

Abercromby Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104507
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	286965
Inspection date	20 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Anna Dawson

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	51
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S King
Headteacher	Mrs Edna Hunter
Date of previous school inspection	5 June 2001
School address	Falkner Street Liverpool Merseyside L8 7QA
Telephone number	0151 709 5114
Fax number	0151 707 2497

Age group	3–5
Inspection date	20 March 2007
Inspection number	286965

© Crown copyright 2007

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 one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small nursery school is situated near the centre of Liverpool in an area of social and economic disadvantage. Nearly all children attend full time. There are 18% of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is broadly average, and of these an above average percentage have severe learning difficulties.

The proportion of children learning English as an additional language has been rising since the last inspection and an above average number of children leave or join the nursery at different times. Of all the children 61%, mainly from African, Middle Eastern and Chinese heritages speak Arabic or Somali as their mother tongue. Many of these children have little or no understanding of English on entry to the nursery. A minority of children are in the care of the local authority and a further minority are children of refugee families. The overall attainments of the majority of children on entry in the areas of language, communication and personal and social skills are well below those normally expected of children of this age.

The school has just become a satellite nursery of the newly built Granby Children's Centre. It is part of Toxteth Learning Network and has gained the Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features and which provides good value for money. The inspection judgements agree with the school's view of its effectiveness. However, children's personal development and the care, guidance and support for children are outstanding, and better than the school's modest view.

Links with parents, the community and neighbouring schools are outstanding. The school is well thought of in the local community and is oversubscribed. There are excellent links with local schools and colleges, particularly for sports coaching. The staff help parents effectively to develop their understanding of how to become partners in their children's education. Parents unanimously value the work of the nursery and the care and education given to their children. This is reflected in comments that the children 'are happy and confident and make good progress'.

Children's personal development is outstanding. They flourish in the happy, secure, family atmosphere that the staff create. Consequently, they become confident and independent learners because of the excellent care and guidance they receive. Leadership and management are good. The nursery is well managed and staff carry out their responsibilities effectively. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and is successful in promoting the well-being of all children, meeting their needs and those of their parents.

The children get off to a flying start and greatly enjoy their activities because of the good quality of teaching. They achieve well and make good progress to attain standards broadly expected at their age by the time they transfer to full-time education. There are strengths in the teaching of personal, social and emotional development and communication and language skills where children make very good progress because the staff place great emphasis on these aspects. As a result, most children learning English as an additional language understand and speak English quickly and soon become sociable and independent learners. However, on occasions the staff do not challenge children enough in discussions to promote thinking and learning. Monitoring of teaching and learning is not always sharp enough to ensure that teaching is consistently good. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress towards the targets that are set for them and are well provided for.

The good quality curriculum is well thought out to meet the needs of the children and to celebrate their cultural heritages. The indoor and outdoor activities are wide ranging and stimulating, encouraging children to become independent in following their interests. However, the role-play areas reflecting the topics children study lack some imagination and are not as stimulating as they could be to encourage children to develop their language and communication skills.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Governors are knowledgeable and give good support to the school. There is good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure that teaching is consistently good.
- Ensure that staff consistently challenge children to develop their thinking and learning in discussions.

- Develop role-play further to stimulate children's imagination and the development of their language and communication skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children make good overall progress and achieve well. The staff place a high priority on the development of communication, language and social skills in all activities and as a result, the development of many children's personal and social skills is rapid. Equally, those learning to understand and speak English as an additional language often make extremely good progress because they get very good support from the staff. By the time the children leave the nursery, the majority are well placed to attain the standards normally expected on entry to full-time education. The small minority of more able children are challenged equally as well and exceed the nationally expected standards. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are identified early and they receive effective support from staff and outside agencies.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Children greatly enjoy coming to the nursery. When asked, they say they like their activities and playing with their friends. Relationships between the staff and the children are excellent. Most children are gaining a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong, behave well and follow the nursery 'golden rules'. All children enjoy celebrating major festivals, acknowledging the cultural heritage of others and contributing to charity appeals. Children know that it is important to eat healthy snacks and have many opportunities for exercise. They feel secure and know who to turn to if they have a problem. They are considerate of others, for example taking care not to bump into one another when playing on the wheeled toys outside. Making independent choices in learning is encouraged and consequently, children's involvement in their learning is exceptionally well developed. They become confident learners. Children learn about the wider world, for example from their planned visits to the local area and visitors such as musicians and a gardener who come to school. Attendance is good for most children. However, a very small minority have poor attendance and punctuality, which limits their progress.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and outstanding in the teaching of personal and social skills and in helping children to develop their understanding of English. Children learn to manage their feelings and emotions very well because staff have high expectations of them and provide good role models. Staff are quick to act to resolve any difficulties. Those children who are learning to speak English benefit extremely well from small-group discussions as new vocabulary is reinforced orally and visually. Staff know the individual needs of the children very well and work with them to plan what they need to learn next. Children are encouraged to share their feelings and discuss, plan and evaluate their work. This promotes skills of independent learning well and helps children to understand what they can do better

next time. Although the vast majority of teaching is good, there are occasions in discussions when the staff could question and prompt children's learning further. There are good procedures for assessing children's progress. Progress is thoroughly checked and the children's 'key adults' keep records up to date.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

All children have access to well planned stimulating activities which allow them to follow their interests indoors and outdoors. There is a great emphasis on children developing communication and social skills. Good provision is made to develop children's skills in information and communication technology. The provision of small-group work and role-play areas such as the home area effectively promote pupils' speaking and social skills. However, the role-play areas are not as imaginative as they could be to stimulate the development of language and communication skills. The nursery is well resourced with a number of dual language resources and is organised well for children to follow their interests, investigate and explore how things work. The staff record children's choices of activities and ensure that they experience the full range of activities and systematically develop their skills. Staff work effectively to enrich children's experiences and learning through the visitors who come into school such as the sports coaches and African drummers and through visits children make to the local park.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support given to children are outstanding. Robust procedures for child protection and to safeguard children are in place. The allocation of key adults to work with small groups of children each day strengthens the quality of relationships between the children and their parents and the staff. Great care and sensitivity is shown towards each child. Consequently, children feel secure and valued, particularly those who are vulnerable or who have specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children are fully involved in assessing their learning and get good guidance to develop their skills continuously. There are excellent relationships with outside agencies such as health visitors and social services when additional help is needed. Parents are encouraged to become partners in their children's learning and some benefit from the courses that staff provide. This puts them in a better position to help their children learn at home.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of the leadership and management is good. Together the staff and the headteacher have created a family learning environment where children are happy and flourish. The headteacher gives outstanding leadership to fulfil the aims of meeting the needs of the children and their parents. Views are gathered systematically from the children, staff, parents and governors and are taken into account. Parents are kept very well informed about their children's progress and without exception appreciate the work of the staff. For example, parents and community workers translate for those who lack a secure grasp of English. The staff carry out their responsibilities well because they receive good professional development. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and use this well to plan future developments. There are good systems to check on how well the school is doing

and to identify where further improvements can be made. The monitoring of teaching and learning is effective overall as staff share a wealth of information informally on a day-to-day basis to improve their practice. However, more formal monitoring, although adequate, does not always ensure that teaching is consistently challenging. The governors give good support and commitment to help the school move forward.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for talking to me about the interesting things you do in the nursery. I enjoyed being with you and watching your activities. I particularly liked these things about your school.

- You like your activities and really enjoy finding things out;
- You are kind and helpful to your friends;
- Your key workers give you a lot of enjoyable and interesting things to do and take care of each one of you;
- Your headteacher does an extremely good job.

I have asked your key workers and headteacher to make sure you all learn as well as you can and to make the role-play areas more exciting so you will spend more time talking and playing together in them. You can help by always doing your best and keeping on enjoying your activities.