

Sandy Lane Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110956
Local Authority	Warrington
Inspection number	337603
Inspection dates	21–22 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Clare Henderson

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	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Maureen Banner
Headteacher	Mrs Lindsay Bray
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2007
School address	Sandy Lane Orford Warrington WA2 9HY
Telephone number	01925 623640
Fax number	01925 234688
Email address	lbray@warrington.gov.uk

Age group	3–5
Inspection dates	21–22 April 2010
Inspection number	337603

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 15 members of staff teaching and all the children learning during the morning and afternoon sessions over the two days. They observed the school's work, and looked at policies, procedures and other documentation, including those relating to safeguarding, children's progress, checks on the quality of provision and improvement planning. Discussions were held with staff, parents and carers and the chair of governors. The views of parents and carers, through 45 returned inspection questionnaires and the opinions of staff were analysed.

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

- whether outcomes relating to children's personal development are a strength of the school
- whether provision and leadership and management are outstanding
- the quality of children's mathematical and physical skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world
- the effectiveness of the support provided for children with special educational need and/or disabilities.

Information about the school

The children who attend this average size Nursery school are predominantly of White British heritage. A small number speak English as an additional language. A higher than average proportion of children has special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school is the town's designated resource centre for children with a range of developmental delays, sensory, physical and medical needs. A Children's Centre, with extended services, managed by the headteacher and a private day nursery share the site. These were not the subject of this inspection.

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

The Nursery provides an outstanding education for its children. This is because staff and leaders create inspirational learning opportunities which enable every child to live out the school's belief that 'together is the place to be'. Within the school, all children thrive in a magical atmosphere of calm, nurture and fun. The school plays a central part within the community and excellent partnerships with parents, carers and a range of outside agencies ensure exceptional care, guidance and support for each child and their family. Children make outstanding progress in their learning from starting points that are below expected or low, particularly for the significant minority with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities. By the time they leave to join their Reception class, the majority of children are confident and independent learners.

Children love the Nursery; they have highly positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is excellent. They flourish in the very secure and safe environment because their welfare is exceptionally well provided for. Each day, children thoroughly enjoy a wide and highly varied range of carefully planned and exciting activities, both indoors and out. These encourage the children to learn and develop exceptionally well. The staff are always at hand to promote learning further by showing children how to draw the very best from the exciting activities.

Leaders and managers with a passion for early years education inspire high quality teaching and learning. Governors are very supportive, extremely effective in holding the school to account and exemplary advocates for children and their families. Community cohesion, though good overall, has been identified as an area for improvement so children can discover more about those with different religions and cultures from their own. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate, albeit overly self-critical in its view of the effectiveness of some aspects of the school's work. This illustrates the lack of complacency and constant drive for improvement, evident in the work of all staff. The school's track record in moving the school from good to outstanding since its last inspection demonstrates that it has excellent capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop community cohesion by:
 - providing children with more opportunities to contribute to the community beyond the nursery
 - providing children with wider experiences of religions and cultures different from their own.

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

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

Children run eagerly into the Nursery each morning. This, together with above average levels of attendance, demonstrates clearly how much they enjoy coming to school. Achievement is good as children play happily together in the extremely imaginative indoor and outdoor environments. Boys particularly enjoy and learn well from more physical activities outside. Their interest in writing and their ability to problem solve have been considerably enhanced as a result of the staff's guidance and encouragement for them to learn more outside. Children are enabled to make choices, for instance, in deciding where to make their dens or in choosing what resources they will take with them on their weekly welly walks'. Such activities develop their resilience and skills of negotiating as they learn to share and value each other's ideas.

Children work with close concentration on construction tasks and thoroughly enjoy recording their thoughts through speaking and mark-making. They watched, with fascination and wonder, as eggs hatched into fluffy chicks. Sheer delight is engendered through such exciting activities and children's understanding of the world in which they live is extended in a real and memorable way. The most able children are already using their excellent knowledge of letter sounds to spell words correctly and use scientific language to explain that the powder has 'dissolved' in the potion they make. Such activities prepare them well for the future. Consequently, by the time children move to their Reception classes, their skills have improved significantly and are in line or above those expected for their age. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities thrive and make the same rapid progress as their peers because their needs are identified accurately and catered for sensitively and very successfully.

Children confidently explain the need to exercise and say how important it is to wear a cycle helmet when they are on the bicycles. This demonstrates their mature understanding of the need to lead healthy and safe lifestyles. Children develop a very good feeling for what is right and wrong, show a keen sense of curiosity in the natural world and are budding gardeners. They are very accepting of others and have developed a keen empathy for each other's needs. They all confidently use signing to aid communication.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

1

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

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate	
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment ¹	3
The quality of children's learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
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	2
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance ¹	2
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The outstanding interaction between all staff and children, combined with the extremely well-thought-out organisation of the accommodation, curriculum and choice of resources, ensure that all aspects of the provision are of exceptionally high quality. The excellent ratio of adults to children ensures that individual learning needs are consistently met. Adults know the children and families very well. Regular observations by staff inform them about children's particular interests and their achievements. All adults contribute to daily assessments which build into a comprehensive picture of each child's development in different strands of learning. These observations and assessments are used exceptionally well to plan ever more challenging tasks. Adults have very high expectations of children's capabilities and they direct their praise precisely so that children understand what is meant by 'good listening' or 'good sharing'. They are skilled at intervening at appropriate moments to ask open questions which prompt children to think. The main focus is on promoting learning through first-hand experience. A rich and creative mix of activities, visits and visitors, many of which also include parents and carers, helps to expand their understanding of how they can engage in their children's education and provides children with a thirst for learning. The combination of independent choice for a wide range of interesting and challenging activities and adult-led sessions ensures that basic skills in all areas of learning are promoted most effectively.

Early identification of individuals' needs and very close working with outside agencies mean that children receive first-rate support to help them thrive. Parents and carers of children with additional needs appreciate greatly the high levels of care their children

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

receive. Staff excel at building up a comprehensive picture of each child in their care.

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?

The headteacher leads a very strong team of highly committed staff who all show a strong commitment to equality and diversity, celebrating the individual qualities of each child and their family very well. Each member of staff, including administration and site cleaning and supervision, makes a valuable contribution to the development and success of the school. Teamwork is strong and sophisticated monitoring and evaluation procedures successfully drive improvement and are a model of exemplary practice within the local area. The governing body has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is a very close partnership with parents and carers with many opportunities to learn new ways of helping their children learn and develop at home. These very strong links ensure the personal needs of the children are addressed extremely well. Resources are very well deployed and the school provides excellent value for money. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding, policies are comprehensive and procedures ensure children are protected and supported very effectively. There are very strong links with a wide range of external agencies which contribute well to children's outstanding progress. Community cohesion is good overall, with strengths in links within the local community. As yet, children do not have enough opportunities to find out about people from places further away from the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1

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 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 all parents and carers say they are happy with their children's experience at the school and there is 100% agreement on many aspects of their children's education. Their views are reflected in the following comments, 'I do not know how I would have coped without the support of the nursery staff', and, 'staff go the extra mile to look after the children'. The inspectors agree with parents' positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sandy Lane 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 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 124 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	91	4	9	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	87	6	13	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	76	9	20	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	76	11	24	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	84	7	16	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	76	10	22	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	73	12	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)	26	58	14	31	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	76	10	22	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	69	8	18	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	71	11	24	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	78	10	22	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	87	5	11	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.



23 April 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Sandy Lane Nursery School, Warrington, WA2 9HY

Thank you all very much for making us feel so welcome. We really enjoyed coming to your nursery and finding out about all the exciting things that you do and how well you all learn together. I especially loved sharing in those special moments when the chicks hatched.

I agree with you and your parents that Sandy Lane is an outstanding nursery and I can understand why you are all so happy there. The grown-ups look after you really well and your headteacher and all the staff are very good at planning things for you to do that help you to learn new things very quickly.

I saw you busily working, playing and learning lots of exciting new things. I was also pleased to see how you do 'good listening' and 'good sharing' all the time so that everybody can join in the fun. You are learning lots of new things every day.

You are especially good at doing things for yourselves and playing well with other children. Your behaviour is excellent and you get on very well together. You have lots of places to run around and explore in your outside area, as well as places to grow plants and practise your writing. It is good that your parents and carers have lots of chances to learn new things too, so that you can have fun together at home as well as at nursery. I think all of you need to give yourselves a clap for working and playing together so well.

Even when a school is as good as yours is there is always a way to make it even better. I have asked the grown-ups to help you find out more about people from places much further away from your school, so you can begin to understand how they live.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Clare Henderson

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.