

Plymbridge Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113052
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	338079
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Holwill
Headteacher	Lynda Chapman
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2006
School address	Miller Way Estover Plymouth PL6 8UN
Telephone number	01752 786444
Fax number	01752 793485
Email address	plymbridgechildrenscentre@plymouth.gov.uk

Age group	3–4
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2009
Inspection number	338079

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 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 learning sessions and held meetings with governors, staff, children, an educational psychologist, a speech and language therapist and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation, including school plans and policies, assessments and tracking of children's progress, provision and planning for children who are vulnerable or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In addition, 34 parental questionnaires were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following: the progress that children make in their learning and whether this is equally good for all groups of children, including those who find speaking difficult how well assessment is used to improve teaching and learning and to secure improvement for individuals and groups of children the degree to which leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, check the strengths and weaknesses of provision to bring about continuous improvement.

Information about the school

This Nursery school is below average in size. It is located adjacent to Estover Community College in Plymouth, which is currently being redeveloped to provide an integrated campus meeting the breadth of young people's needs at all stages. All children attending the Nursery School are in the Early Years Foundation Stage age group. The school is a designated assessment unit and, as a result, the proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very high. A significantly large number of children enter with speech and language difficulties. Most children are from White British backgrounds and a few children speak English as an additional language. In 2006, this Nursery school became part of a Children's Centre, which offers before- and after-school and holiday activities, including provision for older pupils, and a range of services to families. This inspection report relates only to the Nursery provision.

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

Plymbridge Nursery is a good school. As senior managers state, 'This is a nurturing community', and as a parent puts it, 'The school is very responsive to parents' requests and suggestions'. The ethos of the school combines exemplary care with very supportive inclusion. This fosters confidence in children and their parents and a determination by all staff to treat each child equally as a unique individual. As a result, mutual respect typifies the excellent relationships enjoyed by all those associated with the school. The headteacher has led the school for a number of years with great dedication. She has been successful in getting everyone to sign up to a commitment that children come first and that provision should be adapted as much as possible to meet each child's individual need. At times she has taken on too many responsibilities, but recent appointments and an enlarged senior management team have brought a more effective team approach to the leadership of the school. These developments bode well for the future. Governors support the staff and manage finances well. They also help to promote very close links with parents. However, governors agree with inspectors that the way they monitor the school, especially some policies and procedures, could be more effective. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection. This is evident in the school's improved and now effective use of self-evaluation and assessment of children's progress to inform teaching and learning. Improvement is also illustrated by the excellent strategies teachers use to develop children's speaking skills. The subsequent good achievement of the children, from a range of differing starting points and with a range of learning needs, also show the school's good capacity for sustained improvement. From the moment they make contact with the school, children and their parents are welcomed as a family into a community where their needs are identified and supported by caring staff. The school's excellent links with a comprehensive range of outside agencies and specialists, including, for example, a speech and language therapist, means that assessments and induction support are begun at a very early stage. As soon as they enter school, children are assisted by clear expectations, well-considered routines and consistently good or better practice. As a result, many, including some who enter with no speech, make outstanding progress in their self-confidence, behaviour and speaking and listening skills. The school gives very close support for families and for parents of children with complex needs. This ensures that children value school and take full advantage of the school's exemplary care, guidance and support. This is a very well equipped and maintained school, both indoors and outdoors, where all pupils are given the opportunity to have fun and succeed. Effective teaching ensures that children enjoy an excellent curriculum, which is tailored to meet their individual needs and interests. It supports at least good learning across all the areas required within the Early Years

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

Foundation Stage. In so doing, the school provides good value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- ' To further develop the school, governors should strengthen the way they check the effectiveness of the school by adopting a more systematic and delegated approach to monitoring, reviewing and updating policies, procedures and practice, in order to be better placed to hold leaders to account and bring about improvement.

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

By constantly enhancing staff skills, especially through excellent links with outside specialists, the school continues to be successful in including all children equally and in promoting good progress and achievement for all groups of children. This is despite an increasing number of children with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities attending, often initially for formal assessment, but staying on to continue their education at this school. Children are admitted into the Nursery School usually at the age of three years when their skills in general, especially in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development, are well below those expected at this age. By the time they leave the school, mostly at the age of four years, children have achieved well in most areas of learning and develop levels of skills which are just below those expected at this age. Progress is particularly impressive in children's social, emotional, language and physical development. This stems from the staff's good teaching and very caring support. Different groups, such as boys, girls, able children and those from a variety of backgrounds, all derive equal benefit from the variety of stimulating learning activities available in the school's excellent facilities. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, especially those with complex needs, also receive high quality support and, in relation to their capabilities, make equally good progress as others. The behaviour of children is impeccable. They enjoy school a great deal and feel safe. This is clearly apparent in the laughter and joy that emanates from all parts of the school, for example as children pedal energetically around the tricycle track. All children, even those with complex personal needs, following the example all of adults who work in the school, showing respect and consideration towards others. Children, for their age, show an excellent understanding of safe living, share any concerns trustingly with staff and know right from wrong. Lunch time is a positive learning experience where children are helped to enjoy socialising with others and develop a good understanding of hygiene and healthy eating. They show interest in their work and play and willingly take turns with each other. They are developing independent learning skills well. This is clearly seen as children respond to the staff's well-considered and consistent expectations and routines, for example happily helping to put away apparatus at the end of each session. Children's good achievement, very positive attitudes and willingness to try hard at school show that they are well prepared for the next steps in life beyond this small 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

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	1
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	2
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 good quality of teaching and learning reflects the diligence of staff in getting to know the children and tackling their individual needs. Adults are skilled in adjusting the way they engage with the children to meet their differing needs. The high quality of the staff's questioning of children to develop new learning, especially in developing speaking and listening skills, from the children's own ideas and learning choices, is a strong feature. Staff subtly withdraw from one-to-one support at the optimum moment, at lunch time for example, particularly with children who have very complex needs. This is another strong feature, which helps the children to be freely included in group activities and develop self-confidence. The school's systematic improvement in the way staff assess the children's responses and progress and enhance speaking skills, both areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection, have played a key role in developing these successful strategies. Assessment information now gives a clear picture of how well children are doing in different areas of learning and helps to ensure

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

that all groups of learners are doing equally well. However, there is still some duplication in record keeping, which is being reduced through new 'Learning Journeys', which show the children's progress and development of skill more clearly. Very good pastoral care and support of behaviour, warm relationships and excellent links with outside agencies further enhance the quality of the support that leads to the children's good learning. Very close links with parents, including through homework known as 'Impact Work', also help staff to engage with children. The curriculum is truly outstanding and is enriched by a first-class range of indoor and outdoor learning opportunities. Children happily experience excellent adult-led group sessions or freely choose activities for themselves. Adults unobtrusively support children in their independently chosen activities. This is seen, for example, when they climb up into the well-maintained climbing frames to promote children's thinking by discussing their ideas. A comprehensive range of well-planned parental support, induction and transition arrangements further enrich children's learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has an unwavering vision for her school, which is based on ensuring that each child is treated as a unique individual and, as much as possible, receives personal care. To achieve this, there is a clear sense of purpose in supporting children and their families and striving for improvement. This is fully endorsed by senior staff and the governors. Leaders and managers are diligent in ensuring that all children enjoy equal opportunity. In addition, through its family support services, as a part of a Children's Centre, and within its carefully constructed curriculum, the school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Since the last inspection, senior staff have strengthened the way they evaluate the effectiveness of the school. Self-evaluation is now good, particularly in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and children's progress. This has been recognised by the school gaining the Bristol Standard in Early Years Provision. In particular, the resultant improvement in teachers' assessment and planning ensures that children achieve equally well in relation to their ability. The children's good achievement and great enjoyment clearly show that the school provides good value for money. All staff provide excellent pastoral care for the children and this is supported by good safeguarding of pupils through the checks made on all adults who

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

work in the school. Governors are effective in their personal support of staff and in encouraging excellent links with parents and outside agencies. However, some of their approaches to monitoring the effectiveness of the school tend to be informal and are not sufficiently systematic in checking policies and procedures.

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	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	3
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	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of the parents are entirely happy and have full confidence in the work of the school. Several parents highlighted the excellent relationships they have with the staff of the school, their gratitude for the personal support they have been given in time of need and the warmth of the care their children also receive. Other common threads within parents' comments included praise for the way new children and their parents are inducted and welcomed into school. Parents praised the way the staff work so effectively with them, giving parenting guidance if necessary, for example. They also value the school's close links with outside specialists to help children learn, for example with speech therapy, and appreciate the stimulating learning environment provided at the school. The numbers of parental criticisms were very few and these were also examined during the inspection. The views of the parents interviewed both formally and informally confirm the very positive responses in the questionnaires.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Plymbridge 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 12 statements about the school. The inspection team received 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 64 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	85	3	9	2	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	91	3	9	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	65	10	29	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	71	9	26	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	77	7	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	74	8	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	77	8	24	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)	24	71	7	21	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	68	9	27	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	68	10	29	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	74	9	27	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	74	9	27	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	91	2	6	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 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.



17 September 2009 Dear Children Inspection of Plymbridge Nursery School, Plymouth PL6 8UN Thank you so much for your very warm welcome. We really enjoyed talking with you and seeing you at work. We were very impressed by many things, but especially by your excellent behaviour and the very kindly way you treat each other. The way that all the adults who work at the school give you and your parents such close personal attention and make sure that you enjoy your learning and play are other outstanding features. We are pleased to agree with you and your parents that Plymbridge Nursery is a good school. These are some of the other main things we found: You make good progress because the staff ensure that you have a wonderful range of learning activities to choose from, both indoors and out of doors. The staff teach you well and use your own ideas to promote good learning. As a result, you develop skills that are close to those expected for your age. Most of you become confident learners who can speak and listen well. You really enjoy school, feel safe and live healthily because you are cared for extremely well. Your headteacher, staff and governors run the school effectively. They work very closely with visiting staff and with your parents to help you achieve well. To help the school to improve, we have asked the governing body to strengthen the way they check how well the school runs. You can help by continuing to give of your best in all that you do. Thank you again and best wishes for the future. Yours faithfully Alex Baxter 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.