

# Blagrove Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109749
<b>Local Authority</b>	Reading
<b>Inspection number</b>	337365
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Janet Sinclair

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	73
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs R Kershaw
<b>Headteacher</b>	Vivienne Simpson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Recreation Road Reading RG30 4UA
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors made many on-going observations of the children at work and play. These included nine part lessons, observing two teachers and six nursery nurses and teaching assistants.

Inspectors also held meetings with governors and senior staff. They looked at a wide range of documentation, including policies, the school development plan and records of children's progress. They considered the 57 responses from questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- The progress the children are making in all areas of learning.
- The effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum, focusing on child initiated play, challenge and adult intervention.
- The extent to which monitoring of the work of the nursery encourages self-evaluation and guides improvement planning.

## Information about the school

The nursery is average in size. Most children are from White British backgrounds. There are a small number of children from minority ethnic groups, some of whom are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language. A few children have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These are mainly speech and language difficulties. Most children start in the September after their third birthday and stay for three or four terms until they move to the Reception year in a range of primary schools. Children attend the nursery either in the morning or the afternoon. The school provides a lunch club.

The school was designated a Children's Centre in September 2009.

**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

This is a good school. It has some outstanding features. The very sensitive, thoughtful leadership of the headteacher ensures a welcoming, nurturing environment in which the children thrive. Excellent relationships and effective teamwork are hallmarks of the school's success with parents, carers and children. Parents and carers are highly appreciative of what the school provides for their children, particularly in terms of their enjoyment and progress. Comments such as, 'My child is really happy and achieving well,' and, 'My child enjoys many varied and exciting experiences,' typify parents' and carers' views.

Children enter the nursery with skills and abilities that are broadly as expected for their age and make good progress in all the areas of learning due to effective provision. Excellent induction and a welcoming environment ensure that they settle very well, thoroughly enjoy all that is on offer and become confident, inquisitive learners. Teaching is good and the nursery nurses and teaching assistants are particularly effective in their roles within the nursery. Staff work extremely hard to provide a stimulating learning environment for the children, which encourages effective learning and promotes their personal development and welfare. There is a good range of independent activities for the children to engage in and staff interact well with the children to promote and extend their interest and to make observations of their learning. However, the effectiveness of these interventions is limited because short term planning gives insufficient detail about staff's expectations for what children are expected to learn. Consequently, staff are not always focused enough on how or when they should support children's learning. It also means that observations of learning are not always linked to clear outcomes and this occasionally slows children's progress because the outcomes are not concise enough to inform future learning.

Children feel extremely safe and well supported. They make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community through, for example, their involvement in the 'Reading in Bloom' competition and singing to senior citizens. They have an excellent appreciation of the world around them and enjoy finding out about different cultures through interesting events such as the visit of the Indian dancers. Children benefit from a rich curriculum which is enhanced extremely well through visits, visitors and exciting events such as the 'World Beaters' music event. The school carefully tracks children's progress so that all groups of children are supported to ensure their learning moves forward. Excellent support for vulnerable children and their families ensures that they flourish.

A strong sense of creating a challenging and encouraging learning environment is a key driver for the staff of the school. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate, but the school development plan is not helpful in clearly establishing specific and measurable outcomes

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for key areas for improvement. As a result, the school is not always clear about the extent of its success. The school has maintained its good provision from the previous inspection, addressed the key issues arising and built successfully on its strengths. This, together with the strong commitment of staff to ensure that children do well in all areas of learning, demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve short term planning for children's activities to enable all staff to further extend children's learning and focus their observations more concisely.
- Improve the quality of school development planning so that it is more effective in setting clear expectations for measurable outcomes.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of children**

**2**

Children are active and enthusiastic learners who achieve well across the areas of learning. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language and gifted and talented children all receive focused support and make progress in step with others. For example, children with speech and language difficulties enjoy using photographs of themselves at play to talk about their experiences. This extends their vocabulary and gives them a clear focus for communication. Children concentrate well on activities, often for extended periods. They explore and learn with real intent to discover and make sense of their world. For example, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through making a rowing boat from large wooden bricks or crossing a bridge they have made to get to their drinks at break time. Activities such as these generate great excitement in their learning. Children learn about books and reading through listening to and re-enacting stories, especially when they use masks for specific characters. Their number skills are promoted well when counting how many animals are in the boat and whether more are needed or not. Children are developing a good understanding of healthy lifestyles through giving 'thumbs up' to healthy foods such as fruit and vegetables. They feel very safe in school and know that there is always an adult that they can turn to if they have any worries. They develop excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural qualities. Their sense of wonder is stimulated by watching chicks hatch, tadpoles turn into frogs and the stag beetle larva gradually emerging. They are kind and thoughtful to each other and their strong sense of right and wrong ensures behaviour is good.

*These are the grades for children's outcomes*

**Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

**2**

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b>	
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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
<b>The extent to which children feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Children's behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

### How effective is the provision?

As a result of a good curriculum, staff provide a wide range of well-planned and resourced activities to engage and stimulate children's interests. For example, staff have made good use of the topic based on the story of Mr Gumpy's Outing to develop children's skills and understanding across the areas of learning. They set up role play and fully engage the children in re-enactment and repetition of the story to develop their speaking and listening skills. Adults give good attention to developing language skills and enriching vocabulary, for example when discussing different kinds of boats and the means of steering them through the water. Staff are generally careful to ensure that children's own ideas are taken into account and their interests fully followed. However, occasionally there is too much adult talk which limits children's own input. The good outdoor provision is used well to stimulate learning. For example, children explore how water trickles along pieces of guttering into the sand-pit to create rivers and mud banks along which they can guide their boats or build their bridges. It also enables them to engage in physical activity through climbing on the climbing frames and running freely. Careful planning for small group work led by teaching staff enables the children to make good progress in these sessions. However, short term planning is not sufficiently detailed to clearly identify key learning outcomes or cater for specific groups or individuals. As a result, there is not always a good enough match of work or sufficient challenge and this sometimes slows progress. Although staff make good use of on-going observations to record children's progress, the effectiveness of these is hampered by a lack of clarity in the expected outcomes for children's learning.

The key person system provides a stable framework within which children feel very safe

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and well supported. Vulnerable children are extremely well cared for and outside agencies are used effectively in this context. Parents and carers are very pleased with the support their children get, mentioning the strong inclusion policy and the high level of support. Children's progress is appropriately shared with their families and transition at all levels is very well managed. The effective partnership with local primary schools ensures a seamless transition, particularly for the more vulnerable children.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. This is shared by all staff and all work hard to provide an effective learning environment for the children. Children's progress is monitored carefully and small group activities have been implemented so that no child is left behind in their learning. This ensures equality of opportunity for all groups and good attention to eliminating any potential discrimination. Monitoring of teaching is robust and a good initiative has been the use of peer observations to promote discussion and improve its overall quality. However, there is sometimes not enough focus on monitoring what children learn because of weaknesses in short term planning that affect overall outcomes. Self-evaluation is mainly accurate, but the school development plan is not particularly useful in setting clear measurable goals for areas designated as priorities. This makes it difficult for both staff and governors to measure the success of key initiatives. The headteacher and governors ensure that systems for safeguarding children are thorough and all policies and procedures are fully in place. Governors are supportive and fully involved in the life of the school. They carry out reviews of key development areas for the school, such as the recent in-depth report on the use of display in the nursery. Governors are keen to improve their expertise and attend regular training in order to achieve this. The school's designation as a Children's Centre strongly supports its drive to be at the centre of its community, with a range of community events such as buggy walks, sessions run by play rangers and provision of parent groups. The school is developing links wider afield such as the talk given by a parent from Uganda and the World Cup link with South Africa. Excellent links with parents and carers help to forge a strong relationship which is appreciated by them. Partnerships, such as the link with a local university, enable children to be involved in building planters for the outdoor area using bricks and mortar.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Views of parents and carers

The questionnaires show that almost all parents and carers who responded are very happy with the school and what it provides. They consider that their children enjoy all that the school has to offer, make good progress and are very safe and well looked after. The inspectors agree. There were no significant concerns raised in the questionnaires.



### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Blagrove Nursery School and Children's Centre 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 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 73 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	75	14	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	88	7	12	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	43	75	12	21	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	72	15	26	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	46	81	11	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	51	89	6	11	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	67	18	32	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)	42	74	14	25	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	67	17	30	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	58	21	37	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	60	19	33	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	46	81	11	19	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	82	10	18	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



1 July 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Blagrave Nursery School and Children's Centre, Reading RG30 4UA

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your nursery because everyone was so friendly and you were so happy in what you were doing. I am writing to you to tell you what we found out.

You attend a good nursery where you have exciting things to do such as boat building, telling the story of Mr Gumpy's Outing, catching fish in your nets and using the computers. You are doing really well and make good progress. Grown ups take good care of you and that is why you feel very safe and thoroughly enjoy all the things that you do. They teach you well so that you enjoy your learning.

There are only a few things that need to be better. I have asked your headteacher to make sure that plans for your learning are clearer about what you are expected to learn so that staff can help you to make even better progress. I have also asked that they plan in more detail for the most important improvements they want to make so that your nursery gets even better.

Yours sincerely

Janet Sinclair

Lead inspector

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