

Chapel Street Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109421
Local Authority	Luton
Inspection number	337283
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Alison Cartlidge

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	0–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	151
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Rowley
Headteacher	Julia Miller
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2007
School address	Russell Street Luton Bedfordshire
Telephone number	01582 413552
Fax number	01582 540428
Email address	chapel.street.nursery.head@luton.gov.uk

Age group	0–5
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2009
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Registered childcare provision	Ducklings baby and Dolphins toddler units
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	65
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors made 12 observations of varying lengths of children's learning, and held meetings with governors, staff and children. They observed the school's work, and looked at information on children's progress, safeguarding and other documents. Questionnaires from 29 parents were scrutinised.

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

- how well children are helped to develop mathematical language and learn how to compare, add and subtract groups of objects
- the involvement and learning of boys
- the impact of child-initiated tasks on independence and confidence
- the way information on children's progress is evaluated by leaders to help improve provision
- the impact of strategies to improve children's speaking and listening.

Information about the school

Children come to this average sized nursery school from the centre of Luton. The school has a well above average proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities because 16 places are specifically allocated for children with severe and complex special needs. Children come from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds and a well above average proportion is at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language. The main first languages of these children are Urdu, Bengali and Somali. The school is part of a children's centre and includes two units for children under three, one for babies and the other for toddlers. It also has before and after school clubs managed by the governing body.

The school has received several awards including the Effective Early Learning award and Healthy Under-Fives award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Children of all ages delight in coming to this good school. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that they feel very safe, become independent and gain an excellent understanding of how to live healthily. Children in the toddlers' and babies' groups are cared for well, enabling them to make good progress in learning how to speak and socialise with others.

All children, including those with English as an additional language, learn quickly, especially in their personal development, because caring members of staff are good role models and provide good opportunities for children to make decisions about what they are going to do. Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well during their time at the nursery. Teaching is effective because members of staff work alongside the children, asking them questions to help them extend their learning and provide a wide variety of tasks to make learning interesting. Attainment in numeracy is slightly lower than in other subjects, because opportunities are missed to promote mathematical vocabulary and to develop numeracy across the curriculum. Whilst there are plenty of opportunities for counting and comparing size, some members of staff lack confidence in helping the children to compare, add and subtract groups of objects and consequently there are too few occasions when these skills are emphasised.

Teachers keep detailed information on how well children are doing and use this well to plan activities to support their next stage of learning. Children are friendly and develop good self-esteem because they are given good opportunities to share their ideas during discussions and these are praised and respected by members of staff. Children show appreciation for various cultures and work and play together harmoniously. They behave well and develop an understanding of how they can help others by sharing or giving a friend a hug.

Good procedures for self-evaluation and the monitoring of children's progress enable leaders to know what needs to be done next to make the school even better. Previous developments show the school's good capacity to improve. The recent project on improving speaking and listening through the use of puppets and talking postcards is proving to be a great success in increasing the children's motivation and confidence and in strengthening links with parents. As one parent said, 'My child was able to introduce the puppet to friends and family, which is something she doesn't normally do.' The school is now working on improving the use of the outdoor area during poor weather. Good activities to promote physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world are already available, but there are too few letters and numbers on display outside, or interesting activities to support reading, writing and number work. Members

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of staff are aware that they are not doing enough when working outside to develop children's knowledge and understanding in this area of learning, particularly to help boys increase their pace of learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By summer 2010, increase the children's mathematical vocabulary and ability to compare, add and subtract groups of objects, by:
 - providing training to boost staff knowledge and confidence
 - promoting mathematical language throughout the day
 - increasing the time spent teaching mathematical skills
 - planning more activities across the curriculum that involve the use of these skills.
- By summer 2010, improve outdoor learning on wet days, particularly for boys in literacy and numeracy, by:
 - providing all weather areas and activities for reading, writing and number work
 - making activities appealing to girls and boys
 - raising the profile of numbers and letters around the school grounds
 - increasing the way members of staff develop the children's learning when working outside.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children**2**

Children are prepared well for the next stage of their education and later life. They demonstrate their thorough enjoyment of school and the good progress they are making because they settle quickly to activities they have chosen for themselves and persevere well. They are independent and keen to share their learning with others. They learn social skills well, such as how to work together to move a ball through a hoop. As a result, most children behave sensibly and are tolerant of each other. Boys are not always as interested as the girls in the wide variety of tasks on offer. Consequently their achievement is slightly less. For example, in one session girls were more interested than boys in investigating shadows of objects projected onto the wall. Later in the day when members of staff provided additional, more boy-friendly objects such as dinosaurs and cars, the interest and learning of boys increased.

The majority of children enter the nursery year working within the levels expected for this age group. They achieve well and the proportion working within the expected levels has risen to include most children when they leave to join the Reception Year. Children make best progress in personal, social and emotional development. Progress is less marked in numeracy, because children find it difficult to compare, add and subtract groups of objects and do not have extensive mathematical vocabularies. Leaders are aware that this is because not all members of staff are sufficiently knowledgeable and confident about promoting this area of learning.

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All groups of children do well, including those with special educational needs. The school has started to teach all children sign language so that they can communicate more fully with those with severe and complex language needs.

While several children have limited spoken English, they are confident about trying out their speech when working in a small group enabling them to make the same good progress as other children. Occasionally when children are working in larger groups the quiet or shy children are reluctant to join in with discussions and when this happens their pace of learning slows slightly.

Children show interest in the wider world and take part in raising funds for charity. The school is aware that they could be given more responsibility for helping each other in school. Children show that they feel very safe at school and are confident that members of staff will help them when necessary. For example, a child was uncertain about taking part in a new activity but drew confidence from the adult working alongside him. Children are supported well in dealing with their fears. One child explained his response to a scary story by saying, 'I'm scared, but I'm brave'. Children in the nursery lead exceptionally healthy lifestyles by enjoying healthy meals and snacks and by taking part in physical activity such as riding the tricycles.

Children under three are calm and happy in school and work alongside each other and the adults amicably. They learn self-help skills well such as how to hold a spoon correctly and respond well to members of staff, waiting patiently for help when needed.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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	2
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children's behaviour	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	2

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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<p>The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</p> <p>Taking into account: Children's attendance¹</p>	<p>2</p> <hr/> <p>3</p>
<p>The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</p>	<p>2</p>

How effective is the provision?

Members of staff provide sensitive support for all children enabling them to develop at their own pace. Smooth transition between the units for children under three and nursery classes ensures a seamless education. Exceptionally strong links with parents and external agencies ensure that children are given the care, guidance and support they need, even when they are finding life difficult. Good questions are used to help children consider the feelings of others. For example, one child thought that the bear chased the children because 'he just wanted to play' and another suggested that the tearful elephant baby probably 'wanted his mummy'.

Good questioning as children work encourages the rapid development of speaking and listening and a recent project involving the loan of puppets to parents and carers has further strengthened the bond between home and school. The school has correctly identified that not all tasks provide sufficient interest for the boys. Planning does not always give members of staff enough support in considering boys' specific needs.

There are many exciting activities available indoors that make children keen to learn. However, during wet weather the range of activities outside does not provide enough learning opportunities for reading, writing and number work. The school has suitable plans for the development of the outdoor area, so that the outdoor curriculum matches the quality of that found indoors.

There are detailed assessment records that show children's progress in the 'all about me' books, and members of staff understand what children need to learn next. The school is looking at ways that children can become more involved in this process by reflecting on what they have learnt.

The school complies with its registration for children under three and for those in the before and after school clubs. All welfare requirements are met and are administered well. Adults provide caring support for the babies and toddlers. These children are given good opportunities to learn when working with members of staff or on their own. For example, in one session a small group enjoyed sharing a story with a member of staff and other children were happy to work alone exploring the properties of various objects in the sand.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with severe and complex needs, have access to the same activities as other children and are given individual help to enable them to benefit from these learning opportunities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage</p>	<p>2</p>
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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2 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 headteacher, other members of staff and governors have a clear vision for the future. Good self-evaluation enables leaders to set and achieve challenging targets and to have an accurate understanding of what needs to be done to make the school even better. Provision for children in the babies' and toddlers' units is led and managed well. Members of staff work exceptionally well with parents, carers and external agencies to support all children. They take good steps to ensure that there is good community cohesion and no forms of discrimination. For example, the nursery celebrates a wide range of religious festivals and is involved in local events. Information on children's progress is analysed carefully and there is an enthusiasm to make provision even better. The school promotes equality of opportunity well. Leaders are refining assessment information so that it gives greater detail on the comparative progress of children from various ethnic minority backgrounds and to show the progress of those with severe and complex needs more precisely.

Governors are supportive and provide good challenge, although they are not always proactive in checking that the school's documentation fully reflects the quality of provision. For example, they have not monitored fully the school's administrative arrangements for safeguarding to ensure that minor omissions are put right. Despite this, at the time of the inspection the school's safeguarding arrangements were found to be good and children's safety and well-being were in no way being compromised.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2 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

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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	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers are very positive about the work of the school, especially the welcome they receive from members of staff, all of whom are seen as approachable. They make positive comments such as, 'We all feel comfortable about leaving our little ones.' Parents and carers of children under three are pleased with the progress children make in social skills and learning to speak. A few parents and carers of children in the nursery would like more information about their children's progress and how they can help their children at home. This information is already available in school, but leaders have plans to make this information more freely available by sending it home at the start of each term. The inspection team agrees with the parents' views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Chapel Street 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 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 151 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	55	12	41	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	62	11	38	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	45	13	45	3	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	41	17	59	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	41	17	59	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	48	12	41	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	55	12	41	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)	7	24	18	62	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	34	18	62	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	41	14	48	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	52	13	45	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	45	15	52	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	59	11	38	1	3	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



18 November 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Chapel Street Nursery School, Luton LU1 5EA

Thank you for helping us when we visited. We are pleased that you enjoy coming to this good school.

These are the best things about your school.

You learn quickly because teachers help you and give you interesting things to do such as playing in the sparkly sand.

Teachers look after you very well and help you to feel very safe.

You behave well and are very good at staying healthy. It is good that you help to bake your own bread rolls.

Your headteacher and other leaders know what needs to be done to make the school even better.

These are the things we have asked your school to do next:

Help you to learn special words about number work and give you more to do where you need to add and take away numbers.

Give you more chances to read, write and do number work outside on rainy days, especially the boys.

Thank you again for talking to us about what you like doing at school.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge

Lead Inspector

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