

Rockwood Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119065
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379721
Inspection dates	8–9 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Sue Sharkey

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	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane McKinley
Headteacher	Faith Stringer
Date of previous school inspection	25 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited three full lessons and observed the work of two teachers and five teaching assistants. Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff and parents and carers and a representative of the local authority. The inspectors observed the children's work, and looked at the school's system for tracking their progress, safeguarding documents and key policies. Inspection questionnaires from 23 parents and carers and five school staff were also taken into account.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What strategies the school has in place to raise achievement in mathematics, and in writing for boys.
- What the range of monitoring is, who does this and how this is helping children's learning.
- How the school uses the outdoors as well as indoors to challenge children.
- How well the school uses information and communication technology to support children's learning.

Information about the school

This nursery serves a wide area in an urban community and is of average size for its type. Most children are White British; a few children speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is low. Most children attend part time and are admitted to the nursery following their third birthday. The school admits children aged from three to five years. An independent management committee provides a nursery on the school site for children aged two to three years each morning. This setting did not form part of the inspection but a report about the quality of their provision can be found on the Ofsted website.

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

Rockwood Nursery School provides a good quality of education. It has outstanding strengths in care, guidance and support, a key factor in ensuring that children feel exceptionally safe and adopt a healthy lifestyle extremely well. The school's engagement with parents and carers, who are highly appreciative of what the school provides, is also outstanding. A typical comment was, 'Children have a very positive experience, they are well cared for and the school keeps us informed extremely well.' The school's inclusive ethos means that children with different learning needs and from different backgrounds can grow, play and learn together happily.

Children make good progress from their starting points so that by the time they leave, and join the Reception class in primary schools, they are confident and independent learners. Early identification and effective support, including working closely with other professionals, ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make the same good progress as other children. Children engage well and they enjoy both the indoor and outdoor areas where they are able to explore and investigate by themselves or in small groups. Regular guidance and practical experiences, linked to a first-rate understanding of keeping healthy and safe, successfully encourage children to be independent and confident. Good relationships between staff and children ensure that the atmosphere is calm and purposeful, and that children learn to respect everyone.

Teaching is good and is underpinned by a well-planned curriculum. Outstanding links with a wide range of partners support children's learning, particularly by giving important messages, for example, about fire safety and oral health. Teaching assistants carry out their role well, particularly with small groups of children who need extra guidance and support. Children enjoy using computers and headphones when they listen to stories, but there are not enough opportunities for them to use a wide range of information and communication technology regularly. There is a good balance between indoor and outdoor activities and children can move from one to the other with ease. However, there are not as many opportunities to practise their early writing skills outdoors as there are inside.

The school has good capacity to improve. The ambition and drive of the headteacher is being successfully embedded. Clear development plans support improvement and

senior staff take a strategic view of the school's work. Self-evaluation is effective and leaders have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide the children with a wider range of opportunities to practise their early writing skills outdoors.
- Ensure that a wide range of information and communication technology resources are more readily available so that children have regular hands-on experience throughout their indoor and outdoor activities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children's achievement is good. They thoroughly enjoy school and are enthusiastic about new experiences. This is evidenced in their actions and words and is endorsed strongly by their parents and carers. Children can concentrate for long periods of time on activities that interest them, such as using tools to build a house or repairing a road so that their vehicle can continue the journey safely. As the school has outdoor clothing for children continuous use can be made of the garden and the playground area, whatever the weather conditions. Examples are how children explore a number trail to see if they can find ghosts, watch caterpillars in the garden develop into butterflies, as well as dig to find out what is in the soil. Children enter the nursery with a wide range of different skills that are often below those expected for their age, particularly in speech and language, numeracy and in writing for boys. Children practise and improve their new skills successfully making good progress in all areas of learning due to effective provision. This includes boys who enjoy using pencils, crayons and paint to show off their early writing skills. When they leave the nursery, their attainment is overall in line with that expected for their age and sometimes above.

Children have a first-rate understanding of keeping safe because they are actively taught about what is safe and dangerous and how to minimise risk. They enjoy taking exercise as they make full use of the outdoor area where they ride vehicles around the road or clamber up the sloping ridged walls of shelters. This contributes well to their excellent understanding of a healthy lifestyle, as does their enjoyment of daily fruit at snack time when children talk about what they like best. Children make a good contribution to the nursery community and help to take responsibility for tidying up and putting things away. Attendance is good. In working closely with parents and carers, the school has recently introduced flexible sessions which have helped to improve attendance for some children. It is obvious that children enjoy attending the nursery, meeting their friends and finding out new things. Children's keen sense of fairness and cooperation is evident in the way they work, play and share together. They manage their own learning effectively and their behaviour is good. As a result they are well prepared for primary education.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment	3
The quality of children's learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children's' behaviour	2
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 workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance	2
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and the curriculum are both of good quality, enabling children of all abilities to learn well. Good organisation and planning ensure that all the required areas of learning are covered. There are good procedures for assessing children’s progress. Staff use assessment information well and meet regularly to discuss children’s needs and to compile individual learning plans to help children in their next steps in learning, particularly those needing extra support. Staff share high expectations of children and encourage them to join in practical activities and discussions. Many activities promote the development of early writing skills and children make marks on paper, white boards or in sand, for example, but there is not the same wide range of opportunities outside.

Staff provide a wide range of well-planned and resourced activities to engage and stimulate children’s interests. There is an emphasis on children choosing the activities they want to pursue in order to build their independence and confidence, which initially can be limited. For some activities, adults work closely with children and this enables them to focus on their needs. The school has had a focus on developing resources to raise achievement in mathematics and writing. During an activity, where a small group of children were putting together an animal jigsaw, the adult took the opportunity to question them in order to check and consolidate numbers and shapes. Spots on a snail were counted, as well as counting other animals and insects decorated with the same shapes. The school has a good range of information and communication technology resources but these are not always readily available or introduced into activities. A wide range of visitors to the nursery and visits to places of interest make a memorable contribution to developing children’s knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, children visited Towneley Park, where they were excited when they saw the sculptures of wooden animals.

The school has high quality systems for ensuring that the care, guidance and support of children are outstanding. All staff know the children in their care exceedingly well, and parents and carers praise the school highly for the support they give to children as well as to families. Careful observations are made of children’s successes and

needs so that activities are provided to excite and interest them. Strong links with the pre-school provision on the same site help to ensure that induction systems are first-rate. Systems that are in place for children leaving the nursery are as smooth so that children are well prepared and settle easily into primary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. This is shared by all staff who work well together in their desire to do their very best for the children. The positive attitudes and dedication of everyone involved are reflected in the school's welcoming atmosphere. Children's progress is monitored carefully and with recent improvements in the recording and reliability of data, leaders can analyse rigorously the progress and achievement of different groups of children. This ensures equality of opportunity for all groups, with good attention paid to eliminating any potential discrimination. The governing body plays an effective role in shaping the school's direction. It is extremely committed and provides monitoring, support and challenge. The governing body is keen to improve its expertise through training and share its many collective skills with the school. It ensures that child-protection and safeguarding procedures are good in all aspects of school practice, and that the school environment is well managed and provides a safe site for children. The school plays an important role within the community and is greatly valued by parents and carers who have excellent access to information about their children's activities and also the support available from other services. The school promotes community cohesion effectively through celebrations for Eid, the Chinese New Year and Christmas, for example. The school has very strong relationships with a wide range of partners such as the local children's centre where support can be provided for parents and carers and where staff are able to share training resources.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2

The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire were positive about the way the school cares for and educates their children. They felt that their children enjoy school, are kept safe and they were pleased with their children's progress. All were happy with the overall quality of their children's experience. Inspection findings support their views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Rockwood 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 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 78 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	91	2	9	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	96	1	4	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	74	4	17	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	61	7	30	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	78	3	13	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	74	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	87	3	13	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)	12	52	8	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	70	7	30	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	74	3	13	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	52	7	30	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	78	5	22	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	87	3	13	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 all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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 pupils. 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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 pupils 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 pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

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.



10 November 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Rockwood Nursery School, Burnley, BB11 3PU

I enjoyed my visit to your school very much. Thank you for talking to me and telling me all about the exciting things you do. I could see how much you enjoy being inside school as well as outside. All the exercise that you get running around and riding your bikes as well as enjoying and choosing all the lovely fruit at snack time helps you to understand exceptionally how important it is to be healthy.

I was very impressed with how safely you all played outside, particularly in your large garden with the dens and shelters - so much so that I thought it was brilliant. The school keeps in touch with your mums, dads and carers extremely well so that they always know what you are doing. They think that your school is a good place to be and I agree with them. I watched you inside school as well as outside and it was lovely to see you being so friendly to each other and to the adults who teach and work with you. I think that all the adults in your school care for you in an excellent way. You were well behaved all the time and sometimes I did not hear you and wondered if you were creeping around!!

It was lovely to see you enjoying school and I could tell that you were learning through all the different activities that the adults organise for you. They are good at teaching and keep checking on how well you do things. I have asked them to do this even better by giving you more writing to do outside and more technology such as robots, cameras and floor turtles to use in your classrooms as well as outside.

Thank you for helping me find out about your school and for being such friendly children.

Yours sincerely

Sue Sharkey

Lead inspector

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