

Abbey Green Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107188
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	309340
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	121
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Shafiq Porter
Headteacher	Mrs M Dixon
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2004
School address	Green Lane Bradford West Yorkshire BD8 8HT
Telephone number	01274 722070
Fax number	01274 743926

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is situated close to the centre of the city and is about average in size. Children attend on a full-time and part-time basis. Virtually all children are from minority ethnic families, the largest group being Pakistani, and nine out of ten speak English as an additional language. Many children are entitled to free school meals and a large proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The Children's Centre, which was not part of the inspection, was registered as integral to the Nursery school in January 2005, when the new school building was opened. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed since the previous inspection. The school has gained the nationally recognised award of Investors in People.

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 many outstanding features and is living up to its motto of 'All different. All special. All equal'. It provides good value for money. As a result of the headteacher's vision and commitment, much has been achieved since the new building opened with its added Children's Centre. A key feature of the provision is the extremely favourable ratio of staff to children, giving all children a high level of support and guidance. This is of particular benefit to children who are at the early stages of learning to speak English. Parents are full of praise for the school and often comment on the, 'caring, helpful and very nice staff'. The school's strong reputation in the area means there is pressure for places every year and a long waiting list.

Children join the school with skills that are very low; by the end of Nursery, standards are below those typical for their age. The good quality of teaching and learning and good curriculum enable all children to settle in quickly and make good progress in all areas of learning. Close contact with adults is a major factor in the outstanding progress children make in all aspects of their personal development. For example, behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. Children's comments that they really like school are reinforced by parents who say that they find it hard to get them to go home.

The good quality of teaching and learning, and exceptional care, support and guidance ensure children have time to explore, investigate or solve problems for themselves. Colourful displays of children's work reflect the good quality and range of learning activities. Children are free to choose from a wide range of exciting and interesting indoor and outdoor activities. All thoroughly enjoy the activities planned for them and quickly become absorbed in role play or the many opportunities to be creative. Children quickly become confident, independent learners.

The headteacher, ably supported by all staff, is determined to create a centre of excellence. The school's own evaluation of its strengths and areas for development is accurate. Good strategies have been introduced recently to help boys do as well as girls. Involving parents more in their children's learning and developing the role of governors are correctly identified as other priorities for improvement. However, progress in implementing these priorities has been a little slower than in other areas. Nevertheless, given the high quality of leadership provided by the headteacher, commitment of staff and what has been achieved since the last inspection, the school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

As a Nursery school, the Foundation Stage is completely covered by the overall effectiveness section above.

What the school should do to improve further

- Involve parents more in their children's learning.
- Develop the role of governors and ensure that they are more involved in monitoring the effectiveness of all aspects of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well from starting points that are usually well below those typically expected for their age, particularly in relation to language and social skills. Staff place a strong emphasis on the early development of children's personal, social, language and mathematical skills. This helps children to make rapid progress in these areas and prepares them very well for future success. Most attain skills that are below the level expected for their age in all areas of learning. Boys' skills have been significantly below those of girls, especially in reading and writing, but effective strategies recently introduced are helping to close the gap. Children make impressive gains in learning to speak English because of all the support they receive from their teachers and helpers, and all the interesting things planned for them. These cause so much excitement that children are keen to talk about them. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because they are identified early and their needs are met.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Parents comment that their children grow socially and academically because they love being in school. Consequently, attendance is good. Children are busy from the moment they enter with a wealth of interesting and exciting learning opportunities to enjoy. They choose where to learn and play and which resources to use. They tidy away carefully when asked. This gives children confidence and boosts their self-esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The excellent family atmosphere at lunchtime, with every child having a cooked meal, reinforces language and social skills brilliantly. Children are increasingly aware of others who may need help and behave responsibly. For example, a boy, who was helping to water the plants, switched off the water butt tap when it was left running. Children have an increasing understanding of different cultures and enjoy taking part in special celebrations for different world religions. All were excited about the forthcoming Shadi and making invitations for Hamid Bear's wedding. They enjoy playing with the special dolls that portray different personalities and behaviours, and tracking the adventures of the three nursery bears.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan stimulating and exciting learning experiences both indoors and outdoors, so that children enjoy every minute of their learning. The high level of interaction, whereby adults talk constantly with children, is largely responsible for the quick development of children's language skills. Occasionally, teachers' questioning skills are not as effective as they should be, limiting the opportunities for children to talk. Moreover, in group time at the end of sessions, the best use is not always made of the many teaching assistants who tidy up and prepare rather than continue to support children's learning. All staff make good use of computers and digital cameras to promote learning. Any difficulties in learning that children may have are dealt with very well. Staff identify potential problems very early on and, where necessary, seek expert advice to ensure appropriate levels of support. All adults have the highest of expectations of

children in terms of concentration, commitment and response. As a result, children's behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The significant strengths in the curriculum ensure children love coming to school and are busily learning each day. The curriculum has been modified to ensure boys' interests are captivated and their needs are met. There is a much higher emphasis on providing opportunities to encourage boys to develop early writing skills. This has resulted in a significant improvement in the standards boys attain, closing the gap with girls who do very well in reading and writing. Just occasionally, the special boxes with writing materials designed to appeal to boys are overlooked and, therefore, lose their value. Every area of learning has its place outdoors as well as indoors and this helps to consolidate and extend children's learning. The exciting outdoor environment is constantly changing. At the moment, children enjoy tending the garden areas, playing musical instruments, climbing on the adventurous play equipment or sitting in the tent. Indoors, they concentrate well when making vegetable kebabs, exploring the feelings of Ruchana, the life-like doll, when she broke her glasses, and when creating a nest from twigs for baby owls. The curriculum is supported well with a good range of visits to local places of interest.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

High quality support from teachers, teaching assistants and students ensures that children settle quickly at the start of each session. Children feel safe and cared for and quickly gain confidence as a result of the support they receive. The generous staffing levels ensure that there is always an adult close at hand to encourage and support; all are expert at encouraging children's independence. There are appropriate procedures in place to safeguard learners, and health and safety systems are well established. All staff carefully monitor children's activities, responses and achievements very closely. Daily records supplement more formal observations and equip staff to make accurate assessments of children's work and progress. Adults are very quick to identify children's strengths and areas to develop, for example, of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Furthermore, the more able children are extremely well supported because of the speedy identification of their skills and talents. The school has established strong links with neighbouring schools and these ensure children transfer to primary school with minimal anxiety.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's passion for the school and its children is clearly evident. It is remarkable what has already been achieved in the short time since moving into the new building and establishing the Children's Centre. The extremely conscientious deputy headteacher, and all staff who share the unswerving vision, provide able support. The school knows itself well and its self-evaluation is accurate. Good progress has been made on improving boys' performance, especially in early writing skills, but progress on the priorities of developing the role of governors and increasing the involvement of parents has been slower. Governors tend to change fairly often, as parents only have a short time when their children attend school, and this disrupts

the development of the governing body. Governors are very supportive but rely heavily on information from staff about how well the school is doing rather than finding out for themselves. Parents are very supportive of the school but improving their involvement has been affected by the absence of staff taking the lead in this priority.

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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	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

I hope your teachers will read my letter to you so that you know how much I really, really enjoyed my two days in your lovely Nursery school. Thank you for being so kind to me when I was with you.

Your school is a good school with some extra special things happening there. Your mums, dads and carers told me how pleased they are that you come to this school and how very nice your teachers are. There is so much for you to do and to enjoy. I'm not sure that I could make my mind up about my favourite activity. There were so many things that I liked, including seeing you build a nest for the baby owls or a car from the wooden blocks, using the computers, making a kebab and exploring the dark den. It would be just as hard to choose my favourite thing outside! You did a good job of watering the plants. The tent looked cosy and your climbing equipment, slides and huge sand pit looked great fun. Those of you who played the musical instruments did so well that it made some of your helpers want to dance.

Thank you for making my inspection of your school so much fun. I know your mums, dads and carers enjoy having lunch with you and I hope there will be lots more times for them to visit and see the kind of things that you are learning each day. The special people called school governors are also going to visit you more often to find ways to make school even more exciting for you.

Please say hello to your travelling bears Hamid, Junaid and Sabah for me. I hope you keep on being very very kind to Ruchsana and look after one another as well as you care for Squeaky-Weaky, your guinea pig.