

Douglas Valley Nursery School

Turner Street, Off Greenough Street, Wigan, Lancashire, WN1 3SU

Inspection dates 3–4 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are inspirational. Staff and governors share their strong commitment to ensuring provision is of the highest quality. Leaders relentlessly seek ways to improve the school and have brought about recent improvements to the quality of teaching. Thorough systems to monitor children's progress have also been developed and are continuing to be refined.
- Extremely warm, positive and respectful relationships between staff and children mean that children feel very safe and happy in nursery. As a result, they gain in confidence and make rapid progress in learning.
- Most teaching is outstanding and never less than good. Staff engage extremely well in children's self chosen play to develop their learning to the full. They use highly effective questioning techniques to make sure that children learn to think and to solve problems.
- Children achieve exceptionally well, regardless of their starting points, or any barriers to learning. They learn to become independent, confident learners and so are extremely well prepared for their next stage of education.
- Children have a very well developed awareness of safety. They feel very secure in nursery and display a high level of awareness of how to keep themselves safe.
- Children are highly motivated and engaged in the activities and learning environment provided. They behave extremely well and co-operate well with other children.
- The outdoor environment is particularly exciting and inviting and provides a wealth of opportunities for children to investigate, explore and question the natural world.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. They show a high level of involvement in their activities which contributes to their rapid progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight sessions or parts of sessions led by teachers and teaching assistants.
- Meetings were held with senior members of staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector considered 14 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View). The inspector held informal discussions with a small number of parents at the beginning and end of the school day, and noted the replies to the school's own recent questionnaire. The inspector also reviewed the seven responses to staff questionnaires.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's data on children's progress, the school's development plan, planning and monitoring documents, documents relating to safeguarding, and records relating to behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Elaine Murray, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Douglas Valley is an average sized nursery school.
- Children attend for whole day or half day sessions.
- The majority of children are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- At present there are no children who have a statement of educational needs. The proportion of children supported at early years action or early years action plus is below average.
- The school also provides for children from birth to three years and out of school care for children aged 3-11. This is registered provision and is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further refine systems to monitor the progress children make, to aid staff as they plan to extend learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- From their varied starting points, children of all abilities and backgrounds, including more able children, make rapid progress. By the time they leave the nursery to start in their reception classes, most children have acquired the skills expected for their age, and a good number exceed this.
- Children develop high levels of confidence and become independent learners. They happily make choices of where to play and learn. They show a high level of responsibility and independence as they prepare their own daily snack.
- Children are frequently absorbed in the activities provided and concentrate for long periods of time, for example, as they fill containers with water and explore how they can make the water travel along plastic pipes.
- Children show exceptionally good skills in building positive relationships with others. They have very harmonious relationships with staff. They co-operate very well as they create imaginary scenarios in the den building area, and recreate stories using puppets.
- Children show make rapid progress in developing an understanding of books and stories. They enthusiastically discuss the sequence of a story and show that they know how characters are feeling. For example, when talking about a story where a baby owl is missing its mother, children comment 'He's getting sadder and sadder.'
- Both indoors and out, children show a keen interest and rapid progress in mark making skills. They 'write' cards and make lists, and many write recognisable letters as they copy their name as part of register time.
- Children develop mathematical skills rapidly as they are encouraged by staff to count and to solve problems. Children recorded the number of skittles they had knocked over by making a mark for each one. They checked the number by counting again and discussing whether they have recorded too many or too few.
- Children make excellent progress in their physical development as they make frequent use of the range of equipment in the outdoor area to run, climb, and balance. They develop skills using tools and equipment such as spades, spoons and whisks as they explore mud, water and sand. Indoors they confidently cut and fix as they make models and manipulate play dough using a variety of tools.
- Children with special educational needs make extremely good progress. Staff provide a high level of support to ensure that their particular needs are very well met.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Excellent relationships between staff and children help children to feel secure and become confident learners. Children respond well to staff's calm, warm approach which clearly values children and shows respect for their views and interests.
- Teaching is of high quality. Staff skilfully ask questions which challenge children to think. In one activity, children were rolling a ball down a length of plastic pipe and found they could count to five before the ball hit the sand. Staff encouraged children to think whether they thought they would be able to count to a number less than or more than five if the ball was placed lower down the pipe at the start.
- Staff engage exceptionally well with children's self-chosen learning. They listen to children and extend their learning by talking with them about their ideas and giving well timed guidance as to what they might do next. A group of children who had made 'fireworks' and were on an adventure in the outdoor area were given a map which they used to decide where they needed to go. This further developed children's imagination and learning.
- Staff provide an interesting and stimulating learning environment both inside and out. Sessions

are carefully planned to ensure that children have the right balance of adult led and child selected activities. Adult led small group times are used very well to help children to listen and begin to recognise some initial letter sounds.

- Staff have high expectations of what each child can achieve. Observations of children's learning are used extremely well to support individual children and ensure that learning is tailored to their interests and needs. They ensure that most able children have the right level of challenge so that they make the best progress possible.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children show a high level of engagement and interest in their learning. They are happy to come to nursery and are eager to explore the exciting indoor and outdoor environments. They develop confidence and independence in their learning, which has a positive impact on their outstanding achievement.
- Children are very familiar with the nursery routines. They behave extremely well in session times, and at other times such as when they need to tidy away and line up to move to a different room for lunch.
- Staff provide high quality support for children who may find managing their own behaviour more difficult and this has a positive impact on their progress.
- Children show a clear understanding of the nursery rules as they talk to one another about the fact that only three children can play in the home corner at one time. One child calmly explains to another that there are already three children in so one will have to come out, pointing to the sign above the door which explains the rule.
- Discussions with parents, the responses to Parent View and the school's own survey confirm that parents feel their children are very safe in nursery. As one parent commented 'You can drop your child off and know that they are safe.'
- Children show a strong sense of security in nursery. The school's own survey of children's views demonstrates that children feel very safe and know they can ask staff for help.
- Children display an extremely good awareness of safety. In imaginative play, they talk about needing a safety helmet because they have fireworks. They know they need to be careful using real knives to prepare snack. Staff are vigilant in talking to children about how they can keep safe to reinforce this learning.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher's drive and determination to continually improve the school are well supported by staff. Senior leaders monitor the work of the nursery well and are constantly looking for ways to improve what is provided for children. Since the previous inspection, there have been improvements to the quality of teaching, the outdoor and indoor learning environments and to systems for monitoring children's progress. These improvements have contributed to ensuring children's outstanding achievement.
- Senior leaders and governors are highly effective in evaluating how well the school is performing. They use the views of staff, parents and children to inform future planning and make improvements.
- The leadership of teaching is outstanding. Staff performance is very well monitored and training used to further improve the quality of teaching. All staff have attended training to enhance their skills in interacting with children to develop learning. This has resulted in improvements to their teaching skills including the quality of questioning, which in turn has improved children's achievement.
- Children's progress and learning is monitored very well. The school has developed systems which ensure that the progress of individual children, and groups such as those with special educational needs or English as an additional language are tracked. These systems continue to

be developed and refined to aid staff in planning to promote learning further.

- The school is committed to its aim to ensure that every child is valued as an individual. Staff plan to meet individual needs and provide additional support or challenge where needed. This ensures that all children including the most able and those with special educational needs benefit make extremely good progress.
- Parents speak highly of the school and how they feel very well informed and involved in their child's learning. The school works extremely well with parents to ensure they share information about their child's skills and interests. The regular 'Stay and Play' sessions for parents help them to know what the school provides and how they can support their child's learning at home.
- The setting receives light touch support from the local authority which has confidence in the strong leadership of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a wide range of professional expertise, such as education and finance. They have an excellent knowledge of how well the school is performing and what happens in the school. Governors are confident to question and challenge and provide excellent support to the headteacher. They keep a close eye on all finances to secure best provision. Governors have a very accurate knowledge of the quality of teaching and some visit to observe staff. They know about teacher's performance management and how this links to pay. Safeguarding practices are thorough, well documented and meet statutory requirements.

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	106398
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	426060

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	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Brothwood
Headteacher	Catherine Ardern
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2010
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