

Chatham Place Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104503
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	300604
Inspection date	10 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Gordon Alston

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 on roll	
School	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev John Bradbury
Headteacher	Mrs Joanne Hitchmough
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2001
School address	Chatham Place Liverpool Merseyside L7 3HD
Telephone number	0151 7093559
Fax number	0151 7093559

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

In 2006 Chatham Place Nursery became part of Picton Children's Centre. The Centre provides an extensive range of integrated services and day-care facilities for families and children as well as Nursery provision for children aged three and four. There are plans for the Centre to move to a new site in December 2007. It serves an area in which many families face challenging social and economic circumstances. An above average number of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and half have delayed speech and language development. Over half of the children are from minority ethnic backgrounds and quite a high percentage are at an early stage of learning English. The school recently gained a Healthy Eating award and a National Clean Air award. Due to the long-term absence of the headteacher an acting headteacher has been in post since May 2006.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Chatham Place Nursery provides a good standard of education and good value for money. At the heart of the school's work is the belief that every child is special, and all staff successfully live out the maxim that 'every day matters to a child.' The school's self-evaluation is accurate. It has a clear view of its achievements. One parent, summing up the views of many, wrote: 'Though the building is not of high quality, the team of teachers deserve all my admiration and praise. I congratulate them each day for their work.' The staff are skilled, approachable and caring and this ensures that children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and are well equipped for their future lives. Parents themselves have an increased understanding of their children's learning through play and development because of a successful partnership with the school.

It is obvious from the moment that children, carers and parents enter the Nursery, where they are warmly met and welcomed every day by the staff, that this is a happy, safe and lively place where learning is fun. Children flourish as the staff skilfully assess their different personalities and abilities. New tracking and assessment procedures are beginning to provide information that aids teaching to ensure that individual children's needs are met. These procedures are newly in place.

Children's attainment when they start Nursery is below average and particularly low in their communication and personal skills. A strength is the support given to children with weak communication skills, to those whose first language is not English and to children with additional learning needs. As a result, achievement is good and progress strong in all areas of learning. Children make particularly rapid progress in their personal, social and emotional development because teaching successfully promotes their ability to take responsibility for solving problems themselves and to negotiate with each other. Children love using the innovative outdoor facilities and learn that having fun in the fresh air and being active are good for their health. Hence all children also achieve particularly well in their physical development.

By the time they leave, most children reach the levels expected for their age. A rich and varied curriculum, combined with good quality teaching and learning, provides constant pleasure, excitement and adventure. Because all the adults successfully make the most of every learning opportunity, children very quickly learn to celebrate different cultures in the community around them, for example in enjoying Divali celebrations. Children enjoy eating healthy fruit snacks at break times. They learn how to keep themselves safe by sticking to the rules such as sharing toys and respecting other children's space when playing outdoors. The skills children learn, together with the independence they develop, are preparing them extremely well for later life. Practitioners have very good relationships with the children and inspire confidence and success. Consequently, the children's behaviour and attitudes are excellent and contribute much to their good achievement.

Leadership and management are good. The school is currently led by an acting headteacher whose energy, commitment and experience have won the support of staff, who are constantly looking for ways to improve their work. They share a passionate commitment to providing good education. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection, particularly in improving children's social skills, and recently in establishing clear management systems for evaluating the school's performance. The next step is to extend the clear tracking systems so that children's progress is recorded from birth to age four in preparation for the forthcoming early years'

guidance. There is clear evidence of good capacity for future improvement, and for building on the school's strengths. Governors provide satisfactory support to the school and are increasingly involved in evaluating its work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen and build on the newly established procedures to check children's progress and to decide what should be taught.
- Extend tracking systems to record children's progress from birth to age four.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The attainment of most children when they enter Nursery is below that expected for their age. Skills in speech and personal development are identified weaknesses. From this starting point, all children of all abilities make good progress and achieve well in all areas of learning. This ensures that most children reach the expected levels for their ages by the time they leave and so are very well prepared for their Reception classes. Recently introduced assessments on entry, mid-way through the year and at the end of the year clearly show the significant progress of all children in each of the six areas of learning. All staff work hard to successfully develop children's communication and social skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being are good with outstanding features. Their confidence and self-esteem improves rapidly because all staff value the children as individuals and listen to their ideas. They quickly develop very positive attitudes to learning because it is made so enjoyable. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children are very friendly towards each other and mix well together, regardless of ethnicity, age or gender. They organise their own activities, for example watering the plants in the garden or making a pond for the dinosaurs to live in. Children quickly become confident enough to work independently and rapidly learn to take turns and share resources. They remain busy throughout sessions, persevering with tasks and responding positively to encouragement and praise, which spurs them on to try even harder. Excellent relationships, friendships and behaviour ensure that Nursery is a great place to be.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

New tracking systems are beginning to identify in which areas of learning teaching could be better. The new system provides for a careful analysis of each child's interests and learning needs. Staff then meticulously plan stimulating activities, with clear routines and plenty of sensitive encouragement for everyone to join in. Children's very good response to adults' high expectations of behaviour adds to the pleasant atmosphere. As a result of detailed analysis of their practice, all staff have a good understanding of how young children learn. This knowledge and understanding is applied skilfully to meeting the needs of each child. This level of individual attention works well for children whose first language is not English or those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Both groups are set precise, achievable goals. Skilful teaching

brings less confident children out of their shells and stimulates much talk, humour and collaboration. A particular strength is the way that planning allows for a perfect balance between adult-guided and child-selected activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall and securely based on children learning through play. All the children are able to access all activities provided because of the good support they receive. The building is old and drab, but a stimulating environment, both inside and outside, has been created which is used well to enrich children's play and enhance their learning. Children find learning is fun because practical, hands-on activities not only engage them well, but also help them to become independent in their learning. Children's personal and social development is supported very well as they are encouraged to make choices and work together. Visits to the safari park and art gallery, together with visitors and special events, add richness to the curriculum and broaden children's horizons. Good links with external agencies such as speech and language services also enhance children's learning. The curriculum includes plenty of opportunities for children to learn about how to keep safe and healthy, such as the safe handling of foods and tools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided for all children, including those with learning difficulties and communication problems, are good. Productive working partnerships with parents and outside agencies ensure that children's individual needs are met. Parents are particularly pleased with the care and support their children receive. Procedures to safeguard children and to secure their health and safety are thorough and meticulously implemented by very well informed staff. Adults know the children very well and are highly committed to helping them learn. Assessment information is beginning to be used well to carefully track children's progress through their individual profiles. Staff are also using this information well to guide their planning so that children are helped to take the next steps in their learning. The consequence of this practice is that children not only learn and achieve well but also develop extremely good personal skills and have lots of fun. The school recognises the need to extend this good practice further to take into account the new requirements for birth to age four.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The acting headteacher has provided very good guidance and clear impetus for improvement during her time. The strong focus on developing systems to record children's progress and skills is proving to be successful. She is ably supported by a highly effective and confident team which has also played a pivotal role in maintaining and improving on provision since the last inspection. The staff know the school very well and this is reflected in the school's new procedures for self-evaluation which are providing an accurate picture of the school's performance. The governing body is in the process of changing due to the development of the Children's Centre. They are strong supporters of the Centre and are becoming more confident at questioning and challenging the leadership. There is no sense of complacency and everyone expects the best from themselves and the children.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I really enjoyed my visit to your Nursery very much and have asked Mrs Hitchmough to read this letter to you. I enjoyed watching some of the exciting things you do. I know your mums and dads think that your Nursery is a very special place and I agree with them.

There are lots of wonderful things about your Nursery.

- The staff care about you very much and make learning really interesting and fun.
- Mrs Hitchmough is very clever at running the school and makes sure you all have a good time and do well.
- Everyone in the Nursery is happy and friendly and they all work together to make it an exciting place for you.
- Anybody who needs extra help is always given it.
- You love learning new things and are very good at sharing, taking turns, talking and being kind to each other.
- You love the fruit and the other healthy snacks you get every day.

I have asked the headteacher to keep a record of all the things you learn from when you start the at the Centre in a similar way to what they are doing in the Nursery class.

It was great to see that you are so happy at Nursery and doing so well.