

Lee Royd Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119064
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313171
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Sonja Oyen HMI

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bernard Holden MBE
Headteacher	Mrs Karen Coffey
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Royds Street Accrington Lancashire BB5 2LH
Telephone number	01254 231725
Fax number	01254 231725

Age group	3–4
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

This purpose-built Nursery school is in a residential area, close to Accrington town centre, where there is a mix of social and economic backgrounds. While most children come from the immediate area, a small proportion travel some distance. Many parents attended the Nursery as children. Just over a quarter of the children are of Asian heritage; they speak limited or no English on starting at Lee Royd. Overall, the children have skills and knowledge broadly typical for their age although there is wide variation. Four children have specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The children start in the Nursery school in the September following their third birthday. A small number of children attend the before and after-school sessions, the lunchtime club, holiday clubs and Squirrels Academy, which provides Nursery education in term time for children aged two to five years. A significant number of children in the Nursery attended Squirrels Academy last year. The day care and education provision are run by Squirrel Club Ltd and managed by the headteacher. This independent provision was inspected in May 2007.

The Nursery has morning and afternoon sessions, with 55 children attending each. At the time of the inspection, building work was continuing to refurbish the school building and grounds with no access to some parts.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Lee Royd is an outstanding school. It is best summed up in the words of one parent who wrote: 'A super Nursery, the best start a child could wish for.' This was typical of the praise and overwhelming support of parents for the Nursery, the headteacher and staff. The outstanding provision, particularly the high quality of teaching and care, ensures that the children thrive, find learning fun and achieve extremely well.

The exceptional, clear sighted leadership of the headteacher underlies the school's success in fulfilling its mission statement to provide a high quality curriculum and learning environment. The Nursery gives excellent value for money. The governors, headteacher and staff have the interests of each child at heart. They are shrewd in appointing experienced staff and stretching finances. They are alert to the changing needs of the community and conscientious in seeking and acting on the views of parents. Good examples are the development of extended services and the packs of activities with guidance for parents to help their children at home. The headteacher and staff are constantly looking to ways to improve, and as a result, modest in their judgement of their effectiveness. The school development plan, based on relevant priorities, is not explicit enough about how proposed actions will benefit the children.

The very strong teamwork, commitment and enthusiasm of all who work at Lee Royd ensure the school runs like clockwork. Highest priority is given to fostering the children's confidence and independence. The staff are assiduous in ensuring that the children feel safe and secure, especially so during the current building work. The children behave extremely well; they know why rules and routines are important in getting along with others. They know about healthy eating and living and make the most of their time outdoors. Lee Royd Nursery is a happy, calm and motivating place to be. Praise and encouragement abound. Staff and children enjoy their time there. Many parents commented on how their children want to go to school at weekends.

The staff take pride in sharing with parents what they have seen the children do and heard them say. Along with how the week's activities are linked to particular areas of learning, the staff share with the parents the children's learning targets. Some of the targets are too general and long term to involve the children in commenting on how well they are doing. A key strength of the Nursery is the considerable skill of the teachers and support staff in fostering the children's learning through practical activities indoors and out. All the adults are sensitive to the needs and moods of young children; they know how to catch the children's interest and when to up the challenge with new ideas and tasks. As a consequence, each child makes marked progress and many make rapid strides in learning to understand and speak English. When they leave for primary school, the children are well grounded in early reading, writing and number. Some are doing as well as children a year older. All are willing learners, confident to try new things and experienced in using different equipment and materials, particularly in information and communication technology (ICT).

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

As a nursery school, the Foundation Stage is completely covered by the Overall Effectiveness section.

What the school should do to improve further

There are no significant areas for improvement, the following are refinements:

- Identify clearly in the school development plan how the proposed actions will benefit the children.
- Ensure that the learning targets for children are simple enough for them to understand and comment on as part of the procedures to track their progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

From varying starting points, which for some children are low for their age, all achieve exceptionally well because of the outstanding staged provision. When they leave the Nursery, most are well on track to reach the standard expected at the end of the Reception year and a significant proportion is set to exceed it. Standards are on the rise because the staff are upping the challenge when appropriate, particularly in reading, writing and number. Many of the children already have a go at writing their name unaided, recognise letters and confidently count beyond 20. Several children wrote lengthy letters to the 'giant' who left them a present, writing in lines and copying some letters from print in the classroom. The children are mastering key skills, such as cutting, exploring and manipulating materials and tools, as well as acquiring new words and phrases as part of listening to stories and learning about different topics. They talked confidently about polar bears at the North Pole and penguins at the South. While using the computer mouse to move symbols on screen, children told each other to 'click on there'. Children with language difficulties have increased their vocabulary and repertoire of signs. Similarly, children who do not have English as a first language have gained in their understanding of English and are starting to speak English at school and at home.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The children make excellent progress in their personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is because the adults expect and encourage the children to do things for themselves and involve them in a wide variety of experiences. Many children are self-assured, taking off their own coats, finding their name card and coming into the Nursery keen to see what is new. Boys and girls play happily together, often for long periods, and show remarkable tolerance of others. They find learning fun – handling soap flake goo caused much excitement and laughter. They know the routines and need only gentle reminders to wear aprons and to tidy up when the horn sounds. They used the new soap dispensers sensibly when washing their hands and remembered to put used paper towels in the bin. They often preferred the fruit to other items in their lunchboxes and at snack time happily munched on carrot sticks and apple slices. The children know they have to show 'kind hands' and thought for others to be chosen as 'star of the week'. They are proud to have their name on display and a certificate to take home. They liked the photographs taken during the celebrations for Christmas and Eid, and also those that they had taken with the digital camera the day before.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The high quality of teaching is the prime reason why the children do so well in their learning and personal development. The teachers and assistants form strong, effective teams. All the adults are quick to act when something needs doing or when a child needs support. Rooms, activities and sessions are well organised to provide a changing range of activities which catch the children's interest and move on their learning. In class sessions, the adults reinforce and rehearse knowledge, such as counting how many children are present and finding words that start with the same sound as the day of the week. They skilfully introduce new concepts and experiences and pose questions that prompt the children to describe, explain and offer their own ideas. All cleverly engage the children in conversation and take part in activities. As a result, the children are drawn into trying new things and solving problems, such as using a roller tape to measure the gap between two bollards. The use of Urdu and Punjabi as well as English by the bilingual teaching assistants enables the children with limited English to take a full part and to show what they know. The staff work as one to praise and reward the children with stickers, smiles and thumbs-up. Regular observations of the children and reviews of the day allow the staff to plan and amend activities to meet the needs of individuals by extending the challenge for some or repeating activities for others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum epitomises the best for young children. Rightly to the fore is a strong emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development and the other required five areas of learning are well fostered through experiences related to themes. There is an effective mix of independent activities and adult-directed work both indoors and out, with good quality equipment and resources. The use of hard hats, reflective jackets and ear defenders added much to the attraction of the 'builder's yard', as did the small shiny notebooks in the writing area. Over the year, the children take part in a good range of events in school, such as healthy breakfast day, and meet many visitors who come to talk about their work and interests.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The high quality of pastoral care is reflected in the parents' unanimous agreement that they feel their children are safe and well cared for. All the required safeguarding procedures are in place. The headteacher is conscientious in ensuring that staff, parents and visitors are aware of these procedures and in updating regularly staff expertise in child protection and first aid. The staff are good role models in eating healthily, showing good manners, and celebrating others' achievements. Parents praised the staff's open, friendly discussions with them and their willingness to act on suggestions such as the introduction of home packs and lending libraries. The Nursery's good links with other child care providers and primary schools ease the children's move to and from the Nursery. The move for children from the Squirrel Academy into the Nursery is almost seamless because the children know the staff and are familiar with the routines. This is enhanced by the compilation of a record of achievement which is presented to the parents at the end of the Nursery year. The photographs, samples of work and comments from the parents and teachers give parents a good overview of their children's progress. As yet, the

records do not reflect how well the children are doing in meeting their learning targets, which are often too general to involve the children in reviewing how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The Nursery has improved since the last inspection because of outstanding leadership and management, particularly the headteacher's strong conviction and clear vision of what Lee Royd Nursery should offer the local community. Her focused oversight has ensured that the extended services are a totally integrated part of Lee Royd, with shared values and ways of working. It is not a surprise to parents that more and more people want their children to attend. The governors, led by an experienced and well informed chair, keep a watchful and critical eye on finances and the curriculum. They, with the headteacher, are already considering the implications of national initiatives and drawing up plans. Governors, headteacher and staff want Lee Royd to be the best; they are willing to take calculated risks such as introducing the teaching of letter sounds and words. Their analysis of the children's progress last year shows that this has added significant value. It also indicates very good capacity to continue to improve the outcomes for children. The school development plan reflects this with an outline of actions to strengthen the provision but does not identify clearly enough how it will benefit the children. The headteacher knows her school and staff extremely well. She is constantly monitoring what is happening and puts high store on making the most of each person's abilities and skills. Morale is high and the work to gain awards for the Nursery ensures everyone feels valued.

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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
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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 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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Dear Children

Inspection of Lee Royd Nursery School, Lancashire, BB5 2LH

Thank you for making me so welcome when I spent two days at Lee Royd. I can see why you enjoy coming to Nursery – it is really super! Everyone was having fun even in the rain. Like you, I was curious to know whose big boots were left in the builder’s yard, and I wish I had been able to make beans on toast. Mrs Coffey is very clever in knowing what to do to help you learn. She wants you to have only the best and I was pleased to see that you learn a lot and do extremely well!

To make things even better, I have asked Mr Holden, Mrs Coffey and the teachers to

- Set you some little things to learn and to ask you how you have done.
- To be very clear in their plans about what any changes will mean for you.

You can help by telling them what you do and don’t like.

KEEP HAVING FUN!

Sonja Øyen

Her Majesty’s Inspector