

Bensham Grove Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108320
Local Authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	356339
Inspection dates	24–25 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Moira Fitzpatrick

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	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Joe Mitchinson
Headteacher	Mrs Denise Henry
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Sidney Grove Bensham, Gateshead Tyne and Wear NE8 2XD
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons where they observed two teachers, two teaching assistants and two nursery nurses, and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the school's improvement plan, attainment data, teachers' planning and safeguarding procedures. The responses in 31 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and three completed by staff were analysed.

- How well children progress in their learning and whether all groups make similar progress.
- The rigour and accuracy of assessments of children's learning and how effectively these are used to provide good levels of challenge for all children.
- The effectiveness of the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures in identifying the most significant priorities for improvement.

Information about the school

The nursery serves a predominantly White British community. The proportion of children who speak English as an additional language in the current year is now close to average, due to a steep rise in numbers since September. The proportion of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are below average and there are no children with a statement of special educational needs.

The school shares a site with a Children's Centre, with which it has close links, and forms a hub for the local community. A new headteacher took up post in September 2010.

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 nursery. Children's achievement is good because they all make good progress whatever their starting points. Some aspects of the nursery's work are outstanding. Excellent partnership with the on-site Children's Centre ensures a seamless transition from home to school and from one provision to the other. Links with parents and carers are outstanding, as is the school's contribution to community cohesion. The school has successfully welcomed and integrated a number of non-British families this year which has enriched the school's diversity and provided a springboard for all children to learn about different cultures. All parents and carers are made to feel true partners in their children's learning and value the opportunities they have to contribute; for example, by sharing their knowledge of their children's development and interests so that these are taken into account by staff in the nursery. Many parents and carers comment that their children, 'grow in confidence as a direct result of the hard work, dedication and care of staff'.

The quality of care, guidance and support for children is good because staff build upon the close relationship with parents and carers to make every child feel safe and secure. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language are well supported. They join in all activities and progress as well as other children. Learning and progress are good because teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. There are sometimes inconsistencies in practice which prevent learning from being better than good, but the headteacher has identified where the best practice is and is accelerating a culture of sharing professional expertise amongst the staff. The curriculum provides a range of interesting activities indoors and out, which follow children's interests and meet their needs well. Some staff are not always quick to assess how well children are learning and do not adapt resources and activities as soon as they might to ensure all children are fully challenged in what they do.

Good leadership and management have ensured the school has maintained standards and the quality of provision since the previous inspection. The recently appointed headteacher has been incisive in her evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. She and the senior teacher have correctly identified the most important areas for improvement and have begun work on improvements to planning so that better use is made of knowledge of children's learning. While all staff are involved in helping to improve the school, there is not enough clarity about their roles and responsibilities. Accurate self-evaluation and carefully planned actions have ensured the school has made good progress since the previous inspection, especially in areas of the curriculum and partnerships to enhance children's well-being. The effective management system and the proven record of improvement shows that the school has good capacity to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the assessment of learning so that it is more consistent, builds upon the best practice and accurately captures each child's stage of development by:
 - providing training for staff who require it, so they are able to identify developmental levels and effectively plan the next steps in learning for all children
 - developing strategies which allow staff to moderate each other's judgements so that they come to a shared understanding of children's learning and progress.
- Review the roles and responsibilities of staff so that all are clear about their responsibility for improving provision by:
 - making clear that staff are accountable for the progress that children make
 - developing teamwork and professional practice to enable staff to share the most effective practice so that children consistently benefit from the best provision for their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

Children enjoy their time at the nursery because they feel happy and safe there. They clearly look forward to each day, as their bright smiling faces show when they arrive at the start of each session. Children quickly learn where the activities are that interest them most and they confidently move around the nursery selecting what they will investigate and explore. Children new to the nursery quickly learn to follow the example of older children and develop good levels of independence, which propels their learning at a good rate. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported by staff to learn alongside their friends and progress at the same rate as they do. They are given additional support to overcome barriers, such as language delay or speech difficulties, which accelerates their learning in these areas and allows them to integrate fully in the life of the nursery. Children join the nursery with skills that are broadly typical for their age or slightly below. Their achievement is good because all make good progress. By the time they leave they nearly all reach or exceed the expected level for their age. They are well prepared for the next stage of learning.

Children behave well and follow rules and routines sensibly, which makes a good contribution to the community in which they learn. They understand why certain foods are good for them and happily accept healthy fruit and drinks at snack time. They take plenty of vigorous exercise in the spacious outdoor provision, no matter how cold the weather! Children's good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their enthusiasm for learning, their good attendance and high levels of confidence and independence to find out things for themselves.

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

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:	2
Children's attainment ¹	2
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	2
Children's behaviour	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account:	2
Children's attendance ¹	2
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

Staff plan activities to give children plenty of opportunities to develop curiosity and become confident learners. This is where the better learning takes place, enabling children to follow their own ideas and develop good levels of independence. The quality of planning varies because the sharing of best practice has only recently begun. Weaker planning leads to some provision being a little static and not developing quickly enough to take into account children's different rates of development and progress. Where planning is good or better, teachers are quick to adapt or add resources to provide a good level of challenge and accelerate progress. Direct teaching is sometimes outstanding, as when teachers make very good use of questions to develop children's thinking or demonstrate how a book can be made. On these occasions children are engrossed and fired with enthusiasm. Some observations of children at play are not always clearly focused on what learning is taking place, so that some assessments are too general to inform really sharp planning. Senior staff are aware of the need to improve assessment so that planning is more detailed and consistent in providing good levels of challenge. The school has this improvement as a key priority this year.

The curriculum provides a broad range of interesting activities for children. These are designed to help children make choices and learn through play. This approach helps the children to become absorbed in their learning so they develop good levels of concentration

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and perseverance. Activities are planned so that when children are ready they can play alongside or with a friend. Regular opportunities for this are promoting some good collaborative play, especially amongst groups of boys. A good example was a group working together to roll a 'barrel' up the hill and then see where it went to as they pushed it down again. A wide range of visits and visitors extend children's learning beyond the school extending their knowledge of the world and themselves.

All staff provide good care for children. They know the children well and provide a warm welcome. They have good systems for sharing information with parents and carers at the start of each session. This ensures that staff and families are aware of any difficulties children may have. Children trust adults and copy their kind and caring behaviour, which makes the nursery a safe and comfortable place to be. Support for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language is good. Senior staff quickly spot where a child has difficulties and promptly enlist the support of external agencies for expert advice. Good links with families support them to help their children at home.

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	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has given a good lead to developing provision since she took up post at the start of the school year. She has accurately identified the need to review assessment methods so that information feeds into future planning for learning. Staff have responded positively, though there is still some way to go to ensure consistency of practice across the team. All staff are involved in monitoring learning and identifying areas for improvement, though roles and responsibilities are not yet well enough defined to ensure that all staff understand fully their accountability for children's progress. The headteacher has rightly identified areas of professional development for staff to bring about greater consistency of expectations and performance across the team, including moderating each other's judgements.

The governing body provides good support and challenge for the school. It is well organised to ensure it has a clear view of the school's performance through first hand monitoring. Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements and are rigorously monitored and implemented by all staff. Staff have regular updates in child protection and welfare training so they are well equipped to spot and deal with concerns. The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination well through robust policies that are fully implemented by staff. Excellent links with parents and carers give

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them high levels of trust in the school, involve them in sharing information about their children's development and support them to assist with their children's learning in the home. Excellent partnerships, especially with the on-site Children's Centre, provide a seamless transition for children from one provision to the other. The promotion of community cohesion is excellent. The school has a very thorough knowledge of its community's needs and offers great support to parents and carers through the excellent links with other providers. It has been particularly successful this year in welcoming parents from communities in Eastern Europe. This gives all children a very secure foundation for their learning and helps them understand and accept difference.

These are the grades for 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	3
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and hold it in very high esteem. They believe their children are well cared for and very safe and secure in school. Many expressed their delight at how well their children have settled and are learning. Comments such as, 'I am very happy with the nursery. My son enjoys attending every day, I feel he has had the best possible start for future education.' are typical of the many received. Inspectors found that care and support for children is good, which helps them to settle quickly, and that they are well prepared for the next stage of education by their experiences and learning in the nursery.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bensham Grove 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 31 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 69 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	81	6	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	87	4	13	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	68	8	26	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	74	7	23	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	90	3	10	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	77	7	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	77	7	23	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)	18	58	9	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	77	6	19	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	81	5	16	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	68	10	32	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	81	5	16	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	87	4	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 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 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 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.

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 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.



26 January 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Bensham Grove Nursery School, Gateshead, NE8 2XD

Thank you all for the very friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your nursery recently. I really enjoyed joining in with some of your play. Your good behaviour and enjoyment of learning help to make your good nursery safe and happy. You are well cared for by adults who know you well and can spot when you need help. The adults plan plenty of interesting things for you to do and they know that you learn best by finding out for yourself most of the time. Your teachers help you to make good progress in your learning, so it is no wonder your families are so proud of you. You are kind to each other and are learning to share and take turns, so you will be ready for the big school when the time comes.

Your teachers have been working out ways to make your learning more interesting by watching what you really enjoy. I have suggested that they notice how quickly you are learning so they always put out things to make you think a bit more and enjoy learning even faster. I could see that some of your teachers have found the ways that you learn best so I have asked that they share these good ideas with all the adults so everyone gets on better.

Your headteacher, families, staff and governors want the very best for you and they work well together to achieve this. I have suggested that the headteacher and governors make sure that all the adults understand what they can do to improve your nursery so that it is even better than it is now. You can help by being as happy and hard working as you are now.

Very best wishes to all at Bensham Grove Nursery.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

Lead inspector

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