

Whitegate Nursery School

Victoria Road, Padiham, Burnley, BB12 8TG

Inspection dates 24–25 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- This nursery school provides a first-rate education for its children. They thrive because they are made to feel welcome and valued as individuals.
- Parents are partners in their child's learning. They know exactly how well they are doing as well as how to help their children at home.
- Children make exceptional progress from their starting points because the quality of teaching is outstanding. Disabled children and those with special educational needs make excellent progress because they are very well supported by very skilled adults.
- Staff keep a very close watch on children's progress and understanding so that they can help them take the next steps in their learning as soon as they are ready.
- The imaginative range of experiences and activities develop children's curiosity and interests exceptionally well.
- Children behave extremely well. They are keen to talk about themselves and their learning to visitors because they are confident and pleased about their achievements.
- Leaders, managers and the governing body succeed in their determination to make sure that individual potential is fully realised.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 40 minutes teaching independently, made brief visits to lessons, heard children pointing out words in books and jointly observed two hours of teaching with the headteacher.
- The inspector took account of 10 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) as well as 15 paper returns of the on-line questionnaire.
- The inspector held meetings with three parent governors, the headteacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator and met many parents informally at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspector looked at documents including: records of children's progress, plans for improvement, governing body meeting records, children's attendance and behaviour records and documents related to safeguarding. Children's learning journals were looked at jointly by the headteacher and the inspector.

Inspection team

Marie Cordey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- There is a children's centre on site managed by the headteacher and the governing body. The inspection report for the children's centre is available on the Ofsted website.
- The nursery school provides part-time places for morning or afternoon sessions. Some children arrive early for the afternoon session, stay for lunch and attend the after-school club.
- There is a lower than average proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs and average numbers of children with a statement of special educational needs.
- At the time of the inspection none of the children were being supported by pupil premium funding.
- The school holds Investors in People status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that governors are more knowledgeable about the quality of teaching and the progress made by individual children so that they can further challenge the school's effectiveness.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children start in the nursery with a range of developing skills and most are at an earlier stage of development than would be expected for their age. They make rapid progress during their time in the nursery so that when they leave almost all have reached levels in their learning that are in line with their age and many exceed this.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs make exceptional progress. They are fully included in activities. Some learn to share and to use signs to communicate and equipment to enable them to enjoy all the activities available.
- Children develop their personal and social skills remarkably. They are encouraged to be independent and 'have a go' and so they tidy up after themselves, do up their coats and put on their wellingtons to go outdoors. Children play very well together and most are already keen to share.
- Excellent opportunities are provided to develop children's curiosity for learning and their ability to work things out for themselves. They turned over pieces of wood, searched flower beds and delved into the wooded areas on a hunt for mini-beasts. They talked about where worms, beetles and spiders lived as well as why 'darker' areas might be better for some insects.
- Children's early writing skills are very well-developed to write their names on paintings, menus and photographs. They recognise rhyme because their teachers and nursery nurses spend time reading to them, musical instruments are used by children indoors and out and rhymes are chanted frequently during the day.
- The exceptional outdoor area encourages children to learn about the world around them. They talk with enthusiasm and knowledge about nature, the difference that the sun makes and how to cook food that is grown in the ground.
- Children never tire of the wide variety of activities on offer to them: the pirate ship, 'hidden' areas, reading corners, counting in the sand and in water and using their imagination in acting out characters from storybooks.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- All staff are experts in early year's education and most extend it further through advanced level training and learning. They use this knowledge to interest and excite children to stimulate them to have a life-long passion for learning. Disabled children and those with special educational needs are very well-supported to develop their social communication and also to become more independent.
- Activities are carefully matched to each child so that, for example, fiction and non-fiction books, information and communication technology and dressing up clothes reflect the individual experiences and interests of children. From super-heroes to dragons, football to cycling, staff use children's interests to encourage them to make early attempts at writing, explore their imaginations and talk about their play and learning with others.
- 'Videoing' the children's learning is used to help staff to plan further developments as well as helping parents to support their child's learning at home. Taking account of children's progress happens continually so that rapid progress is made. Learning journals are rich in detail about children's development and include photographs, examples of counting and number work, early writing as well as children's views and their parents' comments.
- Staff show sensitivity to individuals' interests and abilities. For instance, play activities about animals originated from the children's suggestions. They are stimulated to improve their physical development by access to, for example, climbing short ladders or using the large play equipment.
- Routines are quickly established through praise, singing, rhymes and very high expectations of the children's capabilities. Children learn to recognise what is going to happen next through

sounds, music and conversations with each other as well as with adults. They learn so well because they are expected to achieve as well as they can.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children, including disabled children and those with special educational needs, are absorbed in their play and learning and fully committed to whatever they are doing. They do not give up easily and are extremely concentrated on their learning.
- They are clear about how to climb trees safely 'you only go up so far', who to approach if they are hurt or upset and why you have to be careful when playing in water or sand. They are very pleasant to each other, their staff and to visitors. They feel reassured by the support of their key worker. Children are clear about what are the right and the wrong things to do.
- Because parents are fully involved in the carefully thought-out settling in time, children quickly and happily become involved in school life. They clearly enjoy school life and they attend very regularly and punctually.
- School records show that sharing and respect for others is the norm for the nursery, and staff are excellent role models.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's effectiveness. Further emphasis on emerging writing and reading has extended children's vocabulary as well as their ability to begin to link sounds and letters. Staff are regularly and frequently challenged to extend their knowledge and skills to support the children's education. They are very eager to do this because they share the headteacher's drive to provide 'Whitegate children' with the best possible start to their education.
- Performance management arrangements are challenging and clearly linked to improving the quality of teaching and accelerating children's progress. These are rigorously reviewed in order to ensure that teaching is consistently outstanding. Further education and training are encouraged. The headteacher is an exceptional early years teacher herself and can show others both at the school and in the local authority the best of early years practice.
- The strong partnership with parents is a particular strength of the school. They learn about the content of their child's areas of learning as well as how best to help their children to learn at home. Parents are very active participants in their child's education and are overwhelmingly positive about the school's effectiveness.
- The local authority provides 'light touch' but nevertheless, much appreciated and valued support. Regular reviews of the school's performance help to challenge the school and to help its continuing drive for further improvement. Health and social services are very effective in helping children with social communication difficulties.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Is very supportive of the school's work and involved in numerous school activities. Finances are scrupulously managed to provide good quality equipment and resources to best support children's learning. Safeguarding arrangements are secure. Although increasingly challenging the school by asking questions, governors are keen to increase their knowledge about the quality of teaching and how well individual children make progress.

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

Unique reference number	119096
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	401810

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Greenwood
Headteacher	Mrs Kay Burke
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2010
Telephone number	01282 772283
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Email address	office@whitegate.lancs.sch.uk

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