

Chestnut Avenue Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113050
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338078
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Ronald Hall

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	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Lucas
Headteacher	Lindy Brown
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2006
School address	Magnolia Avenue Exeter EX2 6DJ
Telephone number	01392 255128
Fax number	01392 491821
Email address	admin@chestnut-nursery.devon.sch.uk

Age group	3–5
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2010
Inspection number	338078

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

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

T: 08456 404045
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They spent the majority of their time observing learning, observing five sessions and three teachers. Inspectors also held meetings with the headteacher, staff and representatives of the governing body. They scrutinised the school's work, including documentation, systems for tracking children's progress, the monitoring of teaching and learning, teachers' planning and the school's action plan. Inspectors reviewed samples of children's 'Learning Journeys' and safeguarding documents. Completed questionnaires from 14 parents and 8 staff were also scrutinised.

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

- the impact of leadership and management in making and driving improvements at all levels
- the impact of the curriculum and teaching and learning on children's attainment
- the progress and attainment of all the children and why they are not reaching levels of development typical of their age
- the impact of the assessment, monitoring and tracking on providing challenge and ensuring rapid progress for the children.

Information about the school

The nursery is part of an established children's centre and is led and managed by the centre's leaders. The leadership and management of the centre have gone through considerable changes since the last inspection. The head of centre has been appointed since the last inspection. A senior teacher has responsibility for the daily running and operation of the nursery.

The nursery is situated on the outskirts of Exeter city centre. Most children are White British, with a few from other minority ethnic groups. A high proportion of children have special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is a wide range of integrated services at the centre, working in partnership with the nursery. These include support and advice for parents seeking training and/or work, and full day care through a partnership with a local neighbourhood nursery.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. Significant improvement is required to ensure that the leaders of the nursery school have a clear vision for improvement, the capacity and ability to raise attainment and a consistent and cohesive approach to improvement. The considerable turmoil in the leadership of the children's centre and lack of effective leadership and management within the nursery itself mean that the necessary foundations to support improvement have not been established. Although governors are supportive of the nursery, they too have not been effective in bringing about improvements. The inability to raise the quality of teaching and expectations of what the children should achieve have led to provision that is inadequate.

There are some positive features. These include the sensitive management of children's behaviour, very good relationships with adults, and the excellent resources and environment. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and, as a result, their behaviour, as seen in their ability to concentrate and sustain periods of activity, is also good. Nevertheless, the long-standing lack of vision and understanding of the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage by staff has resulted in attainment for the children being unsatisfactory. The relatively new head of the children's centre has put into place measures to remedy the shortcomings as well as seeking local authority support. However, at the time of the inspection none of these measures has had time to have a positive impact on the children's outcomes, or raise the skills of staff to ensure a high quality education for the children.

Teaching is unsatisfactory and staff have a limited understanding of how to assess, record and track children's progress. The achievement of the majority of children is unsatisfactory. There is not yet sufficient or consistent improvement in teaching to ensure the children reach their potential. Leaders and managers are not fully aware of how to use information collected through their monitoring of provision and children's achievements to plan effectively. At present, despite recent improvements to some aspects of provision, improvements are fragile and as a result the nursery's capacity for sustained improvement is inadequate.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring senior managers and all staff are trained so that they fully understand the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage by December 2010
 - ensuring senior managers and all staff are able to use the school's assessment, monitoring, recording and tracking systems effectively by December 2010
 - improving systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning to ensure there is a clear identification of aspects that need to improve
 - improving systems for analysing data about children's progress to identify the areas for development for learning and ensure equality of opportunity
 - improving the effectiveness of the governing body in monitoring and challenging the school to improve.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and children's achievements by:
 - improving planning of activities to ensure provision is tailored to meet the children's interests and needs and is clear about the skills and knowledge they will gain
 - improving assessment to more accurately record the skills and knowledge children have gained.
- Ensure that the progress and achievement of all children are at least satisfactory by December 2010.
- Raise the level of teaching and learning so that they are at least consistently satisfactory by October 2010.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children**4**

On entry to the nursery, the children's attainment is below and, in many cases, well below that typical for their ages. Low expectations and inconsistent teaching and learning lead to inadequate progress overall. By the time they leave the nursery, the majority still have not acquired the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that they will need in order to reach the goals expected for their learning at the end of the Reception Year. The children do, however, make especially good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Evidence of this was seen in the children's positive behaviour. When motivated, children chose activities and persevered with them until they were completed, on occasions displaying very high levels of concentration and absorption. A group of children were observed developing their physical skills in a particularly successful activity with a member of staff. The adult constantly challenged and stretched the children's skills by increasing the complexity and difficulties of the required tasks. This level of achievement was seen only rarely during the inspection. Teachers' plans did not often contain this level of challenge.

Since the last inspection there has been a decline in attainment. The school's assessment information shows that there is a lot of work to do to strengthen children's progress across all areas of learning. The children's communication and language skills

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

are good and they are confident and independent. However, the teachers do not build on children's skills or extend their learning. Children make choices and pursue their interests, but the adults do not monitor this effectively and so are unable to adapt planning to reflect the children's needs. Children are encouraged to participate in all of the activities, but little or no account is taken of how well children engage with them to ensure their suitability or effectiveness. The early morning activities are the most successful sessions, where adult-led activities are better focused and produce at least satisfactory progress. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities generally make better progress their peers because their needs are identified early and they are provided with external support.

The children clearly feel safe, secure and very happy. This is reflected in their above-average attendance. They settle quickly into the routines and look forward to the events of the day such as snack time. Children new to the nursery very quickly learn where everything is and how to gain access to the activities. Although generally not self-initiating, children are developing good skills of self-reliance and self-care. For example, they create their own picnics, selecting the foods, making sandwiches, pouring out their own drinks and clearing away their own plates. The children link this well with their understanding of healthy eating and are able to explain which foods are healthy and some that are not. The children are developing good social skills, learning to share and take turns. Some, particularly those who have been at the nursery for some time, initiate contact with adults and engage in conversations about their activities. The outdoor area and the large equipment are well used and are a source of considerable fun, enabling children to develop physical skills and to learn to take risks. Staff do not make the most of the nursery's excellent resources effectively to enhance learning. Therefore, the children fail to gain the basic and key skills required to enable them to move on readily to their next stage of education. Good use is made of the local community and links with other establishments to enhance learning and bring about a greater understanding of the children's local and wider communities. Children participate in planning by providing ideas for study and give their ideas about how the nursery should look.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
--	----------

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

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

Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Children's attainment ¹	4
The quality of children's learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which children feel safe	2
Children's behaviour	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Children's attendance ¹	2
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is inadequate because staff do not fully understand the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is no effective monitoring of children's progress and achievement. While there is an appropriate mix of adult- and child-led activity, adults do not adequately supervise all of them. This means that when the children choose where they want to work, a lack of intervention means that progress in learning is not assured. The nursery has recently introduced more focused approach but this has not had time to have a positive impact on children's learning.

Following the assistance of the local authority, the nursery now has a satisfactory curriculum that covers all of the areas of learning and development. However, this has yet to help raise attainment. The local authority's adviser is working with the head of the children's centre to ensure the curriculum is matched to the needs of the children. While processes for observation and assessment are in place, they are not used effectively to tailor the provision to meet children's interests and needs. Adults do not focus on the skills and knowledge the children have acquired but on the tasks they have done. Children's profiles contain insufficient detail to help plan their next steps for learning.

The children are well looked after throughout the day. The atmosphere in the nursery is calm and this is one reason why the children settle so quickly and so well. Relationships are good and staff are caring towards the children.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
---	----------

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

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The changes made by the new head of centre are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of the provision and on staff morale. The head of centre has a clear vision of how to move the nursery forward and is encouraging staff to take on board new developments and identify further areas for improvement. However, the skills required to lead these initiatives are lacking within the nursery itself. As a result the impact of changes is limited and taking too long. Staff are still demoralised and not sufficiently well skilled. Training is now being provided to raise the skill levels of staff so that they have greater impact on children's achievements. The school's links with parents are good. Links with other agencies to support children are also effective. The school has good access for those with disabilities and is fully inclusive. In its day-to-day work, the school promotes equality of opportunity for all children; however, it fails to ensure that all children are making progress as they should.

The governing body has recently received training in order to help it to monitor and challenge the school. However, this is not yet having an impact on improving provision. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. The school has good links with the local community and the children have a sound understanding of the cultural diversity within their school. They regularly raise funds for charities at both a national and international level. As part of this, the staff provide opportunities to learn about other cultures and the diverse society in which they live. The school works with a range of external partners but this is currently only having a satisfactory impact on the children's outcomes.

The local authority is increasingly supporting the school and helping to drive improvements. The link adviser has, for example, provided much in the way of staff training and guidance on the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, due to the inadequate leadership and management of the nursery school, it is unable to improve on its own and lacks capacity for improvement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4

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

The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Views of parents and carers

Parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were very positive in their endorsement of the nursery's work. They are confident that their children are looked after well in a safe and nurturing environment. One or two commented positively about the staff and how their child, 'loves going to school'. Negative comments and concerns raised were mainly regarding the lack of progress made by their children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Chestnut Avenue 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 14 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 82 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	86	2	14	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	11	79	2	14	1	7	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	8	57	5	36	1	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	64	3	21	2	14	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	7	50	6	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	50	4	29	2	14	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	71	3	21	1	7	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)	6	43	3	21	2	14	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	57	4	29	2	14	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	50	5	36	1	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	64	4	29	1	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	64	4	29	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	71	3	21	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



21 May 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Chestnut Avenue Nursery School, Exeter EX2 6DJ

It was a pleasure to meet you all and see how you are doing in your learning. I enjoyed talking to you and taking part in some of your activities. I enjoyed seeing you sticking and gluing in the craft area and using musical instruments to add to your dressing up games.

You are such a credit to the Nursery and to your families. You were so well behaved and so happy in your school. The grown-ups look after you well but you could be learning so much more and quicker. There are lots of good things happening at your Nursery but there are some things that the grown-ups need to make better. This is what I have asked them to do.

- Make sure the teachers can plan to help you learn more.
- Make sure the staff know how to help you improve.
- Make sure the people in charge can improve your school.
- Make sure that those who help you, understand what they have to teach you and know how to check that you are learning.

Yours sincerely

Ronald Hall Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.