

# West Exe Children's Centre Nursery School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134674
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	341494
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 September 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Curtis

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>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	100
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dave Simpkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Baker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	0 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Cowick Street Exeter Devon EX4 1HL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01392 279361
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed child-initiated activities and adult-led activities both indoors and outdoors, and held meetings with governors, staff and parents. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's procedures and policies for safeguarding children, records of children's progress and the 27 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- the success of initiatives to improve children's progress in communication, language and literacy, and in personal, social and emotional development
- how successful the school is in improving the relative underachievement of boys
- how well staff use the Devon Learning Journey to monitor and assess children's progress.

## Information about the school

The school is an integral part of West Exe Children's Centre. Other provision in the children's centre is managed by the Children's Society. In addition, there is a privately run day-care facility which is subject to a separate inspection. Children attend the Nursery either for the morning or the afternoon. For children who joined the Nursery prior to September 2009, sessions last for three hours. Those who joined in September 2009 attend for two and a half hours building to three hours by half term. The majority of children are of White-British heritage, although an increasing proportion come from minority-ethnic families. Currently, eight children are at the early stages of English language acquisition. Ten per cent of children are identified as having learning difficulties, including a small number who have a statement of special educational need. On leaving the Nursery, children transfer to Reception classes in as many as 11 different primary schools.

The Head of Centre leads the children's centre, with a senior teacher responsible for the day-to-day leadership and management of the Nursery School, accountable to the Head of Centre. The senior teacher has been in post for a year. Since the previous inspection, the governing body of the Nursery has been restructured recently.

**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 school. It has outstanding features in three key areas. The first of these is in the excellent partnerships the school has with parents and carers and outside agencies, which contribute significantly to strengths in children's learning and development. Staff see the partnership with parents and carers as vital to their work and to children's development. Parents and carers are welcome at any time in the school, with a rota set up, at their request, for them to come and help in the school. During the inspection, children's creative development was enhanced considerably in singing, music making and dance as the result of a parent playing the piano. The second outstanding feature is that safeguarding requirements are implemented fully and rigorously. Children's safety and welfare are paramount at all times, both indoors and outdoors. Excellent attention is paid to hygiene. Daily risk assessments of indoor and outdoor learning areas are undertaken meticulously. The quality of care, guidance and support that the children receive is the third outstanding feature of the school's provision. Each key person knows his or her children exceptionally well. Children with learning difficulties receive high quality care so that they are included fully in all activities. Children learning English for the first time receive excellent support which enables them to make very good progress.

Children make good progress in their learning and development. The school is successfully improving children's progress in communication, language and literacy, and in personal, social and emotional development. A stimulating reading area, writing areas (indoors and outdoors), effective questioning by staff and excellent storytelling are used most effectively to develop children's key skills, especially in speaking and listening. Staff work exceptionally hard with children to promote the school's golden rules and these are reinforced at all times as a priority. Children gain in confidence and become happy and motivated learners.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and has identified areas for development that focus on improving children's learning and development. Since her appointment, the senior teacher has worked successfully in creating a team ethos amongst staff with a shared and common understanding of how the school can improve children's learning. Based on the track record of improvement over the last year, including the significant input by governors, the school has good capacity to improve. Currently, though, staff and governors are not sufficiently focused on measuring the impact of new initiatives to improve outcomes for children. As a result, they do not have sufficient information on the performance of boys and girls, and morning and afternoon groups.

Resources to support children's learning are good. The outdoor learning area is exceptionally good, especially the woodland area and adventure trails. These areas

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contribute significantly to strengths in children's physical development. The indoor area is attractive with good resources. However, there are no computers or smartboards for children to use as part of their self-chosen activities. Consequently, this restricts children's development in a key area of basic skills.

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

- Place stronger emphasis within its self-evaluation on measuring the success of initiatives to improve the performance of children, especially boys and girls, and morning and afternoon groups.
- Improve children's key skills in information and communication technology by providing computers and/or smartboards that children can use readily as part of their self-chosen activities.

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

Children are happy, secure and confident. They arrive excitedly at the start of each session and usually leave their parents behind as they enthusiastically join in the exciting activities planned for them. Children usually make for the outdoor area which is no surprise because it is such a stimulating environment. Parents comment positively on how quickly their children settle. As one said, 'After half an hour of my child's first morning I was told, "I don't need you anymore".' Children enjoy playing together in pairs and groups, including boys and girls. They learn to take turns and negotiate who will be the passengers in the two seats on the back of a tricycle. Children support each other in a caring way, for example a child said to his friend whilst using the adventure trail, 'Follow me and you will be safe.' There are good examples of children working independently and showing sustained levels of concentration, including making patterns, collages and painting. Relationships are good, with older children helping new children. In one observation a child said, 'Hello what is your name? I'm "x" and I've come to play with you.'

The school knows that the progress of boys is not as good as that of girls. It is taking determined and effective action to tackle this. Staff recognise that boys benefit from outdoor learning and understand that progress in very early writing skills is better for them if they have the opportunity for large mark-making. Equally, boys are motivated to write, if for example they can issue parking tickets when in the role of policemen. The provision of real gardening tools rather than pretend ones again encourages and motivates boys. Where boys show an interest in storytelling, staff write down their stories and read them back to them. Children learning English as an additional language make good progress because staff support them so well. The use of high-quality pictures showing all the activity areas both indoors and outdoors enables these children to quickly adapt to choosing activities for themselves. Individual support from inclusion workers enables children with learning difficulties to make good progress and to play a full part in the day-to-day life of the Nursery.

By the time they leave the Nursery, children make good progress based on their starting

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points and achieve levels within the expected range for four-year-olds in all areas of learning. Key skills in information and communication technology are not as strong as other key skills because of the lack of resources to support children's learning.

Behaviour is good and if any child forgets the school's golden rules, staff intervene quickly and calmly to reinforce them, for example in expecting a child who runs through the indoor area to go back and walk. Children enjoy cutting up the fruit for snack time and do so through the safe handling of knives. They know that they must wash up their own cups and plates. The inspector was left in no doubt that he should do the same! Children are involved in the local community. They particular enjoy selling apples (from the trees in the garden) to members of the public and relish using real money.

*These are the grades for children's outcomes*

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</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	2
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which children feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Children's behaviour</b>	<b>2</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>2</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>	2
<b>The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Staff plan a wide range of exciting and imaginative activities for children which contribute to the good progress they make. Children are encouraged to plan their own work and very strong emphasis is given to children choosing their own activities. As a

<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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result of parental feedback, parents and carers are encouraged to contribute to the planning for their children. Staff make very effective use of the Devon Learning Journey for the day-to-day assessment of children's progress in all six areas of learning. Parents and carers say how much they value these learning journeys in bringing out the uniqueness of their children. A strength is that parents are invited to contribute to these learning journeys if there is a significant or 'wow' moment in their children's development at home.

Sessions led by key persons are planned effectively to support children's learning. Story time is particularly effective in promoting children's key skills in communication, language and literacy. Children especially enjoy being actively involved in the story. For example, when a group listened to the story 'Handa's Surprise', they dressed up as characters in the story, which brought it alive and made it meaningful to them. Key persons use questioning very effectively to develop children's understanding of stories. Children benefit from a stimulating curriculum in the school which is enhanced through the use of visits and visitors. A visit to the local museum was greatly enjoyed because children had hands-on access to relics. The children's contribution to and enthusiasm for the Cob House project in the school grounds is impressive. Children enjoy stories read to them by parents and carers from ethnic-minority groups who read them in their home language.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Since her appointment, the senior teacher in partnership with the head of the children's centre and the governing body, has worked successfully to create a very strong and effective staff team who are committed to providing children and their families with the very best learning and development experiences. Safeguarding and welfare are paramount, with children and families benefitting from the wide range of outside agency support available in the children's centre, such as speech therapy. As part of the children's centre, the Nursery is at the very heart of the community it serves. Parents and carers and other members of the local community have ready access to support services and professional advice provided in the children's centre.

All children and their families are encouraged to play a full and active part in the

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Nursery. There is no stereotyping by gender and, for example in the home corner boys undertake cleaning and washing-up duties as enthusiastically as the girls.

Governors are very active and supportive. They visit the Nursery on a regular basis, with individual members having specific areas of responsibility. The curriculum committee is especially effective in working with staff to promote children's learning and development. There is a determination and drive to address areas of underperformance in children's learning, including improving the progress of boys. Governors and staff have a very strong picture of the success of the school's provision for children and engagement of parents. However, through its self-evaluation, leaders and governors do not focus sufficiently on measuring the success of provision and initiatives on the outcomes for children. They do not have a detailed enough understanding of the performance of boys and girls in, for example, the group who will transfer to primary schools in January 2010.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>	1
<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>	2

## Views of parents and carers

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at West Exe Children's Centre to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site



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inspection. In total, there are 100 children registered at the school.

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

Parents and carers are very supportive of the Nursery. Their views are reflected in the written comments, such as 'Best nursery ever!' and, 'Absolutely brilliant setting – my daughter really enjoys coming to Nursery. The staff are wonderful, attentive not just to my children, but for parents' needs and concerns too. A warm, friendly and caring environment – full of learning.' The inspector found no evidence to substantiate any individual concerns, although these were summarised and reported to the school without identifying any individual.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	93	2	7	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	78	5	19	1	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	67	7	26	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	70	8	30	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	93	2	7	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	78	6	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	63	8	30	0	0	1	4
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)	15	56	12	44	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	74	7	26	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	67	8	30	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	56	11	41	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	70	8	30	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	85	4	15	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"><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.**



16 September 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of West Exe Children's Centre Nursery School, Exeter EX4 1HL

Thank you very much for making my visit so enjoyable and interesting. Would you please say a big thank you to your parents for filling in the questionnaires for me? I am delighted to tell you that you go to a good school. It has a number of things that are excellent.

These are the things that I thought were really good.

- You really enjoy your time in the Nursery and all the fun things you can do both indoors and outdoors.
- Your Key Person looks after you and takes very good care of you to keep you safe and help you enjoy learning.
- You enjoy working with other children, and sometimes just working by yourself.
- Your behaviour is good and you know how to follow the golden rules.
- Adults in the Nursery work hard to make sure that your parents and carers are always welcome to come in and help you.
- You enjoy being outdoors, especially on the tricycles and being in the Cob House.

To make your Nursery even better, I have asked all the adults who help you and your school governors to:

- make sure that they know how well you are all doing in your learning.
- give you more equipment so that you can have more choice in using computers to help you learn.

Yours faithfully

David Curtis

Lead inspector

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