

Bacup Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119097
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	326944
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Geoffrey Yates

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)	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Kathleen Holt
Headteacher	Mrs Lyn Rider
Date of previous school inspection	21 March 2006
School address	Cowtoot Lane Bacup Lancashire OL13 8EF
Telephone number	01706 873856
Fax number	01706 878852

Age group	3–4
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This average-sized nursery school is located close to the centre of Bacup. It draws children from the town and a wide surrounding area. It mostly offers part-time places to children each morning and to different children each afternoon. Children spend between one and five terms in the school. They move on to Reception classes in a number of local schools. A very small proportion of children are from a minority ethnic background. Almost all children speak English at home. There is an above average number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school shares the site with a primary school. The school runs day care and has before- and after-school provision on the premises, and was inspected alongside the school inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school is outstanding and ensures children achieve exceptionally well. The key to the school's success is the strong emphasis placed on children taking responsibility for their own learning within a vibrant, exciting and very safe and caring learning environment. The staff nurture and support rather than direct children's learning. This ensures that children develop into increasingly independent learners who can make decisions and organise themselves well; both key attributes for their future success and well-being. Excellent leadership and management by the headteacher ensure a regime that constantly seeks to improve on previous best for the benefit of children's learning. Parent support for the school is exceptionally high. Parents confirm that their children are very happy to attend school and that staff know their children very well and ensure that children's personal development and well-being are paramount resulting in excellent provision, before school, in school and at lunchtimes. One parent sums up the views of many, 'Bacup Nursery School is like a children's wonderland. The way in which the children's interests are fostered and fuelled is fantastic.'

Children's achievement is outstanding. This is because teaching and learning is excellent with a very good balance struck between learning initiated by children and learning directed by adults. Most children join the nursery with skills and knowledge well below those typical for their age. Very well planned provision for every child's learning and development ensures rapid progress. By the time children are ready to enter the Reception class in other schools, their knowledge, skills and understanding are well within the expected range. A major element in this success is the excellent link between learning inside and outdoors. Both learning environments challenge children to use and improve their skills across all areas of learning. Children learn and develop exceptionally well through stimulating play, talk and valuable first-hand experiences. For example, in the classroom children are enthralled by looking at slugs and tadpoles and talk excitedly about what they observe. In the outside area, both boys and girls construct a den using milk crates and a range of other materials working very well together, especially in rebuilding the den when the wind blew it down.

All members of staff create a welcoming and secure environment where children's care and welfare are paramount. This helps them to settle in without fuss. All legal requirements regarding children's safety are met. Children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted exceptionally well. Exemplary attitudes, behaviour and relationships are at the heart of everything children achieve here. They develop the basic skills and personal attributes necessary for future success, an understanding of the key principles of safe and healthy living, along with evident enjoyment of purposeful learning. For example, they know why it is important to cross the road safely, as witnessed during the inspection on a trip a group of children made to post a letter. Children develop a sense of responsibility and are very kind to each other. For example, one child was observed, without prompting, giving another child a beaker at snack time. Attendance is good because children love coming to the nursery, with parents reporting that children are very disappointed when they have to go home.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher, very well supported by a dedicated staff, provides high quality leadership totally focused on ensuring children almost limitless, daily opportunities to explore, make decisions and work things out for themselves. Community cohesion provision is good. There are very strong links with the local community including visits to an old people's home. Very close monitoring and shared evaluations ensure that the leadership has a very accurate view of the school. This ensures that planning and

assessment is firmly focused on the next steps in children's learning. However, information and communication technology (ICT) is not used as well as it might be to maximise efficiency in the analysis of data. The governing body is very much involved in aspects of school life and carries out its duties exceedingly well. Current successes, excellent teamwork among all the staff, and the desire to do better, combine to show the school has an outstanding capacity to improve. The school gives outstanding value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make more effective use of ICT in gathering and analysing assessment information.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children achieve very well and attain levels that are well within the expected range in all areas of learning. They develop outstandingly well as independent learners, who are able to work with others and take turns. This is a result of high quality teaching by caring, supportive and knowledgeable staff. Children enjoy learning because the staff work very successfully together in supporting children's all-round development. Children with learning difficulties receive the right level of support to enable them to achieve exceptionally well and to be fully involved in all the nursery has to offer. Teachers and support staff provide an excellent range of opportunities both indoors and out, which empower children to be fully involved in all they attempt to do. Consequently, by the time they leave the school, children have made rapid progress in developing skills including skills in communication, literacy and numeracy that will help them in their future education.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children work and play collaboratively, learn to show respect for each other and make very good progress in developing their personal skills. Children's spiritual, social, emotional and cultural development is very strong. Behaviour around the school is excellent and children know how to stay safe, without being fearful. They understand and adopt healthy habits, for instance, independently washing their hands after going to the toilet and before they eat healthy snacks. The school's well resourced and highly stimulating outdoor environment ensures that children are encouraged to be constantly active and they make excellent progress in their physical skills. They are aware of healthy choices in what they eat. When leaving school at the end of the morning or afternoon session most children ask their parents to buy them some fruit from the school's own healthy food shop. Children participate enthusiastically in learning activities, taking responsibility for choosing their activities, justifying their choices and explaining what they are doing. For example, one child told the inspector that he was waiting to go on a tricycle because, 'everybody needs to have a turn and you have to wait'. Relationships with each other and with adults are very strong. Children have very positive attitudes to their learning, as witnessed in the speed in which both morning and afternoon groups of children on daily entry to the nursery get totally immersed in the activities provided. They develop a good understanding of the wider world through their play activities and through the experiences offered by visits and visitors to the school such as the visit made by policemen. One outcome of the police visit, resulted the next day in a child wearing a police toy helmet and carrying a notebook totally immersed in role-play enquiring of the inspector in a serious tone of voice, 'What's your problem!'

Quality of provision

Effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development

Grade: 1

Children get off to a flying start and develop very positive attitudes to learning. This is because the headteacher and staff have an exceptional knowledge of the learning and development requirements of young children and are confident in helping them to learn effectively both indoors and out. The quality of teaching and learning is exceptionally high. Staff plan effectively to ensure that each child is suitably challenged by the learning experiences provided. A walk undertaken by children to post some letters encapsulated in 30 minutes, high quality learning experiences for children across all areas of learning. Staff know their children and their parents very well and all are involved in observations of children's work and performance and in recording their progress. The school's own assessment and tracking system provides staff with detailed information on the progress of individual children. The analysis of the data is carried out very well but this takes a considerable amount of time because it is mostly done manually. Children work very well with adults and when undertaking a multitude of tasks independently.

Effectiveness in promoting children's welfare

Grade: 1

The school is very inclusive, so that all children have their welfare needs met very well regardless of their background. There is a total commitment by all members of staff to providing high quality care. This is effective in consistently promoting the children's social, physical and economic well-being. Members of staff have an excellent understanding of the welfare requirements and associated guidance for children of this age group. They promote good health and well-being and teach children about being safe. They manage behaviour very well and encourage children to develop the attitudes and behaviour appropriate to very good learners. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and regularly reviewed. The setting, both inside and out, is outstandingly well-equipped, safe and secure and provides a very supportive environment which enables children to thrive. The school works very effectively with parents, carers and other providers, such as the breakfast and lunch time providers, to ensure that all children are well cared for. The school has excellent transition systems to welcome children to the school and is doing what it can to ease their transfer to Reception classes in local schools.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The impact of leadership and management is very evident in the rapid progress made by children in all the areas of learning and in their strong sense of security and well-being. Very good use is made of ongoing assessment in ensuring that the next steps in learning are identified. Overall, evaluation systems are accurate. There is a very strong, common sense of purpose among all adults working in the school to work together to do the best for all the children. The outstanding headteacher is the driving force behind the school's success. No stone is left unturned in seeking new ways to improve the school. Discussions about standards have recently led to improvements in the provision for developing children's number knowledge. For example, very good opportunities during the inspection were provided for children to identify the numbers on houses, cars and notices when taking part in a walk to post some letters. The environment for

learning is of a very high standard, it is bright, welcoming, safe and very child-friendly. The issues raised in the previous inspection have been addressed very well. The school has exceptionally good links with parents, who responded enthusiastically to the request for their views on the school. Vetting procedures for all adults who work with children are robust and meet national requirements.

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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?	2
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**

15 May 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Bacup Nursery School, Lancashire, OL13 8EF

Thank you for welcoming me to your nursery. I hope your parents will read this letter to you.

I very much enjoyed the two days I spent with you. I think the nursery is excellent and I am delighted that you and your parents agree. It was wonderful to see how much you enjoy using the outside area. One memory I will keep for a long time is seeing the delight on one of your classmate's face when his 'plumbing skills' had adapted the outside tap into a type of waterfall. Other children then joined in the fun!

Here are some of the things I found to be especially good.

- You very much enjoy all your activities and I was very impressed by how hard you work.
- Your progress is excellent and you can do a lot more things than most children of your age.
- Your behaviour is outstanding, you are very kind to each other and you are very good at getting on with things on your own.
- The activities staff plan for you and the way they help you to learn are excellent.
- Staff are very good at keeping a check on how well you are doing so they are especially good at helping you to keep on improving your learning.
- The nursery is very good at helping you to keep safe and, through your key workers, staff take especially good care of you.

Your headteacher is excellent at helping your nursery to get even better and all staff and governors support her especially well in doing this. I have asked the nursery to make better use of ICT to track and analyse the progress you make so that time is saved to enable staff to do other things.

Thank you again for all your help and good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Geoffrey Yates

Lead inspector