

# Rockwood Nursery School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 119065           |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Lancashire       |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 326938           |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 25–26 March 2009 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Kathryn Dodd     |

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

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|---|---|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Nursery   |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Maintained  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 3–4   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed   |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |   |
| School (total)                            | 94  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                                  |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mrs Diane McKinley                                  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mrs Ruth Donnachie                                  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 1 May 2006  |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Kingsland Road<br>Burnley<br>Lancashire<br>BB11 3PU |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01282 426711  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01282 426711  |

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|--------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 3–4              |
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Almost all of the children at this average sized nursery school are of White British heritage. A very small number are from minority ethnic groups. A small proportion of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school makes provision for children living in the locality, as well as children from surrounding districts. These districts include areas of social and economic advantage as well as areas of disadvantage. A pre-school playgroup, managed by the governing body, is held for not more than two hours each morning on the school premises, providing for eight children, aged two and three years, at each session.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This good school has an accurate view of its effectiveness and provides good value for money. Children thrive in an extremely happy, very warm, caring and nurturing setting, so that they achieve well academically and make outstanding progress in their personal development. Children thoroughly enjoy everything that is on offer. They feel totally safe because of the very high quality of care, and continual encouragement that radiates from all staff. Children's behaviour is consistently exemplary. They feel a keen sense of belonging to their vibrant school community. They grow in confidence and become eager young learners. These wonderful personal qualities, along with their good academic achievement, is why they are extremely well prepared to be successful in the next phase of their education. The school enjoys an excellent reputation. Parents express their overwhelming support. They, typically, say that they have utmost confidence in the quality of care offered, which reflects the total dedication of everyone to the achievements and welfare of their children.

Children start the Nursery with skills and abilities that are overall below those usually seen for this age. As a result of good quality teaching and learning and a good curriculum, children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, learn and develop well. Consequently, most are working at levels typical for their age by the time they leave. Staff provide practical and stimulating activities to engage children successfully in learning. Key workers know each individual in their group exceptionally well. This enables them to provide the care and support needed, so that children achieve well. However, their planning and questioning does not always take the children's varying learning needs sufficiently into account. This is because staff do not yet always record or share with one another effectively detailed records indicating what children already know and can do.

Children's good overall academic achievement and outstanding personal development reflects good quality of leadership, management and governance. The headteacher's passion for ensuring children can achieve well in an inclusive and exceptionally safe setting, is clearly evident. Highly effective partnerships beyond school, such as with parents and external agencies, help to provide seamless support and care for children's welfare. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school has accurately pinpointed most improvement priorities. This has led to good improvement since the previous inspection, such as developing the quality of provision for learning outdoors and sharper methods to spot where learning could accelerate. However, the methods used to monitor and evaluate the successes of any improvement actions are not always sufficiently rigorous. Community cohesion is satisfactory but the promotion of children's understanding of the diversity of the locality is underdeveloped. Staff have a very strong sense of teamwork and commitment and this gives the school a good platform upon which to build in the future.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve assessment especially in recording children's small steps of learning in detail; using the information consistently well to plan and provide activities and tailoring questioning to reflect precisely children's varying learning needs.
- Improve the rigour of evaluating the school's performance, including the promotion of community cohesion and the success of improvement initiatives.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children start Nursery with skills that are below what is usual for their age and in recent years, their skills have been declining. Communication skills, notably in speaking and listening, are sometimes weak. Children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well, so that, by the time they leave, they have made up for most of their weaknesses, and their skills are typical for their age. Speaking and listening skills, however, remain lower for some children, which is an improvement priority identified by the school. Children's personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. Adults make the most of every opportunity to help children to learn to get along well together and develop their independence. Although both boys and girls make good progress, it is more rapid for girls than for boys. Recent adaptations to the curriculum and the purchase of new 'boy-friendly' resources are helping to successfully close this gap. The skills of children who attend morning sessions are generally more advanced than those attending in the afternoon. This is because a minority of children assigned to afternoon session do not attend on a regular basis.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. They participate enthusiastically in everything on offer. They act responsibly and are keenly aware of how to keep themselves safe, particularly walking up and down the school staircase. Children talk enthusiastically about the fruits offered at snack time and chose sensibly. This, along with many opportunities to take part in physical activities such as 'superstars', dance sessions, or by exploring the school grounds, help children to understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Children are extremely kind and caring, showing respect towards one another and adults. They behave extremely well, get along well together, can take turns and share. Children are keen to contribute to school life. They participate enthusiastically in fundraising efforts, such as 'Rainbow Day'. They know that the funds they raise, with the tremendous support of parents, have helped to purchase resources, such as the outdoor log cabins. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their understanding of local community life, however, is not yet fully developed. This is because there are not yet enough opportunities for them to get involved or to visit it. For the vast majority of children, attendance is good. For a minority, however, progress continues to be held back because their attendance is insufficiently regular.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development**

#### **Grade: 2**

Children learn and develop well. The extremely warm and caring relationships between adults and children, along with a bright and lively learning environment, creative, practical and stimulating activities all combine to fire children's young imaginations. They quickly develop an eagerness to learn because it is such great fun. A strong focus is placed on ensuring that children develop the basic skills needed to be successful in their next steps in their education, such as holding pencils correctly and using scissors effectively. New resources, such as 'the builder's yard' are helping to promote the achievement of boys, such as their physical control and cooperation skills. Adults provide good opportunities for children to develop effective

listening skills. Children respond positively when asked to put on their 'listening ears'. Children's speaking skills, however, sometimes continue to be held back because adults do not always make the most of opportunities to question children's understanding and thinking. Key workers know their own children exceptionally well. As a result, they provide an appropriate range of activities to help them achieve well when they chose to learn along side them. However, adults do not yet formally record and effectively share detailed records of children's very small steps in learning. As a result, future learning plans do not always build successfully on what children already know and can do, particularly when children work with adults other than their key worker.

## **Effectiveness in promoting children's welfare**

### **Grade: 1**

Making sure that every child is nurtured and exceptionally well cared for is at the very heart of the school. High quality pastoral support pervades all aspects of day-to-day practice. Rigorous attention is given to making sure that the school's safeguarding arrangements are firmly in place. Effective on site playgroup provision is helping to foster excellent early attitudes to learning, identify any special educational needs at a very early stage, and establish highly productive links with parents. As a result, children settle extremely quickly and successfully into their Nursery education. Children's assigned 'key workers' provide children with a real sense of security. Outstanding partnerships with support agencies reflect the school's commitment to helping children with emotional needs and learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Strenuous ongoing efforts are made, particularly by the headteacher, to offer support and encouragement to those parents and carers whose children do not attend regularly enough, although this is met with mixed success.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership, management and governance are good. The headteacher's dedication to ensuring that children are safe and happy and can make outstanding progress in their personal development is never off the agenda. Parents are full of praise for the calm and secure ethos that pervades the Nursery. Tireless efforts are undertaken to offer support to those parents and carers who are hard to reach. The Nursery contributes satisfactorily to the development of community cohesion, but children's understanding of the diversity of their local area is not yet fully developed. Self-evaluation is accurate and has ensured the school has moved forward since the previous inspection. The outdoor learning environment has improved well and enriched the children's experiences. Other recent adaptations, such as promoting speaking and listening skills and the achievement of boys, are also having a positive impact on provision. Plans to monitor and evaluate the impact of improvement initiatives, such as how well they promote community cohesion, however, at present, lack rigour. A contributory factor to this is that at present much of this work rests on the headteacher's shoulders and other leaders and governors are not fully involved. Nevertheless, governance is good and governors are improving their contribution especially following recent training.

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## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| <b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b> | <b>School Overall</b> |
|--|-----------------------|

**Overall effectiveness**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>       | 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? | 1   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 2   |

**Achievement and standards**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do children in the EYFS achieve?</b>   | 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/or disabilities make progress                           | 2 |

**Personal development and well-being**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?</b>                          | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 1 |
| The extent to which 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                                    | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |

**The quality of provision**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?</b> | 2 |
| <b>How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?</b>  | 1 |



## Leadership and management

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?</b>   | 2   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2   |
| 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 eliminated   | 2   |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?   | 3   |
| 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  | 2   |
| 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  |

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

27 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Rockwood Nursery School, Lancashire, B11 3PU

Thank you all so very much for making my inspection of your Nursery such great fun. I really enjoyed being part of your school. It was very easy to see why you enjoy coming to school so much. I particularly enjoyed seeing each of you with a great smile on your face when you were exploring your school grounds, such as on your 'listening walk', and searching for hidden numbers. Even though it was very cold and wet outside, and many of you got really muddy, you and your parents didn't mind. This is because the bodysuits and wellington boots you have help to keep you warm, dry and clean. You get lots of chances to take part in fun and exciting activities like these. It is little wonder that you enjoy school so much. So many of your parents told me how pleased they are with the school, too.

I was also pleased to see just how well you all behave, play and get along really well together. You already know how to wait your turn when playing games and how important it is to share the equipment with one another. You get lots of chances to decide for yourself what you play with. The adults who play alongside you are helping you to do well, whatever you decide. They care about you so much and always give you lots of support, so that you feel very happy and safe, and so you are healthy. It was really good to see you all being so careful and sensible when walking up and down the staircase. It was also pleasing to hear you chatting to one another about eating healthy foods at snack time.

Your school is a good school. You do well in your learning, and you are really well prepared for moving to your next school. There are a couple of things about your school that could be even better. To help you further, I have asked the school to make sure that:

- all the adults plan out carefully exactly what they want you to learn each day, so that you all do as well as you can
- all the staff and governors check that any changes they make to your school are helping to make things better for you.

I wish you all lots of luck for your future.

Kathryn Dodd

Lead inspector