

# The Gainsborough Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126563
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	340999
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Brennan

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	73
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tori Morris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Stopp
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	North Marsh Road Gainsborough Lincolnshire
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and held meetings with all of the staff, members of the governing body, some parents, staff from the pre-school and visiting support staff. They observed the school's work and looked at performance data, records of monitoring, safeguarding policies and records, and records of children's progress.

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

- whether partnerships, especially with the pre-school, make a difference to children's learning and attainment level reached
- whether resources and teaching help children get the most out of what they choose to do
- what roles the assistant headteacher and the governing body play in school improvement
- the effectiveness of staff development
- the robustness of safeguarding procedures.

## Information about the school

The Gainsborough Nursery School is situated within a children's centre. Children typically start the nursery at the age of three and stay for three terms; many having attended the onsite pre-school. The proportion of children who have special education needs and/or disabilities is above average. Almost all of the children are of White British heritage. The school has High/Scope accreditation and has been awarded Healthy School status.

**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 school. Parents are fulsome in their praise. Indeed, some are so happy that having moved away from the area, they still travel considerable distances to take advantage of the excellent provision on offer.

The school is as good as it is because it is led so well. Stemming from the headteacher, a clear set of principles which puts children's needs first, underpins the work of leadership. Staff development is very well attended to. Planning guidelines, at-a-glance guides for teaching and learning and the like provide user-friendly frameworks that all staff use well.

There is much for children to do and enjoy, both in and outside. At tidy-time, children just don't want to stop learning. Teaching during group time is expert. First-class assessment procedures ensure that even at this early stage of the school year staff know their key children and their needs very well. This helps fine tune the teaching. Questioning, for example, elicits extended answers from more confident children while supporting the early speech and language of the less confident. Teaching during work-time when children make many of the decisions about learning is not quite as expert. Not all staff strike the correct balance between standing back and joining in learning to prompt thinking.

The school marshals support for children who have particular needs very well. A combination of individual programmes and small group work closely matches provision to children's disparate needs. Excellent partnerships, particularly with the pre-school and with parents, draw everyone together into doing the best for the children.

As a result of the school's outstanding provision, children come on in leaps and bounds. From a low base they typically reach a level of attainment that is broadly expected for their age. They do particularly well in their personal development, gaining many of the attitudes and skills needed for the next stage of education. Many are active and healthy while at school. They learn to look after themselves, for example, in learning how to attend to minor scrapes, although some children forget to put their helmets on when whizzing around on bikes. The school does all it can to encourage attendance and to follow up unexplained absence. Children attend regularly and generally only miss school when they are ill.

The improvement since the last inspection, the great sense of teamwork, and the development of leadership beyond the headteacher, have made the school what it is. It is in a very strong position to maintain the excellence it has achieved.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

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- Promote the development of children's social, language and problem-solving skills further by:
  - asking thought-provoking questions, posing problems and helping children collaborate in their learning during work time.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of children****1**

Children's skills and abilities on entry to the nursery are still much lower than those typically found although there are signs of these rising. Sensitive induction arrangements help children settle very quickly to life at the nursery. The vast majority of children started only a few weeks ago and they are already settled, happy and extremely active. Much of this is because of the encouraging relationships staff have with children, their knowledge of children's individual needs and because there are really interesting things for the children to do. The youngest and newest children demonstrate limited concentration, social skills, and crucially many have little expressive language. Observations of children coming to the end of their time at the nursery, together with the detailed picture revealed through children's 'special books', show that children journey a long way as learners in a short time. By the time they leave, many are transformed into confident children, taking charge and responsibility for their learning. There is little difference in how boys and girls do.

Children's first-rate levels of personal development are typified by one boy who, with the help of his friends and having drawn up plans to build a house, worked in rapt concentration to bring his plans to fruition. Various crates, planks and other everyday bits and pieces were tried this way and that, to arrive at solutions to practical problems. Good perseverance was shown and, with a wipe of the brow, setbacks tackled with determination. Staff place language development at the heart of what they do with children but particularly with those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities that are related to language. The number of children needing personal plans, especially in language, drops dramatically from the beginning to the end of the year. More able children are quickly identified and given dedicated language and mathematical sessions, helping these children do well. One girl, looking at a big number, posed the question that it could be her phone number. By the time children leave the nursery reading, writing and counting skills broadly match expected levels.

Work-time begins with a burst of energy and purpose and results in very active sessions. There is a lot for children to do physically. Some of the younger children have already mastered the art of riding two wheeled bikes so that children's physical development is nudging above levels usually found. The same can be said for children's creative development. Once again the range of equipment and free rein given to children's imagination serves this area well.

*These are the grades for children's outcomes*

<sup>1</sup> 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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<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
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
<b>The extent to which children feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Children's behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

A variety of specialist and everyday resources for both indoors and out gives children plenty to do. The curriculum lifts children out of their everyday lives, encouraging them to use their imagination and giving them a view of the world beyond Gainsborough. The curriculum also makes full use of everyday experiences. Explorations of the wilder part of the school grounds promote children's knowledge of the world and helps children see the delight and possibility in what is around them.

Staff teach well within a simple and clear curriculum framework. Time for children to plan prior to work-time is used expertly. Questions, often sung, prompt children to sing back what they intend to do and who they intend to do it with. This helps children pause and think before work. Time at the end of work-time is also used expertly to help children recap on what they have done. Already, some of the newer children are beginning to use extended sentences to explain, for example: 'They played with ants in the sand.' Teaching during both of these times and other small group times is both consistent and of high quality. Teaching in work-time itself is more variable. The balance between enabling children to pursue their own lines of enquiry and joining in to prompt learning is not always successfully achieved. There are times when staff use activities subtly and to good effect. For example, one staff member, positioning herself between the 'petrol station' and the 'bank', was able to pose questions without imposing solutions. As a result, children filled their bikes with petrol, visited the bank to collect money and went off shopping. Talk between children and the activity itself had a natural flow. Children solved problems, worked together purposefully and enjoyed themselves.

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On other occasions, adults did not ask enough questions, pose problems or broker interactions between children. On these occasions, children, particularly the more-able, do not push themselves as far or work with others enough. The same children can present as a different learners depending upon which approach is taken.

Relationships between adults and children are warm and genuine. Children are comfortable and feel that in their key worker they have a confidante and friend. This in turn, is the linchpin of the school's partnership with parents. This partnership comes to life in children's 'special books'. Starting in the baby unit, flowing through the pre-school and on into nursery, these fully capture children's experiences and progress. Parents and childminders also contribute. This gives a holistic view of the children, their needs and next steps.

The daily routines secure children's well-being. Children whose circumstances make them vulnerable are extremely well cared for. The special educational needs and/or disabilities worker orchestrates external support such as speech therapy very well, alongside helping staff do their best for children. The school's caring attitude can be seen in how it helps children move on from the nursery. Lola the listening leopard, a familiar soft toy, goes before some children so they have a friend who they are used to talking to already at their new school. On occasion, staff at the nursery are loaned to the new school to help children with the most acute needs to settle in.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school knows what it is doing because the leadership understands how young children learn and because it draws everyone into doing their best for the children. The headteacher, joined by the assistant headteacher and other lead teacher, has put in place extremely well thought-out mechanisms to realise the school's vision. Central to this is investment in staff and their development. Staff morale is very high.

Monitoring and evaluation stem from a desire to support and enable staff. A peer mentoring programme is working extremely well. In the first instance, the programme puts the onus on staff to think about their own performance. Staff do this very well. They are comfortable in reflecting upon their own practice and in working alongside colleagues in jointly appraising it. This in turn helps guide staff meetings, the work of lead teachers, training and the pursuit of personal goals.

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The school's continued development is captured within a pertinent and well written improvement plan. The assistant headteacher strengthens the analysis of performance. This has helped target work at individuals and groups of children. It also helps guide training and critical reflection. Where the school has turned its attention to areas of development, such as aiding children's emotional growth, measurable and observable improvements have been made.

The school also invests in its parents. A range of courses, together with the school's willingness to respond to individual parental need, is at the heart of this relationship. Parents are helped in their own development and in gaining skills to help their children. Some talk of feeling proud of what they have personally achieved. The assistant headteacher has also helped foster excellent partnerships with the pre-school. The staff here talk glowingly about the influence of the nursery. Common approaches, growing out of joint development work, have ensured a seamless journey for children. The school works well toward achieving community cohesion. It responds well to community need and gives children a voice in everyday learning.

The governing body analyses performance thoroughly and visits school to get a child's eye view of provision. Safeguarding procedures are well attended to and key policies reviewed. Scope remains to be more systematic in collecting all safeguarding policies together in one clear portfolio that make review a more straightforward and systematic process.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	2
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	2
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	1



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## Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire hold very positive views about the nursery. As one parent said and many others endorsed: 'I am very happy with the school, my child has developed and learnt a lot.' Many feel that the school is a caring, well-led place in which their children are happy. Several praised the school for the support it gives to the children and some praised the daily feedback from the key worker. Hardly any parents had anything negative to say about the school.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at The Gainsborough 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 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 73 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	70	16	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	76	13	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	65	19	35	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	60	21	38	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	72	15	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	58	23	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	69	17	31	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)	36	69	16	31	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	63	20	37	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	72	22	28	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	54	25	46	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	63	20	37	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	74	14	26	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



15 October 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of The Gainsborough Nursery School, Gainsborough, DN21, 2RR.

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. You were all very friendly and kind to me. I would like to share with you my thoughts about your school.

You go to a great school. There are lots and lots of interesting things for you to do. You were all very busy and happy in your work and play. I could see that when it came to tidy-time. Many of you just wanted to keep on working. I really liked your 'special books'. They told me a lot about your time at school. There were lots of smiling, happy faces, shining out from the pages of these. It is good to see your parents and others who know you put pictures in these books.

I was impressed with how many of you eat healthy snacks and drank the milk. Some of you even come back for seconds. You're very busy and energetic. I was impressed with how many of you can whiz around on the bikes. I could also see that you needed a reminder from the adults to wear a helmet. It would be good if you could think about this yourself.

The adults in your school do a fantastic job in making it such a good place to be. They're very good at planning-time and recall-time in getting you to think, talk and even sing about your learning. Staff are mostly good at joining in at work-time. I have asked the school, however, to do even more of this and to help you think, talk and work with each other even more closely during these times. You can help by continuing to try hard and by working alongside with each other.

Thank you once again and good luck in the future.

John Brennan

Lead inspector

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