

Longshaw Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119084
Local Authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	339338
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Shirley Herring

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	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Florence Oldfield
Headteacher	Miss Elizabeth Thompson / Mrs Jean Bennett
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2007
School address	Crosby Road Blackburn Lancashire BB2 3NF
Telephone number	01254 698832
Fax number	0
Email address	longshaw.nursery@blackburn.gov.uk

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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

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, parents, a local authority representative and professional partners who support the work of the school. They observed the school's work and looked at the latest school improvement plan, teachers' plans, assessments of children's progress, children's learning journals and photographs of a range of activities. They also looked at 11 questionnaires completed by parents or carers.

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

- the progress of boys
- the use of assessment information in planning the next steps in children's learning
- how effectively the nursery engages parents and carers in their children's learning
- how effectively the nursery works with other partners
- the development of children's personal and social skills.

Information about the school

The vast majority of children are of White British heritage with a small proportion from minority ethnic groups. A very small number of children are at an early stage of learning English. Children join the Nursery the term after their third birthday. Most attend part time either morning or afternoon, but a small number attend full time. The Nursery operates alongside Longshaw Children's Centre which runs a wide range of early years' provision, supporting families in the school and the local community. This is inspected separately and a report is available on the Ofsted website. The Nursery has been managed by two associate headteachers since the retirement of the previous headteacher at the end of August 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 nursery. It has outstanding strengths in the quality of care, guidance and support it provides and the arrangements for safeguarding the children. It has excellent links with other professionals and is very effective in engaging parents in their children's learning.

Children's achievements are good. They behave well, are exceptionally kind to each other and enjoy being in school. They flourish in the secure environment where the needs of the individual are paramount. They enter the Nursery with skills that are well below those expected for their age, particularly their social and communication skills. They make good progress because of good teaching and a broad curriculum but, nevertheless, attainment is below what is usual for their age by the time they leave the Nursery. They make very good progress in their personal development because of the high priority placed on this aspect, whatever the activity. They achieve well in developing their language skills, though adults sometimes miss opportunities to encourage children to explain their ideas and to demonstrate how children could answer more fully to help them to make even better progress.

The success of the nursery is based on strong teamwork where all adults feel valued and are committed to improvements. The two headteachers and other senior staff are vigilant in ensuring children's safety. They work very effectively with other professionals and with parents to improve children's learning. Improvements in assessment procedures, enrichment of the outdoor area, successful strategies to improve attendance and accurate evaluations of the school's work indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop children's speaking skills in all areas of learning by:
 - asking questions which encourage children to explain their ideas
 - demonstrating how to speak in sentences
 - engaging children in discussion about what they are doing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

Children are developing independence well as they register their arrival by putting their name card with the happy or sad group to show their feelings that day. They show a good level of interest in the range of activities on offer and can take time to consider

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which they would prefer. They make good progress and enjoy their learning because of good teaching, interesting activities and the good use of assessment information to plan the next steps of learning for individuals. Nevertheless, children's attainment is below the level expected for their age by the time they leave the Nursery. Children make particularly good progress in developing personal and social skills, though despite good progress, the language skills of some children are a weakness. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the excellent level of care, guidance and support the school provides. The small number of children at an early stage of learning English also make good progress because of the high level of individual attention they receive to meet their needs.

Children feel exceptionally safe and secure in the nursery because all staff are rigorous in ensuring their safety in all activities. Children use tools, such as scissors, carefully and those enjoying working in the 'Builders' Yard' did so safely because they were closely supervised. In regular visits from the community policeman children are alerted to potential dangers, indeed one child pointed out that she had not seen the inspector in her nursery before. They have an excellent understanding of leading a healthy lifestyle as they explain the value of their fruit snacks and enjoy vigorous exercise on a daily basis. They heed the regular reminders to wash their hands and understand this is to avoid germs which 'can make you sick!'

Behaviour is good. They behave considerately to each other, listen to staff and respond well. Occasionally, there are minor disruptions in group activities but this is often related to tiredness at the end of a session. Children make an excellent contribution to the school community as they tidy up well, follow routines and put up their hands to answer questions. An exceptional element is the way in which these very young children welcome children who have special educational and social needs so that they are fully included in all activities. Attendance is good. Children have many opportunities to work together and this prepares them well for the next stage in their education. However, a small minority of children are limited by a weakness in their language development. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are developing a good understanding of the cultures within the nursery and are developing respect and consideration for others.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

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

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	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	1
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Children's attendance ¹	2
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan interesting activities which help children to enjoy their learning and achieve well. Children respond well to the high expectations of mutual respect and so behaviour is good. In the best lessons adults ask questions that encourage children to explain their ideas, but on some occasions, questions require only a one word answer and so opportunities for developing children's language skills are missed. Very good systems for assessing children's progress have been developed over the last few months and these are now being used well to plan work for different groups. For example, some very good practice in developing children's understanding of letter sounds at different levels was observed. However, it is too soon to judge the overall impact on raising achievement.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is appropriately based on a good range of purposeful, practical activities that shows a good understanding of how young children learn. The school is vigilant in ensuring that an equivalent range of activities is provided for children whether they attend in the morning or afternoon. The high priority placed on developing personal and social skills, whatever the activity, has resulted in children making very good progress in their personal development. However, there is not the same consistency in using the school's strategies for developing language skills in all areas of learning.

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding so children feel secure, gain in confidence and want to come to school. There are excellent systems for introducing children to school, including home visits, and so they settle quickly. Many children benefit from the fact that they have already attended the provision for under-threes in

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the children's centre. Adults pay excellent attention to the needs of the individual and any difficulty or needs are identified at a very early stage. Several parents commented that the excellent care in the nursery and specialist help, for example from the speech therapist, had helped their children to improve. The wide range of expertise in the children's centre, for example, the family support workers, provides very good support for families to enhance children's learning and well-being when they are in the nursery.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	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 two associate headteachers have established a very good working relationship to take the school forward. Staff say they feel valued as they are listened to and have been involved in monitoring the work of the school. The nursery staff work hard to ensure that there are equal opportunities for all children whether they attend in the morning or afternoon. The clear plan for improvement sets priorities based on close observation and an accurate evaluation of the school's work. For example improvements in the outdoor provision are helping to engage boys more readily in their learning, though it is too soon to judge the impact on their achievement. The emphasis on staff training is helping to improve the quality of provision. Recent recruits to the governing body have enhanced the expertise available to support and challenge the work of the school.

The nursery's partnership with parents is excellent. Parents say they particularly value the home visits and the way they are kept very well informed, for example they enjoy taking home the children's learning journals to see their progress. The school values any comments the parents wish to add. The nursery has established excellent partnerships with other professionals in the children's centre and beyond, to access specialist help for the most vulnerable children at a very early stage.

Children's safety is paramount. All the required systems, procedures and practices for safeguarding children are fully in place and very well understood by staff. Senior leaders are exceptionally vigilant and well organised in evaluating procedures and planning further improvements. Staff themselves are excellent role models as they show the children that they are washing their hands thoroughly and using plastic gloves before handling food. Community cohesion is good. Children celebrate the different cultures within the nursery and parents are happy to contribute to celebrations such as Chinese New Year and Divali.

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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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
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

Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with all that the Nursery provides. The inspectors support the views of parents and carers that their children are very well cared for and supported.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Longshaw 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 11 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 80 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	11	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	10	91	1	9	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	9	82	2	18	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	82	2	18	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	10	91	1	9	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	82	2	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	73	3	27	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)	6	55	4	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	82	3	27	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	64	3	27	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	73	2	18	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	91	1	9	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	0	0	1	9	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 November 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Longshaw Nursery School, Blackburn, BB2 3NF

Thank you for helping the inspectors when we came to inspect your nursery recently. We really enjoyed our visit. Some of your mums told me how much you enjoy coming to school each day and I can understand why. They also told me how much they appreciated being able to talk to the teachers and to look at your learning journals so that they get to know how well you are doing.

You go to a good nursery which is a safe and happy place to be. In fact, some of the things about your nursery are outstanding, which is the best word we can use. All the adults take outstanding care of you all and there is always someone there to give you extra help when you need it. The nursery does its very best to make sure that you receive specialist help from other people when necessary.

We were pleased to see how well behaved you are and how much you are learning. We particularly liked the way in which you help each other and take good care of those children who do not quite understand what they need to do yet. Your teachers plan lots of interesting things for you to do. I could see how much you really enjoyed shaking the parachute and watching the ball jump up and down. I am not sure I would have liked mixing the beans quite as much as you did. We were so pleased to see how carefully you handled the tools when working in the builders' yard.

Your teachers work hard to help you to learn. It is part of my job to suggest ways that even a good school could be better. I have asked your teachers to think of even more ways to encourage some of you to talk more about what you are doing so that you get even better at explaining your ideas.

You are a credit to your mums and dads and carers in the way you behave and get on with others. I can see why your teachers enjoy working with you each day. I wish you and your families all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Shirley Herring

Lead inspector

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