

Sandbank Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104134
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	336241
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	117
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Samantha Mawby
Headteacher	Jenny Ward
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The lead inspector visited ten sessions and saw eight members of staff teach. Three sessions of Playcare were also observed. Meetings were held with staff and governors. Inspectors observed the work of the school and Playcare and looked at the school's development plans, minutes of governors' meetings, the school's records of children's progress, and their learning journeys. Twenty questionnaires completed by parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress children make especially in their mathematical development
- the use of the outdoors
- the impact of the new tracking system
- the development of the new leadership team.

Information about the school

Children join the school after their third birthday and attend either morning or afternoon sessions. An above average proportion have barriers to learning such as learning difficulties and/or disabilities including problems in developing their speech and language. The school provides all day care in Playcare which was also inspected. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2010 and the deputy headteacher is also fairly new to the school.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Sandbanks Nursery School provides an outstanding quality of education. Children thrive in this supportive environment and feel exceptionally safe. The high standard of care in the nursery is fully reflected in the Playcare provision which is also of an outstanding quality and complies with registration requirements.

When children arrive in the nursery their skills are often below those expected, but by the time they leave they have achieved well and their skills are similar to those expected for their age. They have made exceptional progress in their personal, social and emotional development and are able to make an outstanding contribution to the school community. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. This is because no time is lost in identifying those children who have additional needs and ensuring that they get the expert help they need. Children settle extremely well into daily routines and learn to persevere at tasks and become confident learners. Hurtful behaviour is disapproved of and children are exceptionally caring towards others, their behaviour is exemplary. All this illustrates their excellent spiritual, moral social and cultural development.

Outstanding teaching, combined with the way that the school ensures that the curriculum is closely matched to children's interests, ensures that children are enthusiastic about learning. They clearly enjoy their time in the nursery and Playcare and often have big smiles on their faces, especially when they are splashing about in the Dabble Pool. Improvements have been made to the way mathematical development is encouraged and there is now more emphasis on linking sounds and letters, but the school is aware that children's progress in developing communication, language and literacy and mathematical skills is still not quite as rapid as in other areas, particularly for boys.

The new headteacher has quickly gained the respect of children, parents, staff and governors. Morale is high and both governors and staff share the ambitious vision of the headteacher. Significant recent improvements have been made to the way that children's progress is tracked and the school is now able to accurately analyse minor differences in the rates of progress in different areas of learning and between different groups of pupils. This information has underpinned the school's accurate self-evaluation and the new management team is rightly starting to formulate strategies designed to further accelerate children's progress. The school has sustained most of its strengths during a period of change and made important improvements to areas of its work. These include boosting children's attendance and improving the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and demonstrate the school's good capacity for further improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate children's progress in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development by:
 - addressing the differences between boys' and girls' progress in these areas
 - ensuring that exciting activities which encourage the development of early reading and writing and mathematical skills are always available
 - formalising the planning of different levels of challenge.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

When they join the nursery a significant proportion of children lack the skills to communicate with each other and adults. Their skills in understanding number and shape and measure are also relatively weak. Children achieve exceptionally well in their personal, social and emotional development. Important social skills are gained, such as how to take turns, to negotiate and to get along with others. Many are learning to talk but children, especially boys, are making slower progress in linking sounds and letters, reading, writing, and calculation than in other areas of their learning. Boys are less enthusiastic about writing than girls. For example, many girls went to the table that held postcards to write on immediately after the teachers' lively introduction to the activity, but most of the boys wandered off to do other things.

Regular routines and safe behaviours are taught and, as a result, children feel exceptionally safe and secure. They say confidently that if they have a problem they should 'tell their teacher, their mummy or a policeman'. Although the nursery works hard at healthy lifestyles it is aware that some children make very narrow choices of food. During the inspection children were enthusiastic about making and eating their own sandwiches made out of brown bread, lettuce, peppers, cucumber and cress. Children are very keen to do little jobs around the nursery and to help one another. They enjoy tending the school garden. Children respond extremely well to staff's high expectations of their conduct. The new headteacher became aware that a number of children were attending school erratically. A close watch is now kept on attendance and, as a result, the vast majority of children attend regularly. Children learn to persevere at tasks and become confident learners, this means that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment ¹	3
The quality of children's learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children's behaviour	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance ¹	2
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Adults support learning exceptionally well within a very supportive and caring environment. They respect children's contributions and make it clear that everyone can learn from one another. Staff consistently provide excellent role models. Not only do they model good behaviour and continually reinforce the use of good manners, they also expertly model language. Throughout the staff there is an exceptional depth of understanding about how young children develop their skills and this knowledge is skilfully applied. Staff are accomplished at questioning children and reshaping questions in order to extend children's learning. Children's learning is frequently checked and this information is collated in 'Learning Journeys' which provide a very detailed record of each child's progress through nursery. Although the extensive information held by the school is used in an informal way to ensure that staff are aware of the needs of individuals, it is not always used formally to ensure that the activities planned challenge each and every child.

The curriculum is firmly based on principles which ensure that children's interests are valued and fully inform curriculum planning. This approach is particularly successful at encouraging children's personal and social development, their creative development and physical development. Children have excellent opportunities to work with many visiting artists, dancers and musicians and this is reflected in their blossoming creativity. They also have good opportunities to find out about other cultures and lifestyles. The school has provided more activities that encourage the development of number skills but the impact of these on children's progress is not yet fully evident. The school has made a start in encouraging children to link sounds and letters but knows even more needs to

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be done to develop expertise in this area. Exciting activities that encourage the development of early reading and writing skills and engage boys are not consistently provided. The outdoors is generally used well but the design of the building hampers children's independent access to the outdoors.

Relationships between children and staff are excellent. The key worker system encourages children to develop a strong sense of belonging to a family group. Very well targeted support for potentially vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities has enabled these children to make the very best of opportunities provided by the school. Excellent links with external agencies ensure that children with special education needs get timely help and that staff also have access to expertise when needed. For example, staff are working on developing their skills in supporting children with delayed speech and language. The very high standard of care and guidance in the nursery is fully reflected in the Playcare provision and the staff are equally skilled at supporting children's learning. Consequently, children move seamlessly between attending the nursery and Playcare.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The new leadership team is working well together and staff feel empowered. The team is fully committed to assuring the well-being of the children and securing their good progress. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good and have ensured that children are exceptionally well supported and are able to make good progress. The school is well aware of where improvements could be made and knows that more needs to be done to develop rigorous strategies designed to further enhance progress in reading, writing and mathematical development.

Governors are keen and enthusiastic. They know the school well and are not afraid to challenge in order to secure the very best for these children. The school works extremely well with a wide range of partners. For example, local partnerships are used well to support management such as when formulating the Disability Equality Scheme. Respect is at the centre of the school's ethos. Diversity is celebrated and valued and the school ensures there is no discrimination. However the school has recognised differences in the rates of progress for boys and girls. Safeguarding procedures are good. Staff are carefully vetted. They have a well developed awareness of safeguarding

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and are vigilant in the way that they care for, and protect, children. However, the school is aware that aspects of the building have to be carefully managed and is taking steps to address this. The school understands its local community well. Children know that they are a valued part of the school community and the school has successfully extended their contact with children from a wider range of backgrounds.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Few parents returned their questionnaire but those that did are very happy with the quality of provision. They are pleased with the excellent support that is offered to their children and feel that their children have made good progress. Those parents whose children have additional needs recognise that their children are exceptionally well supported and are delighted with the progress they have made.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Osborne Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 117 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	86	3	15	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	80	4	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	60	8	40	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	60	8	40	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	80	4	20	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	70	6	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	55	9	45	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	12	60	7	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	75	5	25	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	55	7	35	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	50	9	45	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	70	6	30	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	80	4	20	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
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.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 June 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Sandbanks Nursery School, Bloxwich WS3 2HR

I really enjoyed talking to you when I visited your nursery. You all have lots of fun at nursery and make good progress, that's why your nursery is outstanding. Wasn't it exciting when the fire engine arrived with its siren on and lights flashing? I was very pleased with the sensible way that you all went outside and the way that the teachers made sure you were out of harm's way. I was delighted to find that there wasn't a fire after all. I noticed that your behaviour is always very good indeed. I was pleased to see the way that you all look after each other and do not like to think that anyone would be upset about anything. It's good to know that you know how to keep safe and know exactly who to go to if you have a problem. I thought that the work you produced with the artist was wonderful. I also liked the sculptures you made out of clay and lots of other materials very much indeed.

Your teachers and those that manage your school are all working very hard and make sure you have lots of interesting things to do. They listen very carefully to you and they always try to help you if they can. Although you all do well at school, I noticed that some of you, especially the boys, could do even better in reading, writing and learning about numbers. I have asked your teachers to provide you with some exciting activities that will help you make progress in these areas. Teachers make regular checks on your progress and I have asked them to use this information to plan work that meets your individual needs.

You can also help by continuing to do your very best.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh

Lead inspector

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