

Leasowe Early Years and Adult Learning Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104985
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	377152
Inspection dates	6–7 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Elaine Murray HMI

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	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne McMullan
Headteacher	Mary Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. She visited four sessions, observing two class teachers and a variety of nursery workers. The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, staff, parents and carers, the Chair of the Governing Body and spoke informally with children. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence including staff planning, children's learning journeys, monitoring and self-evaluation, staff questionnaires and 28 parent and carer questionnaires.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which more-able children are challenged.
- The impact of the outdoor Forest School garden on improving outcomes for children.
- How well the nursery addresses differences in the performance of different groups.

Information about the school

Leasowe Early Years and Adult Learning Centre provides nursery education, childcare and a children's centre for the community of Leasowe. This report is for the inspection of the nursery school. The childcare provision and children's centre were inspected separately, and reports can be found on Ofsted's website. The nursery school is average size compared with schools offering similar provision. At the end of their time in nursery the children transfer to Reception classes in a number of local primary schools. Almost all the children are White British and very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language. A small number of children have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The centre has gained the Inclusion Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Healthy Schools Award.

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 school. Children are happy, settled and keen to learn. A close and highly effective partnership with parents and carers has a positive impact on children's learning. Parents and carers praise the communication with staff and typically comment that 'My child has come on in leaps and bounds'. Children thrive in the welcoming and caring environment provided. The good level of care and support for individuals is reflected in children's strong sense of security. Children behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning.

As a result of good teaching and an exciting curriculum which effectively follows their interests, children make good progress in their learning. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress. Children benefit from the spacious and stimulating outdoor learning environment. They develop a keen enjoyment of outdoor play as they enthusiastically explore the nursery's Forest School garden. They demonstrate an excellent awareness of how to keep safe as they describe why they cannot walk through the area for building fires, and ask for adult support as they learn to climb trees. Children are generally questioned effectively to encourage them to think and extend their learning. However, the quality of questioning is not always consistently high with particular regard to developing children's skills in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. The indoor learning environment provides an interesting range of resources and activities to promote children's independence and learning, although the reading area is not planned and resourced to best effect.

Senior leaders and governors provide strong leadership. A number of recent changes to the staff team have been well managed to ensure the continued success of the school. The quality of teaching is well monitored. Assessment systems have improved and developed. Self-evaluation is effective in sustaining strengths and bringing about improvement. The introduction of the nursery's Forest School garden and initiatives to develop children's communication and language skills have had a positive impact on the quality of children's learning experiences and progress. These measures demonstrate the school's good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that staff consistently question children effectively to develop learning, particularly in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy.
- Further develop the indoor environment to provide a more stimulating area for children to choose books and develop early reading skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

Children clearly enjoy their learning and are eager to attend the nursery. Most children enter the nursery with skill levels that are below those expected for their age, particularly in their communication and language. By the time they leave nursery to transfer to school most children's skill levels are in line with those expected for their age. This represents good progress.

Children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and communication and language skills. Children's self-esteem and motivation in learning is well developed through their experiences in the outdoor Forest School garden. Children enthusiastically recall the activities they were engaged in at their previous visit to the garden. They show fascination as they roll back logs to hunt for insects and worms. They develop physical skills as they learn to climb trees with adult support and run to gather equipment to make a 'castle'. Children learn to solve problems as they decide how they will move a heavy log, and, when playing indoors, how much wrapping paper they will need to wrap a Christmas present. They show good progress in learning to use mathematical language as they describe the size of their presents and the length of paper needed. They show increasing confidence in expressing their ideas and thoughts as they contribute at small group times. Children show enthusiasm for their learning as they engage in activities which are interesting and meaningful to them. For example, they enjoy role play in the well-resourced 'Santa's grotto' and enjoy making reindeer and food for reindeer in the outdoor area.

Children have positive relationships with staff and each other. They are familiar with the clear routines of the nursery, which contribute to their good behaviour. They respond well to expectations that they take responsibility and show initiative, for example at tidy-up time. Children cooperate well as they construct a 'castle' in the Forest School garden. Children show a good awareness of being healthy as they routinely wash their hands after toileting and before eating. They plant fruit and vegetables in the nursery garden, which they enjoy eating.

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 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	1
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 workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance ¹	2
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The vast majority of teaching is good, characterised by effective questioning to encourage children to think and skilful support to encourage children to make choices in their learning. Effective use of praise and encouragement successfully develops children's confidence and self-esteem and promotes their good behaviour. Staff effectively encourage the development of children's speaking skills at small group time as children are skilfully encouraged to share with the group what they have been involved in during the session. Children's progress is carefully assessed and tracked and staff plan to meet the needs of different ages and abilities. Where teaching is most effective, staff use their knowledge of children's capabilities to target questions well to develop learning. This provides challenge for children, including the more able. In a minority of sessions, chances to develop and extend learning, particularly in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy are missed with the result that learning is not as effective.

The curriculum provides a broad and interesting range of experiences which are based on children's interests and needs. The introduction of the Forest Garden has enhanced this provision. The outdoor environment provides a stimulating area in which all areas of learning are effectively developed. The indoor environment is generally well organised and provides well for the development of children's speaking and writing skill in particular. The reading area is not as effectively organised or inviting, with the result that children do not always take opportunities to use this area independently to further develop their love and understanding of books.

There is a strong commitment to meeting the needs of the individual. Staff recognise that some families require extra support and work very closely with parents and carers, as well as outside agencies when required. As a result, the nursery is successful in helping individuals overcome significant barriers to their education.

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

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The nursery benefits from good leadership and management. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body work well to accurately evaluate the nursery. They have a shared commitment to improvement. The school improvement plan accurately identifies what the nursery needs to do next. The school is vigilant in tracking and assessing the progress of all children, so that any gaps are identified and closed. Strategies to improve children's progress in developing language skills have been effective, particularly for those children who entered nursery with a low level of skill development. Leaders accurately evaluate the performance of different groups of children and put effective action into place to address any identified differences. For example, there are currently good measures to further promote boys' problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills.

The governing body is influential in shaping the school's direction and holding it to account. It offers good levels of support and challenge. The governing body has rigorous procedures to ensure the health, safety and well-being of staff and children. The effective safeguarding procedures fully meet government requirements and are regularly reviewed. Staff are vigilant at keeping children safe in a supportive and caring environment.

The school promotes equal opportunities well. Staff work effectively to promote a positive ethos where differences are recognised and celebrated. As a result, children from different backgrounds get on well together. Children learn about their wider community and are introduced to the customs, faiths and lifestyles of different countries.

Effective partnerships with other agencies contribute positively to the progress of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Close links with local schools ensure that children's transition to school is positive and smooth as possible. Highly effective communication with parents ensures that they are well informed about their children's progress in learning and have a good awareness of how to develop their children's learning at home. The provision of courses within the children's centre for parents and carers, such as those for family learning, helps them to do so.

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	2
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

Completed questionnaires were received from 63% of parents and carers, which is a higher than average response rate. The responses were overwhelmingly positive in all areas. All respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements made. Comments which were made all expressed highly positive views. Typical comments include, 'All members of staff make sure my child is happy and safe in nursery and the support is exceptional'.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Leasowe Early Years and Adult Learning Centre 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 **28** completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 44 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	89	3	11	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	93	1	4	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	86	4	14	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	82	5	18	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	86	4	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	82	5	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	86	4	14	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)	24	86	4	14	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	82	5	18	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	75	6	21	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	79	6	21	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	89	3	11	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	89	3	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 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.



8 December 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Leasowe Early Years and Adult Learning Centre, Wirral, CH46 2QF

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your nursery school. It was lovely to meet you all and to see the interesting things you do when you are at nursery.

You come to a good nursery. I could see you have lots of fun and learn a lot because your teachers give you so many exciting things to do. It was lovely to see how much you enjoyed using your Forest School garden and how many good things you learn while you are there. Your parents and carers told me that they are very happy with the nursery and that you all enjoy coming.

Your teachers look after you very well and are good at helping you to learn. I have asked them to help you even more by making sure they always ask you the best questions about what you are doing to help you to learn more. I have also asked them to make your reading area even more interesting for you.

I hope you continue to have a lovely time.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Murray
Her Majesty's Inspector

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