

Leasowe Early Years and Adult Learning Centre

Twickenham Drive, Moreton, Wirral, Merseyside, CH46 2QF

Inspection dates 19–20 November 2014

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and children

This is a good school.

- The achievement of children is good and improving. From starting points significantly below typical when they start school, children reach levels typical for their age by the time they move on. They are well prepared for starting full-time school.
- The school is improving rapidly because of outstanding leadership which has created a skilled teaching team. It is supported by a highly effective governing body.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs make excellent progress. This is because of the impact of outstanding leadership of the staff who are developing excellent skills in helping children with additional needs to learn rapidly.
- Children are well behaved and the school's work to keep them safe and secure is exemplary. Children enjoy learning, make good friends and attend regularly.
- The curriculum is of a high quality. Indoors there are many exciting learning activities. Outdoors, children access an environment that is second to none. Their experiences in the school's 'forest' are superb and the range of opportunities for other learning is excellent.
- Parents value the school's contribution to their lives, often over many years. The school is highly regarded and trusted to do the best for each child.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not outstanding because the quality of support by teaching assistants varies, and consequently some children could achieve even better.
- The new systems for assessing and recording children's attainment and progress are not yet embedded enough to secure the highest quality planning to meet every child's needs.
- The use of new technology in aspects of learning and management is underdeveloped. Opportunities for children to experience technology as part of learning are limited. Staff lack the confidence to use technology to make their processes of planning and recording children's progress more efficient.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was led by one inspector. Learning was observed in each of the morning and afternoon sessions. These visits included joining children learning indoors and outdoors and joining one group as it learnt in the school's 'forest'.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the senior teacher, members of the staff team including students, and three governors. A conversation was held with the special educational needs coordinator. A meeting was also held with a consultant employed by the local authority to give advisory support and guidance.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's view of how well it is doing, its plans for improvement; information on children's progress and attainment; school policies; records relating to safeguarding and behaviour and teachers' planning of learning.
- Samples of children's work were scrutinised from their 'learning journeys' and information given to parents about their children's achievements was also considered.
- The opinions of parents were ascertained by evaluating 12 responses to the online questionnaire, (Parent View). The inspector also chatted briefly with a number of parents as they brought their children to school.

Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized nursery school. It provides government funded part-time nursery education for up to 122 children.
- Children enter the school in the term after their third birthday. Children join at three points each year, at the start of each term dependent on when they have their third birthday.
- During the time of the inspection, 63 children were attending.
- The vast majority of children are of White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- There have been staff changes since the previous inspection. A new headteacher was appointed three years ago and in September 2014 a senior teacher took up post with responsibility for leading teaching.
- The school is integrated with the Leasowe Early Years Centre with which it shares some accommodation and staff. The childcare provision and children's centre were inspected separately. The reports are available on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and thereby raise achievement from good to outstanding by:
 - embedding the improved assessment system so that it more effectively informs planning to ensure that it is consistently relevant to each child's needs
 - reducing variations in the impact of teaching assistants on children's learning by sharing the outstanding practice within the staff team
 - improving the diction of some staff so that children have exemplary models of speaking to aspire to
 - developing and implementing a strategy to increase options for children to learn using technology and giving staff the skills to use computer technology to make their work in assessing and recording children's achievement more efficient.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- An inspirational headteacher, very effectively supported by a talented staff team and a knowledgeable and dedicated governing body, is driving the school forward. Outstanding leadership of the provision for disabled children and those who have special educational needs, and excellent leadership of teaching by the recently appointed senior teacher combine to give enormous momentum to the school's rate of development.
- Staff and governors evaluate the school's provision rigorously, seeking to enhance it even further to improve learning for the children. Based on its track record and ambitious leadership team and governors, the school is extremely well placed to continue to improve.
- The nursery deserves its high reputation in the community and its effectiveness is enhanced by its very close relationship with the integral Early Years Centre. Excellent partnerships with health workers and social and care staff enable the nursery staff to know the families of its children and understand the best way of supporting each child.
- The teaching staff share with the headteacher a great clarity about how to improve the school further. Detailed plans are in place to set out how to get there. The quality of assessment has been improved recently and has refined the process for identifying a child, regardless of ability, who could be making better progress. Teachers are skilled in mentoring teaching assistants and building the confidence and skills of apprentices and trainee teachers who are welcomed to gain experience at the school.
- Regular reviews of the performance of staff are a positive part of their development. Where needed, training is accessed from outside agencies, or guidance offered from within the expertise in the school. Currently, the school is establishing ways of securing the accuracy of its assessments by regular reviews between staff. The school makes sure that staff eligible for moving up the pay scale only do so when they have met all requirements.
- Carefully planned activities are based on the ideals of best practice for children of this age. The emphasis is on structuring play to inspire children to be learners. This is successfully achieved with children making good progress in each of the seven areas of development.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is successfully developed. Children develop an awareness of the features of British culture. Through songs, stories, celebrations and discussions, they learn about a wide range of local, national and international cultural and religious ideas at a level appropriate to their ages. The British principles of fairness and tolerance are promoted this way.
- The local authority pays for outside support for the school. An expert consultant makes two visits a year to the school to offer an objective view about its effectiveness.
- Parents are one hundred percent behind the school. All would recommend it to another parent, and of the opinions given to the inspector, none were negative. Staff work hard to embrace the feelings and wishes of parents and through daily contact keep them informed about their child's progress. The records of each child's achievement as they move through the nursery, called 'learning journeys', give parents a good opportunity to give their views about their child's development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The school benefits from high quality governance. Its effectiveness is rooted in the deep understanding governors have of the school and the community it serves. They regularly visit the school and take time to meet parents and staff and get to know the children. Governors support the headteacher and staff in their determination to get the best for each child, but are not shy of challenging the headteacher and staff to make sure that all decisions are wise and effective.
 - Under the excellent leadership of the Chair, the governing body has been successfully restructured to meet the latest national requirements. This has established a sharper, more focused body in which everyone knows their role and carries it out to the best of their abilities.
 - Governors track the progress of children and understand the complexities of the data compiled for the children. This knowledge is instrumental in debating with the headteacher areas for improving the school and its impact on achievement.
 - Finances are carefully managed and the budget allocation for the nursery alone is carefully evaluated in terms of its impact on the children.
 - All elements of safeguarding are checked to make sure they comply with requirements.

The behaviour and safety of children are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is good. This view is matched by the very large majority of parents who responded on Parent View. Children learn to respect each other's right to join in all activities and benefit from a consistent approach to promoting good behaviour.
- Each child is nurtured and embraced by the enormous care shown by adults. Some stunning initiatives are being developed under the leadership of the special educational needs co-ordinator. These are aimed at understanding each child and implementing innovative and very effective new practices to build good behaviour. There are some children with emotional needs that can, at times, be expressed in anti-social behaviour; the initiatives mentioned give these children the skills to manage their feelings much better.
- Children are encouraged to understand why some actions are wrong. Increasingly, children co-operate with each other in role play, construction and information and communication activities. For example, many children collaborated in building a 'bus' outdoors and welcomed other children who wished to join them on their journey. Children proudly share the 'smiley faces' they are awarded for desirable behaviour and are motivated by words of encouragement and recognition of their good work.
- Staff offer much help and advice to families about bringing their child to nursery regularly. Their support in doing so, coupled with the high levels of enjoyment evident amongst all children for their learning are key reasons why a very large majority attend regularly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding. Regular update training in all aspects of child protection, first aid and safeguarding ensures that all staff are aware of the statutory requirements for these areas.
- Teachers, support, administrative and domestic staff, work together as a team very efficiently to promote good learning in a safe and well managed setting. Procedures for safeguarding children and adults are very thorough. The school is totally committed to meeting the needs of all children and to removing inequalities.
- The staff are vigilant in ensuring the children's security and welfare, and in helping them to care for themselves and others. Support staff work cooperatively with teachers to ensure that children's personal and emotional growth is assured. Through learning outdoors, children develop the confidence to manage their own risks as part of their explorations. For example, they build bridges using wooden planks and balance across them, safely climb off the ground on trees and learn to ride tricycles safely, with care for themselves and others.
- Through their active play, the children learn that exercise is important in their lives. They have a good understanding of the reason for washing their hands before eating their morning toast, when eating fruit and healthy snacks and before their lunch.
- There is very effective support for disabled children and those who have special educational needs. The provision is exceptionally well led and is fully inclusive, there are very good facilities to ensure that the setting is fully accessible for children and adults who need mobility.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Children are bursting with excitement at the start of each session. Other than the occasional expression of emotion at leaving mum or dad, they are swiftly into whatever is on offer in the room. A wide array of learning experiences are skilfully set up by staff to attract the children's interests and matched to their levels of development. Parents are unanimous that their child is taught well.
- The quality of learning is constantly improving. Leaders of teaching support and mentor teaching assistants and trainees very well. There are some variations however, in the quality of learning promoted by teaching assistants which slows the learning for some children.
- Most of the time, children are successfully encouraged to get involved in self-chosen tasks and activities, often in co-operation with others, to develop their learning. Through observations of specific individuals and groups, the staff encourage the children to make decisions, consider options, and explain their thinking. Children are challenged to interact with adults to take the child's learning to a higher level. Because all activities are carefully planned to promote learning, children often learn without realising it, for example by making marks and attempting to make letters to match sounds as they explore shaving gel.
- Children have many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. These include often sharing books with class mates and adults and constantly chattering as they apply their imagination when exploring outdoors. Children develop the full range of physical skills very well both indoors and in the

excellent outdoor learning areas.

- Children benefit from good modelling from the adults leading their learning, for the most part. A group of children, for example, were skilfully led to develop their speaking skills by exploring ways of placing their smile into a box. The skill of the adult leading the activity was immensely successful in promoting, in the children, the skills of making sounds correctly. However, at times, the diction of some staff is not exemplary and hinders the achievement of children, for instance in securing their understanding of phonics.
- The opportunities for learning outdoors benefit learners immensely. A superb range of facilities are available for children to explore, create and investigate; which they do in all weathers! Through the good leadership of staff, children experience the world of the 'forest' in the grounds. They explore the mud kitchen, seek bugs, enjoy the light and heat from a safely organised fire and sit together on tree trunks eating marsh mallows. The school is rightly a leader amongst other schools in this use of the natural environment to encourage children's learning.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs benefit from highly skilled staff who are determined to develop their skills so that they can give children the best support they can. The children's inclusion in school life is outstanding; regardless of their additional needs, everyone is enabled to learn and make progress. The high quality leadership and the excellent support and guidance given by the leader to staff ensures that individual children make good in-roads towards overcoming their difficulties.
- Recent improvement to the quality of record-keeping of each child's progress has heightened the awareness of staff to the needs of the most able children. Increasingly, teachers have higher expectations and provide greater challenge to the most able children in what they do and in the quality of interaction that staff have with them to extend learning.
- Partnerships with parents are warm and effective. Weekly challenges, such as looking for the sounds of their child's name in words in and around the area and at home, give indicators to parents as to how they can support learning. Books are taken home nightly and children can change their book when they wish. Each child's achievement is recorded in their individual 'learning journeys' in which parents are encouraged to give their opinions.
- The benefits of using computer technology are not exploited enough to benefit the children's learning by widening their understanding of the world or to improve the efficiency of how staff record the children's progress and achievement.

The achievement of children is good

- Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education. This is because of good teaching that makes learning exciting and challenging. By the time children leave the school, a large majority have reached the levels of development typical for their age with some exceeding them. Given the individual starting points of the large majority of children, which is significantly below typical for their age, this equates to good progress.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs make rapid progress. In each area of learning their development is good although not fast enough for some to reach levels typical for their age.
- The needs of the most able children are currently coming to the fore in response to the strong leadership of teaching. Their progress is accelerating and their achievement is good. Assessment data, which is now used better by staff, indicates that this is the case.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development, which for many is below typical on entry, goes from strength to strength. They make good friendships, learn to share and co-operate and increasingly express their feelings. Due to the exciting learning environment and care taken by staff to listen to them as individuals, children feel secure in making decisions for themselves including making choices about which activities to explore. They develop the confidence to pursue their own ideas with concentration and imagination.
- A relatively high proportion of children enter the school with significantly below typical language skills; by the time they leave most have a much better vocabulary and have gained the confidence to talk and listen to others. Children develop a secure understanding for their age of the sounds that letters make (phonics). They enjoy sounding out letters and looking for example, in and around the class and outdoors for letters that are the same as that of their names. Children grow to love books. The indoor area is skilfully arranged to raise the profile of books and to attract the children's interests.
- Physical development improves at a good rate. Children acquire good precision in their control of tools such as crayons, paint brushes and building blocks to construct models. This contributes to the children's ability to make marks using pencils, an essential forerunner for writing. The most able children develop

the capacity to write their names. Some children are beginning to create stories using their own form of writing. One child created her own signs to represent the words of the nursery rhyme, 'Baa- Baa black sheep'.

- Activities to promote mathematical development are woven into on-going learning tasks to give them a practical basis. For example, children using a computer programme counted how many ducks were in different ponds and explained how many would be left when two swam away.
- Both indoors and outside, children explore a wide variety of activities that extend their understanding of the wider world. Interaction with the natural environment opens up the joy of nature and develops their curiosity. There are many opportunities to develop good creative skills and promote good understanding through painting, drawing, role play and music. The top quality outdoor provision motivates children to learn through a stunning range of play activities, and the staff constantly provide imaginative tasks to capture children's curiosity to develop their levels of development in all areas of learning.
- Although children get access to learning with a computer, other options for children to develop their skills and understanding of technology are limited. This holds down the children's achievement in aspects of their understanding of the world.

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

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| Unique reference number | 104985 |
| Local authority | Wirral |
| Inspection number | 447925 |

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

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| Type of school | Nursery |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of children | 3–5 |
| Gender of children | Mixed |
| Number of children on the school roll | 120 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Anne McMullan |
| Headteacher | Cathy Hughes |
| Date of previous school inspection | 6 December 2011 |
| Telephone number | 0151 639 8923 |
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