

Brookhill Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101251
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	354967
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	June Last
Headteacher	Lisa Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	20 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Observations included 14 sessions led by four teachers, four nursery nurses and two early-years teaching assistants, and activities which children chose for themselves. Meetings were held with members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors looked at governors' minutes, curriculum plans and assessment documents, including children's individual 'Blue Book' learning records. The questionnaires returned by 44 parents and carers and 12 staff were scrutinised.

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

- How successfully children's own views are used to identify their next steps in learning.
- The school's initiative in helping children to build on their knowledge of letters and sounds to promote their communication skills.
- The extent to which children are developing an awareness of the wider world.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized nursery school. About half of the children are of White British heritage and half are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Twenty per cent of children are learning English as an additional language, half of whom are at an early stage. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these children have speech and communication difficulties.

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

Brookhill Nursery provides an outstanding quality of education. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive. One commented, 'The school has gone from strength to strength.' Another wrote, 'Brookhill is a fantastic nursery and provides a great mix of different activities.'

Children move around the extremely well-equipped indoor and outdoor areas eagerly, choosing a starting point for learning. Once this has been established, staff focus their observations on what the children can do and, with exceptionally pertinent interventions, guide them in developing their acquisition of knowledge and skills. These factors make a strong contribution to the outstanding outcomes. Excellent relationships enable children to feel secure in trying out new things. High levels of support encourage children's rapid development. A wide range of high quality resources, both indoors and outdoors, and a rich curriculum meticulously planned to meet all children's needs, extend their opportunities in learning.

Children's progress in relation to their starting points is outstanding because of the high-quality teaching and very thorough assessment of learning. The very large majority of children exceed the attainment expected for their age in all areas of learning. Personal, social, emotional and physical development are exceptionally strong.

Each child is taught as an individual and levels of support are adapted according to their needs. Children with speech or communication difficulties are extremely well supported. Children learning to speak English as an additional language make rapid progress because of specialist support and high levels of encouragement from staff. Adults regularly seek children's views on what they would like to learn. These 'star steps' then become the focus of subsequent activities. Welfare arrangements are outstanding. Children are very carefully guided and supported. Systems for ensuring children's safety are excellent. Parents and carers are very happy with all safety and welfare arrangements for their children. Children behave exceptionally well as a result of very secure routines and clear expectations, and this contributes extremely well to their learning.

Children recognise that they must respect each other's feelings and they have a high awareness of what is right and what is wrong. They know how to stay safe, for example by assessing the risks and taking appropriate care when playing on the challenging climbing apparatus.

Through rigorous self-evaluation, informed by meticulous tracking of children's progress, the governing body gains an excellent knowledge of strengths and areas for development. The governors execute their role as critical friends very well. Staff are constantly improving their practice and are innovative. Following the success of a recent 'mark making' project, staff are working with the local authority to explore ways of further

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enhancing children's skills in discriminating between sounds to provide a secure basis for subsequent phonic work. The school is seen as a centre of excellence which pioneers best practice. Outstanding leadership and management by the headteacher, governing body and senior staff ensure that all strive continually to improve on previous best performance. Based upon its continuing success, it is evident that the school's capacity for sustained improvement is excellent.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the current emphasis on helping children to build on their knowledge of letters and sounds to promote their communication skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

Children achieve exceptionally well and really enjoy learning. Due to the warm and sensitive approach of the staff, children settle down quickly. They take part happily in group activities, make friends easily and learn to follow the routines of school life. This is evident both in the way they listen attentively when adults are leading group sessions and when children are choosing from the wealth of stimulating activities available. Children participate eagerly in a wide range of physical activities. Playing in the excellent outdoor area, children learn how to avoid mishaps, assess the risks involved in negotiating the climbing wall or balancing on the very popular 'like a bikes' (bicycles with no peddles or brakes). They know about eating healthily and how exercise makes the heart beat faster. Children's excellent moral and social development is evident in the way the children work and play together harmoniously with a great sense of belonging. Children from a wide range of backgrounds work and play alongside one another harmoniously. The more confident children are members of the school council and contribute their ideas, for example about the activities they enjoy outdoors.

Children's enthusiasm and achievement across all areas of learning is evident as children play and learn indoors and outside. They are keen to discuss their activities with adults and soon learn new vocabulary. They use language imaginatively when playing together, for example in the outdoor 'den', and they talk confidently to adults and visitors. They begin to learn how letters and sounds are linked and the school is exploring ways in which these early phonic skills can be extended further. Children sing along with number rhymes and adults take every opportunity to help them learn how numbers are used for counting, for example when children are choosing pieces of fruit for their snack. Children's secure understanding of shape was evident in their careful work with construction apparatus, such as their symmetrically designed buildings and bridges. Children are gaining knowledge and understanding of the world outside their immediate home and school. They were very interested in a world map, which had pictures of the children from different countries and how they said 'hello' in their home language. They enjoy singing songs in Spanish with the bilingual teaching assistant, greeting one another, and learning the names of fruits and parts of the body in Spanish. Children's excellent levels of physical development were evident as they steered their vehicles confidently around other children, carefully used cotton buds dipped in paint to create pictures, and confidently manipulated the computer mouse. Children's creative development is very strong. Children use colours boldly when painting, show flair when creating imaginary animals or model rockets from

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recycled materials. They sing tunefully and expressively. Children are keen to attend and the large majority of absences are due to illness rather than a lack of enthusiasm.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Children's attainment ¹	1
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	1
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

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

How effective is the provision?

In this safe and secure learning environment children's welfare is taken exceptionally seriously. The curriculum is vibrant, relevant and highly stimulating because it gives children opportunities to explore and engage both indoors and outdoors. Children have very good opportunities to look at books and use information and communication technology through the use of interactive whiteboards, digital video cameras and sound recorders. Within this stimulating environment, adults continuously engage children in purposeful dialogue and interesting tasks. They observe their interests, note their capabilities and use this information to plan the next steps in learning. They help children explain their thinking and guide them through all activities. 'What will we need to bath the baby?' asked one member of staff as children were preparing to play with warm soapy water and the nearby dolls. Children eagerly offered suggestions about how to do this. All staff are highly skilled at engaging children and promoting the social and language skills. One group was held spellbound as the teacher used two puppets to introduce the idea of sharing and taking turns, others eagerly 'wrote letters' supported by a nursery nurse and

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posted them to friends or parents, while three children curled up closely to a teaching assistant as she read to them in the cosy reading corner.

Staff use assessment information exceptionally well to match work to children's activities and give children plenty of opportunities to practise their skills in new contexts. All cultures and festivals are respected and celebrated. Excellent opportunities are provided for children to learn about the change in seasons. During the inspection, they were eager to explain what they had found during their walk in the nearby woods. A portfolio of photographs illustrating previous activities abounds with pictures of children's fascinated expressions as they watch chickens hatch, have a go at African drumming and playing steel pans, and gaze in wonder as butterflies emerge from their cocoons. Such activities successfully promote children's spiritual development.

Children benefit from outstanding care, and parents spoke appreciatively of the school's support for the whole family. Parents are very grateful for the excellent breakfast club and weekly 'Wacky workshops' (art and craft activities) for toddlers. Children's progress is tracked meticulously and the information is shared frequently with parents three times a year. Parents and carers are welcome to stay as long as necessary to help their children settle. They also contribute by noting their children's development at home and completing a home/school booklet.

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?

Children's enjoyment and achievement are at the heart of the leadership's drive to maintain and further improve the already high quality provision. The headteacher has successfully built a high performing team that shows great commitment to evaluating practice and striving to improve even further. Evaluation of the school's work is perceptive, accurate, self-critical and leaves no room for complacency. Teaching and learning are rigorously monitored and every opportunity is taken to enhance day-to-day practice, as in the current focus on developing children's early phonic skills. The vibrant, happy ethos is reflected in outstanding provision and high achievement. All concerned help to make the school's motto 'making friends ♦ learning together' a living reality. The school is included in the local authority's directory of good practice and often hosts visits by teachers from home and abroad.

The governing body keeps a sharp eye on assessment information and is quick to question any fluctuations or explore any emerging trends, reflecting the school's strong

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commitment to equal opportunities and determination to quickly spot and eradicate any discrepancy in the achievement of different groups. Governing body members have a wide range of experience including primary teaching, health and finance. This expertise is used extremely well in supporting the school and holding it to account. The governing body ensures that policies for the safeguarding of pupils are implemented highly effectively. The governors regularly review the compliance with regulations, undertaking risk assessments and ensure that child protection policies are implemented extremely well. (Child protection and health and safety are first class and staff regularly carry out risk assessments both around the nursery and when children go out on local trips.) Community cohesion is central to the school's ethos and is an inextricable aspect of its day-to-day life. Cultural diversity within the school and local and national community is celebrated. The school has recently joined a national scheme aimed at enhancing children's global awareness through links with schools abroad. Staff are exploring ways of making such links more meaningful to young children, for example by exchanging digital pictures of the school and the local environment.

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
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 of the questionnaires were entirely positive in their views of the school. All parents and carers felt their children enjoyed school and, with one exception, were happy with their children's overall experience. The concerns expressed by two parents did not reflect the general view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brookhill Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 82 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	66	15	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	64	15	34	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	24	55	16	36	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	48	18	41	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	55	15	34	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	43	20	45	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	66	11	25	0	0	1	2
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)	21	48	15	34	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	55	15	34	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	45	20	45	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	48	17	39	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	55	17	39	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	66	14	32	1	2	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 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



14 October 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Inspection of Brookhill Nursery School, East Barnet EN4 8DS

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed watching you work and play happily together. You get on well with one another and with all the adults.

The school is providing you with an outstanding education. You really enjoy learning because your teachers make sure you have many exciting things to do. It was great to see you hunting for worms in the copse, climbing the climbing wall, making bridges with the blocks and reading in the quiet places indoors.

The adults care for you extremely well and help you if you have problems. Those in charge of the school are working really hard to make it even better. They have some really good ideas that they share with other schools. There is one thing that we have asked all of the adults to do in order to make Brookhill even better.

- Help you to improve your skills in picking out the sounds letters make.

You can help by continuing to be really good listeners. We are sure you will keep on making great progress and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Rob Crompton

Lead inspector

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