

Nelson Whitefield Infant School and Nursery Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119179
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	326962
Inspection dates	20–21 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Derek Sleightholme

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	241
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Carman Stanworth
Headteacher	Mrs Ethna Cummins
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Norfolk Street Nelson Lancashire BB9 7SY
Telephone number	01282 612807

Age group	3–7
Inspection dates	20–21 October 2008
Inspection number	326962

Fax number

01282 618457

Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size infant school with Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision. All pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and at an early stage of acquiring English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The separate nursery provides education for three- to four-year-old children who attend part time each day.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. 'This school is the best in every way. I feel my child is in safe hands. They respect everyone's views.' These are typical comments that reflects parents' high regard for the school.

The school is very well led by its headteacher who is supported by an enthusiastic staff team. They share her passion and determination for pupils to succeed both academically and personally. They have an outstanding track record of success in ensuring the concept 'we are all learners' is embedded into the life, work and ethos of the school. One important outcome of leadership is that pupil attainment has improved. Current standards in Year 2 are above average in reading and mathematics and significantly high in writing. Given pupils' low starting points their achievement is outstanding. This is also true of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who benefit from sensitive support and guidance provided by skilled assistants.

Personal development and well-being, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils are proud to tell visitors about their school and their achievements. Their enthusiasm for energetic exercise and eagerness to take part in physical activities has helped the school secure accreditation as a Healthy School and the Activemark. Pupils feel very safe and settled because the school provides them with excellent care, support and guidance. Their behaviour is hard to fault. Pupils love school lessons and activities. Their rapid gains in basic skills ensure all are extremely well prepared for the future. Although pupils make a good contribution to supporting worthy causes their enterprise skills as school councillors are insufficiently developed. Attendance continues to be affected by the significant number of pupils taking extended leave. However, procedures to improve attendance are being effective and leading to attendance now being almost in line with the national average.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teaching addresses all pupils' needs exceptionally well, expectations are high, relationships are brilliant and assessments are rigorously undertaken. The school continues to provide an outstanding curriculum. Excellent partnerships, especially those that promote creativity, contribute significantly to pupils' academic and personal development. The 'Arch of Unity', constructed in the Nursery garden by pupils working in collaboration with those from other local schools, typifies excellent initiatives that ensure pupils are able to mix with those of other cultural backgrounds.

Leadership and management are outstanding; governance is good.

Morale is very high and teamwork is exceptional. The school has excellent monitoring systems to judge its own effectiveness. Given the track record of improvements made, the school has excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the EYFS is outstanding. Children join the Nursery from starting points that are significantly below what is typical for their age. Many have poorly developed speech, language, and social skills, and limited understanding of numbers. Few are speaking English. Children make speedy gains in all areas of learning. Despite their rapid progress a considerable proportion of pupils do not reach the nationally expected goals at the time of transfer to Year 1.

Teaching is outstanding. Staff are up to date in their knowledge of the revised EYFS curriculum. They confidently plan high quality, adult led and child initiated activities. Practical learning, supported by stimulating resources, helps children to make swift progress in personal skills such as teamwork. Behaviour is excellent because children enjoy many purposeful learning experiences. Nursery children, using the outstanding outdoor facilities, enthusiastically collaborated to fill a barrow with autumn leaves. Reception children, learning about tall and short, were surprised and thrilled when each time they opened a doll another smaller one was inside. Later a small group benefited from skilled bilingual support and intervention as they consolidated their understanding of size.

Children are happy, well settled and very secure because there are clearly established day-to-day systems for their care. Excellent assessment practices, systematically undertaken, provide a clear picture of progress. Leadership is outstanding. Staff assuming personal responsibility as the 'key worker' for each EYFS child typifies their thorough understanding of implementing the latest welfare requirements. Leadership is excellent and the school has drawn up an ambitious action plan based on a clear vision for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop the enterprise skills of school councillors.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding because pupils make excellent progress in Years 1 and 2 and reach above average standards overall. Staff help pupils in Years 1 and 2 to build very effectively on the rapid gains they made during the Foundation Stage and by the end of Year 2 standards are above average in reading and mathematics and significantly high in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress because they benefit from sensitive, skilled support.

Results of the 2007 statutory assessments were above average and the provisional results for 2008 are similar. Pupils made excellent progress in writing and results in this skill continued to be exceptionally good. In 2008, pupils achieved exceptionally well relative to their very low starting points.

The exceptional progress that pupils make as they move through the school can be traced to consistent, high quality teaching, a rich and an appealing curriculum, highly inclusive policies and school leaders' unwavering focus on raising standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are very reflective; in class assemblies they recall visiting a river setting where they remember the beauty of the area and how it encouraged them to think about the natural world. Being healthy is important to pupils. They enthusiastically participate part in the daily 'Wake up, shake up' programme knowing that this makes an important contribution to their overall fitness. Pupils know the staff care for them and they feel very secure at school. They are friendly, polite and proud to show visitors their artwork linked to the 'adopt a tiger' initiative.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They demonstrate exemplary attitudes in lessons and love school activities. One reason given by a school councillor is, 'Teachers make learning fun.' This strong

commitment to school is reflected in pupils' willingness to take on responsibilities such as being lunchtime helpers where they show they can take on responsibility independently. Pupils have a voice in school development through good service as councillors. However, the councillors' high basic skills are not fully utilised to enable them to lead on more enterprising initiatives. Nevertheless, given pupils' high achievement in key skills the pupils are extremely well prepared for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Pupils make impressive gains because they are taught extremely well. Relationships are excellent as for example when pupils sing with their teacher the ten times table briskly and accurately. Lessons and past work confirm teachers have very high expectations of the standard pupils' should reach. This is most evident in the quality of pupils' writing where standards are high. Excellent use was made of a Year 2 visit to a river bank to promote speaking, listening and especially vocabulary. By drawing on pupils' vivid memories of the event and using clear photographs as helpful prompts teachers used challenging questions to extend pupils' vocabulary. Pupils' ability to include descriptive phrases such as 'rippling water' and 'I could hear the water swishing' typify the way they confidently captured the setting and conveyed their impressions of the images seen and the sounds heard.

Teachers' planning skills are exemplary. They are adept at grasping opportunities to promote basic skills through cross-curricular themes. An exceptional organisational feature of lessons is the way bilingual support assistants' expertise is used. They work alongside teachers to translate questions, explanations and directions that are put to pupils. In doing so they ensure all pupils are fully included in the learning process.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. The rich and varied programme includes the opportunity for pupils to make links with others in Nepal and Nebraska. Through assiduous planning, the school provides pupils with many opportunities to learn independently. This has led to marked improvement in the number of pupils reaching higher standards. Intervention and booster programmes are used to very effectively address the academic needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Much learning is undertaken through lively, practical first hand experiences. Involvement in a 'Creative Partnership' provides pupils with engaging opportunities to work with artists and musicians. Environmental themes, such as recycling, are incorporated into personal and social education. A governor link with an aerospace engineering company has given pupils access to experts and firm plans are in place for visiting apprentices to help them build a car from recycled materials. Extra-curricular provision is good with opportunities for pupils to join clubs including sport, music, art, drama and gardening.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, support and guidance are outstanding. Practices for safeguarding, child protection and risk assessments are fully in place. Staff have an excellent understanding of the emotional, social and learning needs of each pupil and meet these needs diligently and very effectively. Theme weeks are used most effectively to promote pupils' understanding of personal welfare.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from appropriate intervention strategies including booster programmes. Similarly, the school provides excellent support to enable pupils to grow in confidence speaking English. A particular strength is the meticulous tracking of individual pupil's progress. This information, plus that from rigorous assessments, informs timely decisions on the application of intervention programmes. School data confirms these actions directly contribute to pupils excellent progress.

Academic guidance is exceptional. Pupils know their targets. Marking celebrates their successes and informs pupils simply and clearly about what they need to do to improve. Excellent progress has been made in encouraging pupils during lessons to apply simple checks that help them measure their own success.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and direction for the work of the school. Senior leaders, supported by a committed and enthusiastic staff have shown great commitment to improve the school and ensure it is highly inclusive. As a result, it fully meets its aim of 'raising the achievement of all pupils whilst acknowledging the uniqueness of the individual child'. Important outcomes of leadership are the considerable success in raising standards, improving consistency in high quality teaching, redefining roles and responsibilities to reflect areas of learning and improving attendance.

A particular strength of the much-improved monitoring practices is the compilation of an excellent annual overview of the key tasks of managers. This widely circulated working document provides an excellent structure for leaders to follow and a timely reminder when measuring success with improvement actions. Self-evaluation is a very accurate reflection of the school's work. Governance has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Governors have a much better understanding of the work of the school; for example, the EYFS leaders recently briefed them on the revised requirements.

The school has a deservedly high reputation for its provision of support, advice and training to staff of other schools. It provides outstanding value for money.

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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, 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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 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

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	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	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**

22 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Nelson Whitefield Infant School and Nursery Unit, Lancashire, BB9 7SY

Thank you for making our time in your school so enjoyable. We enjoyed meeting you, visiting your classrooms, looking at your books and displays and talking to you about your school. You were friendly and polite and we were impressed by your excellent behaviour. We were thrilled to see all the exciting work you do.

These are the things we found out about your school during our visit. You attend an outstanding school. All the people who work in school are doing a great job. Outstanding teaching ensures learning is fun. Consequently you make excellent progress throughout the school. You really enjoy school activities and your behaviour is excellent. We realise by your eagerness to take part in 'Wake up!, shake up!' that you know the importance of being fit and healthy. You told us that you feel safe and know how to get help. The staff provide you with outstanding care. They organise excellent support for those of you who need extra help quickly. You receive very good guidance on how to improve your work and clear targets to work towards. You play your part by working hard in lessons. By Year 2 most of you have reached above average standards. We were most impressed with your ability to write, especially your use of interesting words and descriptions. You reach very high standards in this important skill. Well done!

Your school leaders have devised an excellent learning programme for you to follow that makes learning lively and challenging. We saw how much you enjoy working with visitors who give you the chance to join in with their special skills. We know you especially value visits out of school such as to the riverbank. You help the school in many ways. We think you are so good at gaining basic skills that you could use these to plan projects as part of your school councillor responsibilities.

We wish you and all the staff the very best for the future.

Derek Sleightholme and David Edwards

Inspectors