

Ribblesdale Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119089
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	326942
Inspection dates	14–15 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Eric Jackson

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 (total)	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret Sutcliffe
Headteacher	Mrs Viv Parsons
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2005
School address	Queens Road Clitheroe Lancashire BB7 1EL
Telephone number	01200 423672
Fax number	01200 458277

Age group	3–4
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Ribblesdale Nursery serves a wide area including the local town and surrounding rural areas. The setting has part-time provision for 50 children in the morning and 50 in the afternoon. Most children start school with a level of skills typical for their age. There is a small but growing proportion of children identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mainly with speech and language difficulties. There is also a small percentage with a statement of their special educational need. A decreasing proportion of children of Asian heritage attend, most of who are at an early stage of learning English. The Nursery is part of a Children's Centre under the same management. There has been a second phase of building work during this year to extend this project. Admission to the Nursery is fluid across the year. A small number of children attend for two years, but most attend for lesser periods, some for only a day a week as parents/carers choose. Day care is available, and was inspected separately by Ofsted.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Ribblesdale is an excellent Nursery, inspirationally led and extremely well managed. It has improved well since the last inspection to provide outstanding care in a very safe and fully inclusive setting where the children flourish. They thrive physically through enjoying varied and exciting activities, and their personal, social and emotional development is excellent. They love being here, making significant progress in all the areas of learning, including personal hygiene. The high quality and very effective planning of the use of the setting's indoor and outdoor facilities by the staff ensures that children are challenged to learn very successfully. The many parents or carers who expressed their views were almost all delighted with the wide range of exciting learning opportunities available. One summarised these views for others in writing, 'A safe, warm and loving, stimulating happy school'. The partnership with parents and other schools and support agencies has an excellent impact on the overall quality of provision.

Children's achievement is excellent. Their level of skills when they start Nursery is broadly as expected for their age, but covers a wide range. Assessment records show that most of them have reached levels above or well above those expected for their age when they leave. Children identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are nurtured exceptionally well so that they take a full part in all activities and make outstanding progress. They are safe, happy and tremendously excited by the learning challenges carefully prepared for them by the staff, greatly appreciated by their parents. The school's focus on personal, social and emotional development is so well managed that three- and four-year-olds play alongside each other happily, or engage in joint play exceptionally well for their age. They are highly independent and pursue their own ideas with concentration and imagination. The many opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills, including through excellent learning opportunities in music, singing and dance, lead to above and often well above expected communication skills for their age. Children develop the full range of physical skills exceptionally well in the excellent outdoor provision.

The national drive to promote healthy lifestyles and an understanding of self-care is strongly evident in children's behaviour and attitudes. They take full advantage of healthy snacks, and follow very carefully the staff's guidance on how to keep themselves and others safe. The staff have also adopted the key messages from recent national guidance to present children with a wide range of challenging choices in learning activities. To observe the children here engaging in self-chosen tasks and activities, often in cooperation with others, is to see real learning in action. Through close overview of specific individuals and groups, the staff encourage the children to make decisions, consider options, and explain their thinking. This leads to high levels of independent learning. Detailed records are kept of observational assessments and children's recorded activities to measure their progress, plan new learning, and keep parents informed. The staff are currently developing new systems to use this information more effectively, and recognise the need to compare their judgements with other staff working with young children for consistency.

The staff respond very well to the headteacher's high expectations, and successfully encourage the children to be friendly, take a full part in activities and be aware of other children's needs. Community cohesion is outstanding. The children look after the resources and equipment carefully, and understand that they must tidy up after themselves. Through songs, stories, celebrations and discussions, they learn about a wide range of local, national and international cultural and religious ideas at a level appropriate to their ages. By visiting the surrounding area, such as Clitheroe Castle, they begin to develop their understanding of the local community and

its history. There is a well researched plan to promote community cohesion and these young children begin to develop an understanding of cultural and religious differences and similarities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Liaise with other Nursery and Reception settings to moderate judgements of children's achievements in line with recent national guidance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children achieve exceptionally well. This is because the teaching is excellent, making learning challenging and exciting. Despite a growing proportion of children entering with lower than expected language skills, by the time they leave most children are confident communicators with a well developed vocabulary that they use well, including those learning English as an additional language. Mark-making is strongly encouraged, and though boys do not reach the same high levels as most of the girls in writing, they make very good progress. Activities to promote problem solving, reasoning and number are woven into ongoing activities to give them a practical basis. For example, in seeking 'hidden' pictures of fruit and animals from an African story, children recorded their findings in a chart, and many counted them to seven and 14 confidently. Information and communication technology is used very effectively to support children's wider knowledge and understanding of the world. Children use the class computers very well, and use touch programs on the well placed interactive whiteboard with great skill. There are many opportunities to develop creative skills and understanding through painting, drawing, role play, dance and music. The fantastic outdoor provision motivates children to try a stunning range of play activities, and the staff constantly provide imaginative tasks to engage children's curiosity to develop their physical development further.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children make excellent progress in their personal development and their well-being is promoted outstandingly. Children really enjoy their learning and their attendance is good. They feel safe and they have developed high levels of confidence in the staff and in themselves to develop excellent attitudes to learning and play. They behave very well, learning to respect each other's right to join in all activities and are beginning to understand why some actions are wrong. For their ages, many of them cooperate with each other as effectively as much older children in role play, construction and information and communication activities. For example, an independent re-enactment of episodes from Goldilocks and the Three Bears was performed a number of times by a boy and girl, with other children joining and leaving at will. Children are well set to benefit from the next stage of their learning as their independence reflects their growing self-confidence and self-esteem. Through their active play, they also learn that exercise is important in their lives alongside eating fruit and healthy snacks.

Quality of provision

Effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development

Grade: 1

The headteacher works closely with other staff to ensure that the highest standards of care and the highest expectations of children's progress are central to all that is planned for their

learning. Through careful and regular observations and discussions with children at play, they plan tasks and activities that provide challenging curricular experiences to extend children's scope and learning. The staff plan to regularise their assessment judgements against national guidance by comparison with those made in other local settings. The excellent environment indoors is arranged around children's needs, and this is more than matched by the multi-faceted outdoor learning area that stretches their learning in all areas of experience. These powerful learning areas are considered by staff based on the needs of boys and girls, younger and older pupils, and children of potential high attainment as well as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff provide good role models, and the close relationships developed with children through the key worker system has a good effect on children's social development. Each child's progress is carefully recorded, and records are also kept in a separate folder for each of them, valued highly by parents as evidence of their child's development.

Effectiveness in promoting children's welfare

Grade: 1

All required safeguarding and child protection measures are in place. The staff are vigilant in ensuring the children's security and welfare, and in helping them to care for themselves and others. Support staff work cooperatively with teachers to ensure that children's personal and emotional growth is assured. There is very effective support for children with special educational needs. The whole of the provision is arranged to be fully inclusive and there are very good facilities to ensure that the setting is fully accessible. Parents report that induction procedures are excellent and that the information provided keeps them fully involved as to how their child is getting on.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher leads the Nursery outstandingly, supported very effectively by governors who have justified trust in her capabilities. She has responded very well to the requirement from the last inspection to involve other staff in overall leadership and management. The whole team, teachers, support, administrative and domestic staff, works together very efficiently to promote high quality learning in a safe and extremely well managed setting. The school's self-evaluation is thorough, if a little modest. The Nursery has a deserved high reputation locally, enhanced since its expansion into a Children's Centre that serves a wide area. The efficiency with which the varied and complex attendance patterns and links between different services are organised is very impressive. This combination of services has had a marked impact on the effectiveness of the Nursery provision for its three- to four-year-old attendees. This is due to the high quality staffing and the enabling environment that provides seamless transition between different aspects of the overall provision. Regular update training in all aspects of child protection, first aid and safeguarding ensures that statutory requirements are met. Community cohesion is also promoted outstandingly well. Staff and governors monitor and evaluate the school's provision rigorously, seeking to enhance it even further to improve learning for the children. Based on its track record and ambitious leadership team and governors, the school is outstandingly placed to continue to improve.

Annex A

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 is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do children in the EYFS 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/or disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?	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
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 May 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Ribblesdale Nursery School, Lancashire, BB7 1EL

Hello. You may remember when I came to see you in your lovely Nursery. You called me Jackson and let me join in your play. Thank you for being kind and showing me what you were doing.

You really love playing in the exciting classroom and playing outside in that great outside play area. When I was there, you were searching for fruits and animals from 'Handa's Surprise.' I was surprised at how well you did that, and also how you managed to count them, and even knew the sounds of many of the letters. I have asked for one thing to make your Nursery even better. Your teachers are going to look at ways to show how well you are doing by talking to other teachers in other Nurseries about the things their children do.

Your parents (and please thank them for writing to me about your Nursery) told me that they think you love the Nursery and the teachers. They like it that you enjoy all the things to play with, your friends and the exciting things you get to do. They also think that the staff keep you safe and look after you really well.

I think that you and your parents are right – you have a great Nursery, and you behave very well and play with your friends very safely. Well done.

I hope that you carry on enjoying your Nursery and look forward to going to Reception when you are ready.

My best wishes to you

Eric Jackson

Lead inspector