

Brunel Nursery School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 119092 |
| Local Authority | Blackburn with Darwen |
| Inspection number | 339342 |
| Inspection dates | 4–5 November 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Angela Westington HMI |

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

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| Type of school | Nursery |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3–4 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 62 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Pat Garrity |
| Headteacher | Mrs Gill Wittingham |
| Date of previous school inspection | 3 May 2007 |
| School address | Cambridge Street Blackburn Lancashire BB1 1ES |
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|--------------------------|-------------------|
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. The inspectors made eight observations, of varying length, of children's learning and held discussions with the chair of governors, staff, a small number of parents and representatives from the local authority. They looked at a range of documentation including: policies; the school's records on children's progress; assessments of children's learning; the school's development plan; the single central record of information held on staff; 15 questionnaires returned by parents and six staff questionnaires.

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

- policies and records for safeguarding children
- the impact of the changes to the school's organisation of teaching and learning
- whether all children are making the progress that they should be making.

Information about the school

Brunel Nursery School serves an area of social disadvantage close to Blackburn town centre in an area of urban regeneration. Almost all the children are of Asian heritage and the vast majority are at the very early stages of learning English as an additional language. Almost half speak Punjabi as their first language and over a third, Gujarati. The remaining small numbers of children speak English, Urdu or an Eastern European language as their first language. The school offers part time nursery education for three- and four-year olds, five days a week during the school year. Parents can choose either three hours provision in the morning or in the afternoon. It has a maximum capacity of 80 part-time places. At the time of this inspection, the school was still inducting new children into Nursery. Most children spend a year in the Nursery before transferring to primary school. Depending upon their birthdays, a small number may spend longer than this in the Nursery.

Following the retirement of the long-standing headteacher, the associate headteacher was appointed on a temporary, one-term contract in January 2009 to oversee the school's federation with the neighbouring primary school and to embed the curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Her contract has been renewed each term whilst the plans for federation unfold.

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

2

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 significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to ensuring that the governing body meet statutory requirements for safeguarding children by recording and maintaining the required information from staff vetting procedures and ensuring that child protection requirements are met. The governing body have also failed to fulfil their statutory duty to ensure that requirements for community cohesion are met.

The failure of governors, over a period of time, to meet the specific technical requirements for safeguarding means that safeguarding procedures are inadequate. This has a significant impact on other key judgements such as the quality of provision and the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are many strengths, and much to celebrate, in the daily care of children: the sensitive management of children's learning; very good relationships with adults; and the excellent direction and leadership of the associate headteacher. Nevertheless, the long standing technical breach of the safeguarding requirements, identified by the associate headteacher, means that the quality of care, guidance and support is inadequate. The associate headteacher has put in place measures to remedy the shortcomings but, by not fulfilling this statutory duty, governors' monitoring of the children's well-being has been less robust than it should have been and so governance is also judged inadequate.

Outcomes for children are good. The changes brought about by the new associate headteacher have had a very positive impact on the quality of children's learning and the progress they make. They make particularly 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 outstanding. They also make particularly good progress in their acquisition of English. The school has identified the need to improve further children's skills in early reading and writing and in early calculation.

The provision for the children's learning and development is outstanding. This reflects the very high quality management of the teaching and the care and attention given to their intellectual needs. The associate headteacher and lead teacher provide excellent, reflective practice which has inspired the team of key workers and has raised morale. The introduction of new ways of working and of observing and assessing children's progress has meant that the previously good practice, observed at the last inspection, has improved even further – something that one parent identified in discussion with the lead inspector. A range of new equipment and resources, including improvements to the

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outdoor provision, is used very well and sensitively to contribute to the children's physical and social development.

The school has improved since the last inspection. The associate headteacher and the lead teacher have a clear and shared understanding of how to improve the provision even further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that statutory requirements for safeguarding and child protection are met
- Ensure that statutory requirements for community cohesion are met
- Develop further, for those children who are ready, their skills in early reading and writing and early calculation.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

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|---|
| 2 |
|---|

On entry to the Nursery, the children's attainment is lower than might be expected. As a result of the excellent provision, they make good progress overall and by the time they leave the Nursery they reach levels that are in line with expectations. They make especially good progress in their personal, social and emotional development; indeed for some children the progress in this aspect is outstanding because they leave the Nursery working within the Early Learning Goals - ahead of where they might be expected to reach. Evidence of this was seen in the children's excellent behaviour. Children chose activities and persevered with them until they were completed, on occasions displaying very high levels of concentration and absorption in an activity. For example, one boy recognised that magnetic shapes looked like the ladder on his bunk bed and then spent more than 20 minutes 'building the ladder' and his bed with the shapes, becoming engrossed in the task. Other children returned repeatedly to particular activities, developing a skill or understanding over time.

Children's progress in aspects of communication, language and literacy are also particularly good. Their English develops well: the result of a daily routine that focuses on singing, speech and stories. Since the last inspection, the school has increased its focus on developing children's early number and reading and writing skills. This work had paid dividends. The data held by the school show that over the year, children make good progress in these aspects. The data also show that there is still some work to do to strengthen children's learning of letters and sounds and early calculation. No group of children achieves significantly better or worse than any other. Children who have been identified as in need of additional support make good progress because of this early identification and the support of an experienced and qualified support assistant.

The children clearly feel safe, secure and very happy in the Nursery. They settle quickly into the routines and look forward to the set events of the day such as singing time or snack time. The school's organisation of its continuous provision means that children new to the Nursery very quickly learn where everything is and how to gain access to the activities. During this inspection, an inspector had to ask which were the newest children because it was not immediately obvious, so happy and well settled were they all. The

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children are developing good skills of self-reliance and self-care. For example, they pour out their own drinks and clear away their own plates at snack time. Although they are very young and mostly engage in fairly solitary play, 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.

The children are able to take control and pursue their interests and the adults monitor this and adapt the planning to accommodate the children's needs. On one day of the inspection the heavy rain did not stop the children going outside to use the outdoor equipment, but a greater source of joy and fascination was the 'waterfall' across the door threshold which became an adventurous barrier to get through. The children had great fun passing backwards and forwards through it whilst trying not to get wet, yet expressing surprise about how cold the water was. The adults sensitively allowed the children to carry on exploring the waterfall until they tired of it. The morning's activities were simply reordered to accommodate the children's fascination. In ways such as this, the children are gaining an understanding of natural phenomena and developing a sense of wonder. The children learn about people who are not as lucky as themselves by taking part in special events such as children in need, or visiting a local school for children with physical impairments.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

| | |
|--|----------|
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 4 |
| 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 | 2 |
| 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 |

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

| | |
|---|----------|
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| The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Children's attendance ¹ | 2 |
| | 3 |
| The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is outstanding. The principal reasons for this are that it is highly reflective, focused on the needs of the child and the provision is organised to enable children and staff to become more proficient at the various activities provided. There is an appropriate mix of adult- and child-led activity. The adults supervise each area of learning and children choose where they want to work. At the time of this inspection, the school had just introduced group times led by key workers and children went happily into small groups to listen to stories read by their key workers.

Observation and assessment are well organised and used extremely well to tailor the provision to meet the children's interests and needs. For example, a boy who had returned recently from India was fascinated by planes and airports. The staff introduced toy planes and an airport and picture books on the topic to the play area and watched as he found the toys and spent time playing with them. With the key worker, he looked at the books and talked about the planes and his holiday. Other children found the toys and books and so gradually the language and vocabulary of the group was extended. The adults monitor carefully how the areas for learning are being used and enrich them progressively. New equipment is introduced carefully so that the children are not overwhelmed by too much choice. All staff may note on the following week's plan, located in the staff room, which activities need developing for which child and why. Children's profiles contain a variety of evidence of their good progress and identify the 'next steps' that can be used when planning further activities.

The children are very well looked after throughout the day. The atmosphere in the Nursery is extremely calm and this is one reason why the children settle so quickly and so well. Relationships are very good and staff are extremely caring towards the children. Bilingual staff communicate with children in their home language where this will help them to acquire key vocabulary. Snack time is a good, social occasion.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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|---|----------|
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 4 |
| The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 1 |
| | 1 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 1 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 4 |

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How effective are leadership and management?

The associate headteacher provides excellent leadership and direction for the school. The changes she has initiated have had a significant impact on the quality of the provision and on staff morale. She has encouraged staff to lead developments and to identify further areas for improvement and they have risen to the challenge. Training has been well targeted to raise staff's skill levels and resources are used well to meet the children's needs and achieve good outcomes. The school's links with parents are good. Links with other agencies to support children are also good. In its day-to-day work, the school promotes equality of opportunity for all children exceptionally well. Governors are committed to the school but over time have neglected to meet all their statutory duties. In addition to the shortcomings in safeguarding and child protection requirements, governors have not fulfilled the requirements in respect of promoting community cohesion. There has been no analysis of the community and its needs.

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 | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 1 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 1 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 4 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 4 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

Parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were unanimously 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

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about the staff and how their child, 'loves going to school'. There were no negative comments at all and no concerns were raised through disagreement with statements in the questionnaire.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brunel 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 inspector received 15 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 62 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 12 | 80 | 3 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 13 | 87 | 2 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 9 | 60 | 5 | 33 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 9 | 60 | 6 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 10 | 67 | 5 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 8 | 53 | 6 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 11 | 73 | 4 | 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) | 8 | 53 | 4 | 27 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 6 | 40 | 7 | 47 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 7 | 47 | 6 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 8 | 53 | 6 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 8 | 53 | 7 | 47 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 12 | 80 | 3 | 20 | 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.



6 November 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Brunel Nursery School, Blackburn BB1 1ES

It was lovely to meet you all and see how well you are settling into the Nursery. It was great to see you enjoying the waterfall, singing and story time. I enjoyed seeing you sticking and gluing in the craft area and climbing on the climbing frame. I really wanted to have a go on the frame too! ı

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

- Make sure all their important papers are kept properly.
- Help those of you who are ready, to learn a little bit more about books and numbers.

Yours sincerely

Angela M Westington

Her Majesty's Inspector

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