

Whitegate Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119096
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339345
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Hewlett

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	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Greenwood
Headteacher	Mrs Kay Burke
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons, involving four teachers and three nursery assistants, and held meetings with governors, staff, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at assessments and records of children's attainment and progress, curriculum planning, monitoring records and school improvement plans. Thirty six questionnaires returned from parents and carers were analysed as were 11 questionnaires completed by staff.

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

- whether the nursery has sustained its outstanding level of effectiveness since the last inspection
- the consistency of teaching and the assessment of children's progress
- the impact of leadership and management.

Information about the school

Children who attend this average-size Nursery school are predominantly of White British heritage. A small minority has special educational needs and/or disabilities. Very small numbers of children speak English as an additional language. There is a Phase 1 children's centre on site which was not the subject of this inspection but is managed by the headteacher and leadership team. The majority of children attend part time, either in the morning or in the afternoon, with some children arriving early, staying for lunch and then accessing after-school club. The nursery offers a range of extended services to the local community. It holds Investors in People status and Healthy School's accreditation.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding nursery. Excellent care, guidance and support ensure that children are safe, happy and secure. Children's individual qualities and talents are nurtured and highly valued by staff. This makes an outstanding contribution to children's excellent behaviour, growing independence and sense of responsibility. These qualities underpin their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents and carers are highly appreciative of what the school provides. Comments such as, 'I cannot praise this nursery highly enough,' typify parents' views.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the school and achieve exceptionally well. They learn effectively because of the excellent curriculum which is designed to meet their individual needs and because they are so well supported by skilled teachers and nursery assistants. For most of the time, children choose or initiate their learning from a wealth of stimulating activities. They show excellent attitudes towards learning with the overwhelming majority determined to complete a task before they move onto something else. As a result, they have high levels of confidence as they tackle the increasingly challenging tasks that they face. Children's impressive progress is carefully recorded in personal achievement logs which provide a valuable record of children's experiences and set out clearly the next steps in their learning.

Leaders have an excellent overview of the work of the school and know its strengths and where it needs to improve. For example, they recognise that children's knowledge of the wider world and their contact with children from different communities could be better. Self-evaluation is extremely rigorous and very accurate with no trace of complacency despite the outstanding provision described in past inspections. Significant improvements have been made in recent years in areas such as assessment. Staff and governors are united in their pursuit of excellence. This demonstrates the school's excellent capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Broaden children's understanding of the richness of the wider world and increase their contact with it.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

Overall, children enter nursery with knowledge and skills at levels that are below those expected for their age. They make excellent progress so that by the time they leave the vast majority meet or exceed the expected outcomes for their age. Children are active

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and eager learners and achieve exceptionally well. They listen attentively, answer questions enthusiastically and explore and learn with real determination. Children practise and improve new skills successfully, such as writing and drawing, with many able to make a good attempt at writing their own name. Every opportunity is taken to improve their counting skills and the excellent environment outside provides a huge amount of scope. For example, children confidently estimate how many buckets of water they will need as they clean the windows. Their knowledge and understanding of the world grows rapidly, for example, by observing and investigating plants in the school grounds. Physical skills, such as climbing and balancing, develop rapidly and children often become engrossed in role play, which ignites their creativity and imagination. Personal, social and emotional development is a particular strength and evident in children's growing independence and the consideration they show for one another.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same rapid progress as their peers because their individual needs are identified early and catered for with great success. More-able children also make outstanding progress due to the effective challenge that they are offered. For example, additional phonics lessons are offered to those children ready to take on the challenge. Equally good progress is made by those few children who speak English as an additional language.

Within a very supportive environment, children understand the consequences of their actions and how to stay safe. The strong emphasis placed on exercise and healthy eating helps children to adopt healthy lifestyles and understand the importance of good hygiene. They make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community by taking initiative, for example, by acting responsibly, looking after others and taking care of equipment. Behaviour and relationships are exemplary throughout. Children learn to play cooperatively and make excellent progress overall in acquiring key skills which help to prepare them for the future. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their pride in achieving so well as in their good and improving attendance.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment ¹	1
The quality of children's learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1

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 feel safe	1
Children's behaviour	1
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 Taking into account: Children's attendance ¹	1
	2
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Children benefit from an excellent range of well planned and resourced, ever-changing, highly stimulating activities, indoors and outside. At the heart of the provision and instrumental in its effectiveness, is the high quality of the staff team. They have an excellent understanding of how young children learn. They take every opportunity to improve and extend children's language skills through challenging open-ended questions. Staff know just when to redirect children to different activities to ensure that they access the full curriculum and keep their learning purposeful. Excellent assessments, based on regular observations, are used consistently well to identify the next steps in children's learning. This helps adults to closely match the activities provided to children's individual learning needs, to raise the level of challenge and to keep parents and carers informed. As a result, children's very diverse learning needs are met.

The outstanding and stimulating curriculum enables children to build upon earlier learning. It is firmly based on responding to children's interests and, as a result keeps them involved and engaged. For example, their 'building site', constructed alongside the real building improvements taking place next to their play area, brought an immediacy and excitement to their learning. Children built walls, mixed sand and water to make their own cement and drew their own plans and designs. This results in children demonstrating an impressive array of organisational and cooperative skills as they bring their project together. Staff broaden children's experiences by an excellent enrichment programme that includes regular visits within the local community as well as an extensive range of visitors including artists.

The key worker system, where an adult is responsible for a small group of children, provides excellent pastoral care and has a positive impact on children's behaviour. Parents and carers greatly value the high quality advice and guidance provided by staff. Adults are very skilled in identifying and supporting vulnerable children and they link very effectively with outside agencies, such as health professionals and other staff within the Centre, to reduce any barriers to learning. Excellent induction arrangements help children settle quickly and happily into school. Similarly, highly effective contact

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with primary schools helps smooth transfer into the next sector of education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
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?

Self-evaluation is excellent. It is accurate and firmly rooted in an ongoing review of the school's performance. Led by an inspirational headteacher and highly effective staff and governors, the school strives very successfully to maintain itself at the forefront of outstanding early years practice. Together they make an extremely effective team which combines to provide children with the best possible start. Excellent partnerships with parents and carers and other partners are central to the school's vision. Parents and carers speak in glowing terms about how well they are kept informed about all aspects of their children's achievements. As a result, they are in a strong position to complement the work of the school and this help to consolidate their children's learning. The school is committed totally to providing equality of opportunity for all children and tackling any potential discrimination. Consequently, different groups of children perform equally well. Staff and governors have carried out a detailed and thorough review of community cohesion. The nursery is at the heart of its community and the linked children's centre meets the needs of families within the immediate and wider local community. At the same time, there is a recognition that there is always more to be done, for example, the need to improve children's knowledge and understanding of the wider world, as well as their contact with children from different communities.

All required policies for child protection, safeguarding and children's welfare are fully in place and they are reviewed and updated regularly. Staff and governors ensure that they are implemented rigorously with the result that safeguarding procedures are outstanding. High quality provision and excellent outcomes for children, together with strong leadership and well deployed staff, contribute to outstanding value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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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 leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1 1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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	1
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	1

Views of parents and carers

Almost a half of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Of these almost all who returned questionnaires were very supportive of the school. Comments such as, 'My child has come on in leaps and bounds', and, 'we are impressed by the wide range of resources', sum up the views of parents and carers. Very few comments raised concerns. Where they did, most related to the amount of information that parents and carers received about their children's progress and how the school helped them support their children's learning. Inspectors found no evidence to support these concerns but confirmed the accuracy of the overwhelmingly positive responses, including the eight written tributes to the school's work.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitegate 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 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 79 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	81	6	17	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	81	7	19	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	61	13	36	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	75	8	22	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	72	10	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	64	11	31	2	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	58	13	36	0	0	1	3
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)	19	53	15	42	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	61	13	36	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	50	16	44	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	47	16	44	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	72	9	25	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	78	8	22	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). 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.



7 July 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Whitegate Nursery School, Burnley, BB12 8TG

I loved my visit to your nursery because you were so friendly. I want to tell you what I found out.

You attend an excellent nursery. You have lots of exciting things to do such as making cakes, using computers and playing with your friends. I could tell just how much you enjoy the nursery by watching you play together, find out new things and learn new words. You are doing really well and make excellent progress.

Grown-ups take excellent care of you and keep you safe: this is why you are so happy and beautifully behaved. Grown-ups make each day different and interesting. They teach you very well when you work together in small groups. They watch you carefully, make little notes about your learning and write them down for your parents and carers to see. This is important because it helps grown-ups in the nursery and your parents and carers at home to help you learn more each day.

Your headteacher and governors do an excellent job in making your nursery a safe and fun place to be. They never stop trying to make it better by bringing new toys, books and new ideas to help you learn as much as you possibly can.

Your nursery is excellent but grown-ups keep trying to make it become even better. I have asked your headteacher and teachers to help you to learn more about how people live in other countries and in different communities.

Yours sincerely

Mr Michael Hewlett

Lead inspector

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