the school. The headteacher has made a good start in improving the teaching and learning for older children, improving systems of monitoring and self-evaluation and setting up strong leadership for the future of the school. A comprehensive improvement plan has been prepared for the short term and plans for the longer term are to be included shortly, incorporating the views of children, governors and parents. Subject leaders are eager to help and are developing their roles. Governance is unsatisfactory. The governors have only recently received full powers of management and with the instability in the leadership of the headteacher they are making slow progress in developing their roles. Some statutory responsibilities are not yet fully in place. These are in the areas of monitoring the provision for children with learning difficulties and in establishing a policy and procedures for performance management.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	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	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	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	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	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?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	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

Children

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. Your trip to Bournemouth sounded very exciting and we hope that you had a lovely time. We think that your school is satisfactory. These are the things that we found out.

What we particularly liked are: * all adults take good care of you and help you to learn * you enjoy school and are good at all times * you work hard in the nursery * your teachers are working hard to make the school better * your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this nursery.

We have asked your teachers to make sure that as you get older your work becomes a bit harder. We think that the play activities outdoors could be made more exciting. All the grown ups are going to be involved in making your school even better.

We wish you well for the future

Bernice Magson

Lead Inspector