



Walton Lane Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119079
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291307
Inspection date 15 November 2006
Reporting inspector David Earley

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Walton Lane Nursery School
School category	Maintained		Walton Lane, Nelson
Age range of pupils	3-4		Lancashire, BB9 8BP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01282 613437
Number on roll (school)	76	Fax number	01282 699862
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	County Councillor Mrs Shelagh Derwent
		Headteacher	Mrs Audrey Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2001		

Age group 3-4	Inspection date 15 November 2006	Inspection number 291307
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Walton Lane Nursery School is situated on the outskirts of Nelson. It provides education for children aged three and four. Since 2003, it has been the hub of a Children's Centre that offers a wide range of extended services for children from birth to five years of age. It serves an area of considerable social and economic deprivation. Most children are of White British background and a small proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Most children attend part time and many have experienced other facilities in the Children's Centre before they start the school. Attainment on entry to the school is well below what would be expected for children of their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school which gives excellent value for money. The school has very high aspirations for its children and realises these by providing very carefully and accurately for their individual needs. This enables children to achieve outstandingly well. Although most children start school with standards which are well below those expected for their ages, by the time they leave most reach the standards expected for their age. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress because they are particularly well supported. A significant factor in the high achievement is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher who is well supported by staff and governors who share her determination to provide nothing less than the very best for the children at the school.

An important factor in the outstanding quality of teaching is the knowledge teachers have of the children's needs and the skill with which they provide challenging tasks, which are suited to their different abilities. Every opportunity is taken to extend basic skills in literacy and numeracy in all the activities with which children are involved. The excellent curriculum is rich, stimulating and varied so that children want to learn and enjoy their work. Planning is thorough and adapted to individual needs. The curriculum is enhanced by the facilities and expertise available in the Children's Centre which are part of a continuous thread of provision throughout the school.

Personal development is excellent. Pupils develop confidence, high self-esteem and independence because attention to personal, social and emotional development is very strong and pervades all that the school provides. Children feel safe, know about how to stay healthy and are well prepared for future life. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is excellent and children get on well with each other and behave well. Care and guidance are excellent. Children and their families are very well known to staff, who ensure that they are safe and secure. This is an extremely caring school. There are close links with parents and they are very positive about the school and the progress their children make. Attendance overall is average, although a small proportion of parents do not ensure that their children attend regularly. The school has very efficient systems for assessing children and checking on their progress so that teachers know what they need to do next in order to improve.

Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher's very clear vision and determined drive to improve are shared by staff and governors. School development planning is based on a careful appraisal of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the budget is used carefully to support improvements. There have been significant improvements to the building and extended provision since the previous inspection. Governors play a full part in helping to shape the direction of the school and are very supportive. The school clearly shows that it has an excellent capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise attendance by continuing to work with the small group of parents who do not send their children to school regularly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Most children start the school with skills that are well below what is usual for their age, particularly in mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. The school's very effective system for tracking the children's progress, the challenging teaching and a rich and stimulating environment ensure that all children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the small proportion of children from minority ethnic backgrounds, achieve outstandingly well. By the time they leave the school, most pupils are working at the expected levels for their age. No opportunity is missed to develop social and language skills; consequently, children increase their confidence and independence and talk willingly with peers and adults. Children make very good progress in their mathematical development, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world, because their lessons are exciting and fun. When, for example, they observe, handle and discuss different fruits, or count the legs on toy dogs, they extend their learning without realising it. Those children who learn at a faster rate can write their names, count on and back to 20 and use mouse and key board skills with growing confidence. Children have a wide range of activities with which to hone their skills. They delight in threading beads in patterns, producing careful collage work and in loading and unloading trucks as they make deliveries from the outside 'toy shop' to the 'warehouse.' They thrive in the inspiring environment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are excellent. Learning is fun and relationships are excellent so that children make remarkable gains in their personal qualities. They settle quickly to daily routines and learn to respect each other and understand the differences between right and wrong. Children love coming to school and as soon as they arrive they eagerly explore the wide range of activities attractively and accessibly prepared for them. They enthusiastically discuss with their key workers what they are going to do because there are lots of opportunities to work independently or together. They know about which foods are good for you because they have healthy snacks and meals and get plenty of exercise. There is a very warm and welcoming atmosphere and children know and trust their key workers so that they feel safe and secure. Attendance is satisfactory overall. Although the school works hard to encourage a small group of parents whose children do not attend regularly, this is not always successful. Children learn about their responsibilities to the community by helping to clear away and take turns. Because they develop good basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), they are very well prepared for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. A significant factor in the progress made by most children is that they are encouraged to become independent and make choices. Typically, there is a very well-judged balance between teacher-directed activities and activities chosen by children, and the working atmosphere is one of excitement, hard work and enjoyment. Staff have a very clear understanding of individual needs and ways of working, and use this very sensitively to provide children with challenging tasks. The scene is usually one of sustained concentration where children become engrossed in their tasks and, either by their own choice or the teacher's direction, move to other tasks and quickly become immersed in them. Crucial to the whole process of teaching and learning is the quality of discussions staff have with children, where by careful questioning or prompting language, understanding and skills are extended. For example, when working with remote controlled toys, the children extended their positional language: forward, backwards, their understanding of technology and their use of ordinal number: first and second. Work is well matched to abilities so that children are challenged at appropriate levels. This is enhanced by the use of assessment so that teachers are clear about what children need to do next in order to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is excellent. It is very carefully planned to meet the needs of all children. A very strong emphasis on practical experiences shows a clear understanding of how children learn and is well complemented by the importance given to personal, social and emotional education, which helps to increase confidence and self-esteem. Staff are very skilled at identifying children's interests and planning tasks to suit individual needs. The curriculum is further enriched by a range of visits and visitors to the school. When the children role-play the baby clinic with the school nurse, they learn about care and growth. Puppet shows help them to learn about road safety. Planning includes a careful balance between the different areas of learning and in the use of indoor activities and the rich and extensive outdoor area. The curriculum is extended through the school's links with the wide range of services available in the Children's Centre such as further access to ICT provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. In this school every child really matters and this forms the basis for all that the school does. The school works in very close partnership with parents. They have very positive views of the school and are extremely well informed about individual progress and day-to-day activities. One parent wrote that 'her child becomes very excited in the mornings when it is Nursery and upset at

the weekend when there is no Nursery.’ The school lies at the heart of the Children’s Centre. Staff from the Centre, such as family link workers and health workers, bring their considerable and varied expertise to the benefit of children and their families. Child protection and risk assessment procedures are effective and the school carefully follows government recommendations for safeguarding children. Children feel at home in school and this enhances their personal development. The school’s emphasis on supporting the needs of each child is a significant element in the achievement of the children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Provision for these children is excellent so that they are well integrated into the life and work of the school. Very comprehensive systems for assessing and checking progress contribute significantly to high achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding and the leadership of the headteacher is exemplary. Throughout the school, there is a very clear commitment shared by staff and governors to meet the needs of all children and provide secure foundations for their learning, now and in the future. This leads to high academic and personal achievement. The headteacher’s vision and inspiration underpin the school’s determination to provide only the very best for all its children in this very inclusive school. She managed the move to the new premises and the extension of services with professional insight and flair. She is very well supported by staff who work extremely well together to support the school’s relentless drive to improve. For example, teachers new to the school are very thoroughly inducted and quickly share the school’s high expectations and aspirations. Although there were no significant areas for improvement identified by the previous inspection, the new premises and extension of services have helped to improve provision considerably. The school has in place very effective systems for self-evaluation which lead to clear priorities in the school improvement plan. Governors are supportive and very well informed so that they are ideally positioned to help shape the direction of the school and hold it to account for its performance. The budget is carefully managed to support the raising of standards and teaching is regularly checked in order to make improvements.

Dynamic leadership, rigorous self-evaluation and a shared striving for excellence give the school excellent capacity to improve.

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

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Walton Lane Nursery School

Walton Lane

Nelson

Lancashire

BB9 8BP

16 November 2006

Dear Children

I think your school is super. I really enjoyed coming to see you because you made me feel very welcome. I think that you like school and are very good at deciding what you want to do each day and always try your best. I am pleased to see that you like healthy foods and get lots of exercise and that you all get on well with each other. I think that your headteacher looks after the school really well and she and all the adults work very hard to make sure that you are safe and have lots of interesting things to do. Teachers know you and your families very well so that they know what you like to find out about. I enjoyed looking round the Centre and I am pleased that it helps to look after you as well. Most of you come to the Nursery every day and it is a shame that sometimes some of you miss coming so that they miss all the lovely things that are going on. I enjoyed watching you loading the truck to take toys to the warehouse and liked it when you were finding out about how old the teddies were. I especially liked the fluffy one!

Thank you once again for being so kind to me!

Yours sincerely

David Earley

Lead inspector