

Westminster Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110953
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	325261
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Paul Bamber

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.
The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	60
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Appropriate authority	The governing Body
Chair	Mrs J Rhodes
Headteacher	Mrs E P Smith
Date of previous school inspection	November 2005
School address	Nelson Street Crewe Cheshire CW2 7LJ
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector observed the Nursery's continuous provision and held meetings with the headteacher, governors, parents and staff. He examined the Nursery's work and looked at its school improvement plan, the tracking and analysis of children's progress, especially those referring to the support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English. He also scrutinised minutes of governors' meetings and parental questionnaires.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the Nursery's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- children's achievement overall but especially that of those with speech and language difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language
- how well provision meets the needs of children who spend different lengths of time in the Nursery
- the quality of teaching and of assessment.

Information about the school

Children attend this average size Nursery either in the morning or the afternoon. They join in the term following their third birthday. This means that they spend a minimum of three and a maximum of five terms in the Nursery according to their birth date. They come from a wide catchment area, both from the immediate locality and from suburban areas bordering Crewe. Since the last inspection there are many more children from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language. These proportions are higher than normal. The main representative minority ethnic group is Bangladeshi, followed by Polish, Russian and Chinese. There has also been an increase in the proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, especially speech and language difficulties. There are places for 104 children; 60 children attend currently. The Nursery provides a lunch club for up to 18 children to serve the needs of some parents. It has several awards including the Family Learning Quality Standards Kite mark, the Inclusion Quality Mark and the Effective Early Learning Quality Assurance Award.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This Nursery provides children with an outstanding start to their education. Excellent leadership and management ensure high quality learning, a superb level of care and children's great enjoyment in all the setting offers. Children achieve outstandingly well in all areas of their learning. This is because staff are very experienced in and extremely knowledgeable about the needs and stages of development of three and four-year-olds. Having entered the Nursery with skills below those expected for their age they leave with skills above those expected for children entering the Reception Year. This is a reflection of the excellent teaching and support they receive. The headteacher and governors use resources most effectively to ensure that the higher than average proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language have the appropriate support that enables them to achieve as highly as other children. Such practice reflects the Inclusion Quality Mark the school has gained.

The Nursery buzzes with activity and enjoyment. Children rush in at the start of their session, 'abandon' their parents happily, self-register and promptly immerse themselves in the exciting activities on offer. They role-play, model, paint, use cameras and computers and handle and look at books. All relate extremely well to each other and quickly adapt to routines. Children often remind each other and adults about the 'right things' to do. Their behaviour is excellent and they get on extremely well with their key workers, adults who work exclusively with a small group of children at certain times in the session. Children have a keen sense of enquiry and they are actively encouraged to explore and extend their interest both indoors and outside.

While the Nursery provides the best possible outdoor provision it can, there are some restrictions on the opportunities for children to learn and play outside and to develop independence because of limited access to the outside area. Managers are constantly seeking to improve this aspect, but have been frustrated somewhat by difficulties in adapting the building to enable free access to outside areas. Although the school's self-evaluation is generally accurate, if somewhat modest, and improvement since the last inspection has been good overall, it is the outdoor play issue which means that the school has good rather than outstanding capacity for sustained improvement. A considerable strength of the Nursery's work is its extremely productive partnership with parents and carers. As a result of day-to-day contact, family learning and stay-and-play sessions and the parents and toddler club, the

needs of children are very well met and parents and carers feel valued partners in their children's early education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To continue to seek ways of providing easy and continuous access to the outside learning and play areas.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of children?

1

Children achieve outstandingly well as a result of excellent teaching and provision. Key to the development of their above expected skills is the adults' very keen focus on ensuring that children feel safe, secure and valued and that their personal, social and emotional development has high priority when they first start in the Nursery. These successful building blocks mean that children take full advantage of the wealth of engaging opportunities to achieve extremely well in all areas of their learning. The quite high proportion of children with speech and language difficulties are supported extremely well to make the same excellent rate of progress as all other children. The same applies to the higher than average proportion of children who speak English as an additional language. The support they receive from home-language speakers and a trained support teacher enables them to make very good progress in both acquiring English and in developing above expected skills in all areas of their learning.

Children work and play safely. Because they are given lots of guidance and positive modelling, they acquire a very effective knowledge of healthy lifestyles, for example, of 'good' and 'bad' foods. Their exemplary behaviour is testament to how much they enjoy their experiences and their wholehearted commitment to joining in and wanting to please, reflects their extremely positive attitudes. Children eagerly follow routines and demonstrate independence, for example, through self-registering, by signifying their involvement in a particular activity and by recognising that if all the bands have gone from the hooks then an activity is 'full up'. They show patience, wait their turn and share amicably. Their growing understanding of the wonders of nature and their awareness of the needs, concerns and differences of others, means that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
Children's attainment ¹	2
The quality of children's learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	1

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

How well do children achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
To what extent do children feel safe?	1
How well do children behave?	1
To what extent do children adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do children contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Children's attendance	2
How well do children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1
What is the extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

The quality of the school's work

The excellent quality of provision is due to the combination of very purposeful, highly skilled teaching and to very well focused planning. There are extremely accurate assessments of children's attainment and progress and insightful identification of the next steps. That these next steps are successfully achieved is due to children enjoying highly stimulating activities which meet their needs and interests extremely well. For example, children's fascination with the building work currently in progress in their outside area is fuelled further by the creation of a 'Bob the Builder's Yard' in which children play at building with toy electric and pneumatic drills, measuring tapes, spirit levels and work benches. Outside the children excitedly but skilfully balance, jump, negotiate obstacle courses and trails, and play happily with untuned musical instruments and large wheeled toys. They bravely test the limits of their self-confidence by climbing ever higher. All these activities are closely supervised to ensure maximum safety. However, because of the limitations caused by a lack of free access children cannot continuously use the outside area. Whether indoors or outdoors, adults continually promote children's language skills and extend their vocabulary through prompts, conversation and open ended questions. Together with precise teaching of letter sounds, this results in children's speaking and early reading and writing skills being very well developed. Clear expectations, stated firmly but sensitively, also successfully encourage children to listen carefully to adults and to each other. The very high quality of care underpins all provision and ensures children's most positive response to all that is offered. The lunch club is very well run, offering children many learning opportunities as well as instilling good eating habits and encouraging socialisation.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
High quality teaching and purposeful learning	1
Effective assessment	1
An appropriate curriculum which meets children's needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	1
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership is highly effective and the Nursery is managed most competently. The headteacher continually seeks to improve provision and communicates her ambitions for this clearly to all staff. Her involvement in teaching and as a key worker means that she is able to model good practice and to pick up on any areas of provision that might need improvement. Her frontline presence also reassures parents and carers, provides immediate contact with children and their parents and promotes very effective leadership of the team.

Leaders and managers, including governors, are extremely successful in ensuring equality of opportunity and in eliminating discrimination. This is evidenced by the equally outstanding progress of different groups of children. The Nursery's contribution to community cohesion is good. The children and parents of the wide range of ethnic and sometimes transient migrant population in the immediate area are welcomed and embraced for the benefit of all. Leaders are extremely conscientious as regards safeguarding and child protection procedures. At the time of the inspection these were at least good and met requirements. The partnerships the Nursery has forged with the local authority, with external support agencies, and with other maintained Nurseries and Early Years providers in the authority, contribute significantly to children's learning and to enhancing staff expertise. Governance is good. Governors ensure prudent financial management, support the Nursery's work positively and offer expertise. Value for money is excellent.

These are the grades for leadership and management

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
Communicating ambition and driving improvement	1
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	1
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	1
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	1
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	1
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

There were 32 questionnaires returned by parent/carers. All of these expressed positive views. The vast majority endorsed the Nursery's excellent practice fully, being especially complimentary about how well children are cared for, behave and learn and about the welcoming and friendly staff. Typical of the comments is, 'This is an excellent school I will continue to recommend it to friends and family. There has

not been one day when my child has not wanted to come to school. I am so very pleased with her progress since she has been attending this Nursery.' No parent/carer expressed a concern or negative view.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its children's needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the children's work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the children's attainment at the end of a Key Stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the children's success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Children might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



20 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Westminster Nursery School, Crewe, CW2 7LJ

What a lovely time I had when I came to the Nursery to see how you were all getting on. I very much enjoyed chatting with you, watching you learn and play and finding out what your parents/carers thought about the Nursery.

I know you are very lucky to go to such a super Nursery. We grown-ups would describe it as 'outstanding'. There are so many exciting things for you to do and to play with. Wasn't it great to have all the drills, tapes and work benches so that you could play being builders and copy what the men were doing outside? I agree with your parents/carers who think that your teachers all look after you so well. This makes you feel safe and happy. The headteacher and the other teachers know very well what you do and what is best for you to do next to help you to learn really well and to help you grow up being friendly, helpful and well behaved children. Part of my job is to suggest things that could make the Nursery even better. Your headteacher knows that it would be better for you if you could go outside to learn and play whenever you wanted to. I have asked the adults who run the Nursery to keep trying to alter the building so that you can do this more easily, especially now that you are going to have a lovely covered area and a super pagoda outside.

Thank you very much once again. I hope you keep enjoying going to your Nursery and carry on learning so well.

With my best wishes

Mr Paul Bamber
Lead inspector

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