

# Ightenhill Nursery School

Lionel Street, Burnley, Lancashire, BB12 6DY

**Inspection dates** 14–15 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Children make outstanding progress in all areas of their learning. Children enter the Early Years not ready to learn but by the time they enter Year 1 they are. The skills of all children are well developed for the next stage of their education.
- Teaching is outstanding and teachers are highly effective in recognising the children's individual interests. They harness this knowledge and use it to provide stimulating activities that rapidly move children on to learn new things.
- All staff work together extremely well as a team to make every minute of learning time count and secure the very best possible progress for children.
- Children's progress in their physical development is exceptional because teachers make very good use of the recently improved extensive outdoor area. Children run, balance on logs and enjoy riding around on their bicycles and scooters with increasing skills and energy.
- Staff are highly effective in promoting children's tolerance and respect for one another. They celebrate diversity at every opportunity and help these very young children develop those values which will prepare them for future life in modern Britain.
- Parents speak most highly of the school. They typically comment on how swiftly children settle into the routines, the kind and friendly staff and the helpful information they receive on how their children are doing in school.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding and they are exceptionally safe in school. Staff create a very happy and calm learning environment which invites children to join in. Children simply do not have time to misbehave because they are too busy enjoying playing and learning together.
- Leadership is outstanding and leaders leave no stone unturned to make things even better for children. As a result, the school is dynamic and continually improving. This is seen in the recent provision of more interesting activities for boys that have successfully improved their writing.
- Staff all have targets to achieve that are closely linked to children's progress. This system has most effectively raised achievement and improved the quality of teaching. All staff have opportunities for further training and development and use these new skills to improve continually their practice.
- The school's evaluation of its own performance is accurate. Robust and rigorous systems to check up on children's progress give the headteacher up-to-date information on the school's performance and enable her to swiftly address any weaknesses.
- Governors have a wide range of professional skills and use these to support the school effectively. They are well informed about the school's strengths and priorities for further improvement. Governors are less knowledgeable about the different areas in the early years curriculum.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector spent six hours observing children learn and five staff were seen.
- Discussions were held with parents, members of the governing body and school staff. A telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the responses of 20 parents who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View) and six staff surveys.
- A range of documents were looked at, including the school's information on children's progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Janette Corlett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized nursery compared to other nursery schools nationally. It has places for 90 children attending part time. Children are generally admitted to nursery in the term following their third birthday. Although there is some flexibility in attendance currently, 21 children attend each morning and 25 in the afternoon and one child has a flexible mix of the two sessions.
- Most children are of White British heritage and very few children have English as an additional language.
- Typically, the proportion of disabled children or those who have special educational needs is low. No children currently on roll have a disability or special educational needs.
- There is a separate provision on site called Munchkins Club that offers pre-school childcare and education and provides sessions in addition to those offered at the school. The setting receives its own inspection and the report is available on the Ofsted website, [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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

- Further improve governance by:
  - making sure all governors have sufficient knowledge and understanding of all the early years curriculum so that they can be even more effective in challenging school leaders on children's progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has created a whole-school atmosphere of excellence which has ensured the school has remained outstanding for many years. Her unfailingly positive approach and emphasis on the importance of teamwork mean that all staff, no matter what their role, are fully committed to ensuring that her views on how to continue the school's success are fully realised. There is never a sense that the school cannot move forward and become even better.
- As a small school, the only other teacher carries out the middle leadership role effectively. Responsibilities include leading information and communication technology, literacy and assessment. The recently introduced system for recording children's progress using tablet computers has already shown an impact in supporting teachers' planning for children's progress.
- The school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance are thorough, including those to check on the quality of teaching. The checking on the performance of all staff is rigorous and leads to staff receiving the right training to help them develop their practice and become even better at supporting children to achieve to the very best of their ability.
- The curriculum is tailored exceptionally well to meet the individual needs of new groups of children when they come to school and it takes full advantage of opportunities for learning based on children's own interests and enthusiasm. For example, children were excited to discover lots of spiders' webs during their explorations of autumn leaves outside. Teachers built on this and made many different activities to support children's learning. These included threading, weaving, counting and making spiders to hang around the classroom, as well as developing their early skills in scientific enquiry using magnifying glasses and learning to treat all creatures with respect.
- Wide and varied opportunities within the curriculum make a significant contribution towards children's outstanding social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Children learn about people from different cultural backgrounds from visitors to the school who talk to them about their artistic and musical traditions, help them celebrate festivals and sometimes prepare samples of food for the children to taste. Teachers constantly model sharing, taking turns, listening to one another and treating everyone with respect. As a result, children know right from wrong and that the very few rules are there to keep everyone safe and happy. They are very well prepared for their future life in modern Britain.
- The school's approach of knowing and supporting individuals to achieve as well as they can means that all children, including those who are most able, are given an equal opportunity to succeed without any fear of discrimination. Children who speak English as an additional language are very well supported and soon learn to chatter away with their friends in school.
- All staff have developed excellent relationships with parents, who wholeheartedly support the school and typically comment how confident they are that their children are extremely happy and safe. Parents are involved very successfully as partners in their children's learning journey, through daily planning and regular discussions with staff.
- There are close links with the on-site Munchkins Club that offers extended care provision to support families.
- Leaders maintain strong links with the local Children's Centre and with local primary schools. This means that there are excellent arrangements in place to make sure that children feel comfortable when starting nursery and are well supported when they move on to the next phase in their education.
- The local authority provides effective but light-touch support for this outstanding school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors bring a wide range of professional experience to strengthen the governing body. Some governors regularly visit the nursery and spend time with the children, but not all governors as yet have a secure enough understanding of the early years curriculum to enable them to really challenge school leaders on the outcomes for children.
  - Governors receive regular updates from the headteacher on the school improvement plan and the progress children make. As a result, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They have a secure grasp of the school's arrangements for managing the performance of teachers, including that of the headteacher, and make effective links between the outcomes from this and staff progression up pay scales.
  - Governors ensure that the arrangements to protect children and keep them safe are effective and meet statutory requirements. Financial management arrangements are equally rigorous.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Classroom routines are very well established. This creates a calm atmosphere where children, from their very earliest days in the nursery, can move seamlessly from playing on their own or in small groups into adult-led activities or snack time. There is always something exciting and interesting to do, so children rarely become distracted because they are enjoying themselves too much and are eager to try something new.
- All this leads to children's really positive attitudes to learning and play. The sound of laughter is almost always present in the nursery as teachers' enthusiasm and real pleasure in helping children learn spill over into creating a highly stimulating environment that captures children's imagination.
- Children learn to sort out minor squabbles for themselves and to understand the importance of respecting each other's differences. They support one another very well. For example, a small group of children helped to search the classroom to find a missing Mr. Rabbit who had been mislaid during the tidy-up routine. There are no recorded incidents of bullying or racism.
- Nearly all children attend school every day because they enjoy it so much. Any absence is appropriately followed up by the school. This good attendance habit from such an early age provides children with a very strong foundation for the rest of their education.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. As the children move very sensibly around the building and outdoor area, they demonstrate that they understand how to keep themselves safe and to manage risk. They race around the track and roundabout area set up for them to play with their bicycles and scooters, for example, but take care not to bump into one another and wait for their turn with very little adult supervision.
- Children know that they need to eat healthy food. They typically comment that 'healthy food makes you big and strong' and know that eating too many sweets will 'make your teeth go black'. The outdoor environment gives them frequent opportunities to run around, climb and ride on their toys. This helps them learn to keep themselves fit as well as contributes to their outstanding progress in their physical development.
- School leaders and managers ensure that the buildings and outdoor areas are very safe and secure. Children say that they feel safe; they demonstrate this through their confidence in the teachers and excellent relationships with all the adults in the school.

**The quality of teaching is outstanding**

- Teaching is outstanding over time and has ensured the strengths identified in previous inspections have been sustained and improved. Staff have an in-depth understanding of how these young children learn. They establish a welcoming atmosphere and children thrive from the day they start in school.
- The impact of teaching on early reading, writing and numeracy skills is excellent. These skills are promoted as a natural part of children's learning. Opportunities for reading form a major part of the nursery routines and children enjoy sharing a good story. Role-play activities promote writing and numeracy skills in an imaginative way that allows children to try out their skills.
- Adults expect the very best from children and act as excellent role models. They show real enthusiasm and excitement in learning and always offer children praise and encouragement to gain their confidence. Support is always at hand, both when children are involved in activities led by adults and when adults are interacting with them as they learn through playing in ways they have chosen for themselves.
- Imaginative experiences capture children's interests. For example, they extended their understanding of how their bodies work when the teacher introduced them to a skeleton and produced some x-rays of bones for them to match up to the skeleton. The children were really excited to investigate the skeleton and the teacher supported those who were a little nervous of it by not minding at all if they did not want to touch it.
- Questions are used most effectively to enhance vocabulary and extend thinking. For example, the children were able to compare a human skull to two sheep skulls, beginning to think about why the shapes are different and note the different shapes of the teeth.

- Staff are adept at supporting learning when children are involved in an activity they have chosen themselves. Their excellent knowledge of how young children learn is very apparent, as they are always alert to opportunities to develop children's understanding and help them to think things through for themselves. A group of children playing in the outdoor 'mud kitchen', for example, found a minibeast which they watched with interest. The teacher developed this further through asking questions about what the children thought the creature was doing and whether or not they thought it could fly.
- Each adult's knowledge of the needs of each individual child is accurate because it is based on careful observation and tracking of their progress. This means that children of all abilities, including the most able, receive the correct type of support that they need to make outstanding progress.
- Adults share information about children's interests and progress exceptionally well with one another and with parents. This means that staff are constantly able to plan activities that will build on children's experiences in the classroom as well as at home; as a result, children enjoy their learning even more.

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Children enter the nursery not ready to learn, particularly in relation to language and communication and personal and social development. By the time they are ready to move on to primary school, all children are working securely within the age-related expectations for all areas of learning and many exceed them.
- Children's progress is outstanding because teachers' daily checks on their learning are used highly effectively to plan for the next small steps. As a result, no time is ever wasted and children move on rapidly to build on their interests and learn new skills.
- Progress in language and communication is particularly swift because teachers take every opportunity to talk to children about what they are doing, modelling good use of language and listening skills. This is especially beneficial for the small proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language and it enables them to make the same progress as others. In one session, children explored a range of kitchen tools with their teacher. She skilfully drew out their thoughts on how each tool might be used. One child felt that the wider slicing side of a cheese grater might be useful for making toast. This led to a further discussion about toast, explaining that it is made from bread.
- Progress in reading is excellent. Children listen eagerly to stories which they have chosen for their teacher to read and equally enjoy sharing books with one another. Every child has a library session each week where they choose a book to take home to read with their parents. They swiftly develop early awareness of the sounds which letters make and the most able are challenged so that they already recognise simple words.
- Opportunities for writing are similarly well promoted, ensuring rapid progress. Last year, school leaders recognised that the progress of boys in writing was less rapid than the girls'. They worked with the rest of the staff team to ensure that all the learning areas, both indoors and outdoors, contain plenty of activities to appeal to boys and make them want to write more. For example, in the outdoor fire and police station area, children have clipboards and pens and enjoy writing 'accident report forms' within their role play. The impact of this is already seen in boys' increased participation and improved skills in writing.
- Children's development of simple skills in mathematical calculations and understanding shape, space and measures is very strong because they have many resources to help them learn to count, to explore shapes and to measure, for example, to weigh ingredients for baking.
- The school nurtures children's outstanding creative development particularly well in the outdoor area which has many places to build dens, experiment with musical instruments and use autumn leaves and twigs to create pictures and build pretend animal shelters.
- Staff provide a high level of challenge for the most able children. They are quick to spot when they can be moved on to a higher level of work. For example, children recognising simple letters accurately are encouraged to identify their own names and then practise writing them. Consequently, these children make excellent progress.
- Although currently the school has not identified any children as requiring help because of their special educational needs, information about the progress of all children is used extremely carefully to ensure all make excellent progress from their individual starting points.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119071
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	448116

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	47
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sarah Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pauline Robinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 January 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01282 427154
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