



Frizington Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112090
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289169
Inspection dates 17–18 October 2006
Reporting inspector John Heap

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Main Street
School category	Maintained		Frizington, Cumbria
Age range of pupils	3–4		CA26 3PF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01946 810846
Number on roll (school)	38	Fax number	01946 810846
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Gwynneth Everett
		Headteacher	Mrs Janet Farebrother
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2002		

Age group 3–4	Inspection dates 17–18 October 2006	Inspection number 289169
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school was designated as a Children's Centre in January 2006, registered to provide full day care, a crèche, out of school care and a breakfast club. It serves an area of socio-economic disadvantage. Children attend the nursery part-time, either in the morning or the afternoon. On admission, their knowledge and skills are typical of those of most three-year-olds. All children are White British. A below average proportion of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has a Healthy School award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is satisfactory, improving and gives sound value for money. The school considers itself to be good, a judgement that is a little generous. Improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection and the nursery is securely placed to move forward.

The strong links forged with a range of outside agencies is an effective feature of the good care the nursery provides for the children and their families. This strength and the good curriculum are major factors in the children's good personal development. One parent succinctly summed up the outcomes like this: 'My child is getting a good start to his education...he enjoys coming to school and the trips they go on'. Parents are right to be particularly pleased with the interesting, safe and secure learning environment that their children experience. Another parent expressed it this way: 'We feel (the school) offers a wide range of activities to encourage child development...we feel very confident in leaving our child in their care'.

Leadership and management are satisfactory with strong features. The headteacher shows strong leadership in:

However, there are weaknesses in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and its impact on learning. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning and the children's progress and achievement are satisfactory rather than good, particularly that of the more able children. Children are on course to meet the learning goals set nationally for the end of the Reception Year. The wide range of basic skills they learn, their good attitudes and their increasing confidence mean that the children are well prepared for the next stage of education and life beyond the nursery. Children who attend for five terms make the most progress. They also contribute well to the induction of the younger children as they start nursery. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make similar progress to their peers. The emphasis on strong teamwork means that teaching assistants play an increasingly effective and successful role in helping the children to learn. Planning is detailed, but the inconsistent use of information from assessments reduces the effectiveness of planning for individual children, particularly for the more able. Individual education plans for children with learning difficulties provide accurate and helpful guides to the small steps needed to improve their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of the information gained from assessments of children's achievements, particularly for more able children.
- Improve the procedures and processes for monitoring and evaluating the nursery's work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and progress are satisfactory. Children reach standards that are broadly typical for their age and there is little difference between the achievements of boys and girls. Most progress is made in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. This is because staff take every opportunity to develop these skills across all activities. A good example is the way staff take care to provide books that link with practical activities. Children are curious about the world around them and gain much from activities in the well resourced outdoor area. For example, children thoroughly enjoy the gardening work and some children have developed impressive bricklaying skills. Skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are developing well. Children are helped to understand how to operate a range of electronic equipment, such as computers, digital cameras and a washing machine in order to develop their manipulation, literacy and numeracy skills. Children enjoy moving to music and playing musical instruments. The gains made by children with learning difficulties are sometimes only very small steps, but the good provision and support enables them to improve.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with strengths in their very good moral and social development. Children benefit from the many opportunities staff provide to extend personal development. At snack time, for example, children share and converse sensibly, show good manners and know why it is good to eat healthily. Staff model thoughtful and polite behaviour and, as a result, the children's behaviour is very good. Children enjoy attending nursery, and feel safe and secure. This is a source of satisfaction for parents. Attendance is satisfactory. Children contribute well to the successful running of the nursery, with the older ones helping the younger ones to settle well. There is lots of purposeful activity when it is time to clear up. Satisfactory learning and good social development mean that children are well placed to continue enjoying their education and to make a significant contribution in their lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Staff succeed in providing an encouraging, stimulating and safe place to learn. Support staff and students make a valuable contribution to children's learning. Typically, in both the morning and the afternoon sessions:

- staff engage children in purposeful discussions about the activities they are doing. Children appreciate these interventions and gain confidence in contributing their personal views
- the children's behaviour is managed well and they learn to be thoughtful, tolerant, well behaved and increasingly independent
- the good learning resources are deployed well so that children develop their learning as understanding grows, particularly in literacy
- the detailed planning is focused on the ways that children learn, as well as what they are to learn.

Assessments are frequent and focus closely on the gains being made by individual children. Records are linked directly to 'stepping-stone' statements drawn from the areas of learning specified nationally for children in the Foundation Stage. While this is a useful method for recording achievements, it has too little impact on planning for individuals, particularly for the children capable of higher attainment. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from good support and their individual education plans provide helpful guidance on the small steps to learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Most aspects of the broad and balanced curriculum promote the children's good progress in personal development. Enjoyable visits and visitors to the nursery play a key part in developing their knowledge, understanding and participation in the wider world. For instance, the work of a visiting chef fosters the children's understanding of the food and clothing of cultures other than their own. Throughout the day, the benefits of healthy eating, exercise and safe behaviour are emphasised. Interventions by staff encourage discussion and reflection. The good outdoor area provides children and adults with the opportunity to study, discuss and manage the growth of seeds and plants while gardening. The nursery rightly believes that the curriculum should provide for the different learning styles of individuals if all are to do their best. Access to the curriculum is good for the majority of children, but insufficient use of assessment information limits the opportunities, particularly for higher attaining children to learn more.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Provision for care and support is good. This includes the strong links the nursery has established with outside agencies to facilitate support for children and their parents. Procedures to safeguard children are in place, including arrangements for protection of vulnerable children, and the safety and security of the premises. Procedures to promote good attendance are good. For example, key workers intervene promptly if reasons for an absence are not known. The monitoring and tracking of children's learning is sound, but at an early stage of development. As a result, the use of this information to promote children's learning is limited.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school's ambitious vision of providing an effective Children's Centre is progressing well in some important ways. These include good quality care, developing the independence and confidence of children and their parents, and supporting staff in meeting the varied challenges of the new arrangements. Achieving this position in a relatively short time shows the headteacher's good leadership and the good support of parents, staff, governors and external partners. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is developing useful monitoring procedures, but there is a heavy reliance on the information they receive from the senior management team. Planning for improvement is developing well, with increasing use of success criteria that are measurable. Nevertheless, the evaluation of the nursery's work has some shortcomings and these have led to over generous judgements on the overall effectiveness of the nursery and the quality of teaching, learning, leadership, and management. These weaknesses include too much reliance on informal methods of monitoring teaching and learning. Financial management is prudent. The nursery is rightly aware that its new status will mean significant change in its sources of income and the importance of developing new partnerships.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	2

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Frizington Nursery School

Main Street

Frizington

Cumbria

CA26 3PF

18 October 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for the lovely time I had in your school this week. Your warm welcome and the help you gave to me made my day thoroughly enjoyable. I learned a lot about your school and have returned home with lots of memories. I will try very hard to share some of the special memories with you in this letter.

I was particularly impressed by:

- your very good behaviour and the way that you help each other when working or playing together
- your politeness and good manners at snack time and the way that you are careful about eating healthily
- the way the older children help the newcomers to the nursery
- your careful use of the interesting outdoor area: you are much better gardeners than I am!
- the hard work and care shown by the very friendly and helpful adults in the school
- the good number of exciting things for you to learn, including the popular visits and visitors. I looked at photographs of you working hard and enjoying your lessons.

In addition, the adults give a good example of how to grow up as generous and caring children. You will be ready to go successfully and happily to your next school.

I have congratulated the staff on what they do well and asked them to improve nursery by:

- looking at ways that they can help you to make even better progress in your learning
- doing all they can to identify where improvements in the nursery need to be made.

Finally, keep working hard and getting on with everyone inside and outside your school.

Very best wishes

John Heap

Lead inspector