

Leasowe Early Years and Adult Learning Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104985
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	324139
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Frank Carruthers

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 on roll	
School (total)	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs B McLennan
Headteacher	Mrs Mary Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2006
School address	Twickenham Drive Moreton Wirral Merseyside CH46 2QF
Telephone number	0151 6398923
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

The centre provides integrated education and care for 50 weeks of the year to support families and their young children from birth to five years old in the Leasowe and Wallasey areas of the Wirral. At the end of their time in the 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 learning English as an additional language. About 15% of the children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mainly in relation to speech, language and communication. The centre has gained the Inclusion Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Healthy Schools Award. This inspection focused on Nursery provision only. Provision from birth to three is part of a separate Ofsted inspection and this report may be found on the Ofsted website.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The centre provides a good education for the children and has outstanding features. Of particular note are the high quality of care, guidance and support the centre gives the children and their families; the exceptional outdoor opportunities the children enjoy; the contribution the centre makes to the local community through its excellent partnerships with parents and agencies; and the progress that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make. Leadership and management are good with outstanding features and senior staff have made good improvements to the provision since the last inspection.

Children start in the Nursery class with skills that are mostly well below those expected at the age of three. Most have attended a weekly playgroup session for a term before they start and this helps them to settle in. Children achieve well thanks to the good teaching they receive and excellent opportunities they have to explore, investigate and play both indoors and outside. They soon love coming to Nursery and make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and in their physical development. By the time they move onto Reception classes in nearby primary schools the attainment of most children is in line with expected levels. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have made excellent progress, though their attainment is still below expected levels. Their progress is outstanding because of the excellent support they receive from both staff and visiting specialists such as the speech and language service. The reason why achievement overall is not outstanding is because the more able children are not always challenged to achieve as highly as they might.

Children are given very good opportunities to take part in physical exercise and enjoy a healthy snack. In addition there is a well balanced lunch for those whose parents choose for them to stay. The children know simple ways to stay safe and they play happily together, sharing the resources well. They have warm relationships with staff and adapt to everyday routines very well. These attributes help them to transfer to primary schools smoothly.

Teaching and learning are good and some aspects are outstanding. For example, staff plan a rich variety of activities for the children to experience and make sure all children have equal opportunity to enjoy them. They are highly skilled at helping children with speaking and listening difficulties to communicate and join in. Teamwork is a very strong feature and staff observe and assess how well the children are doing regularly and conscientiously. These observations along with photographs and pieces of work make up the children's journals, which the children proudly show to visitors. Children have excellent opportunities to learn, play and explore in the huge and extremely well resourced outdoor area that boasts a rich variety of things to do. This boosts their confidence as well as their physical development. However, at times opportunities to challenge the more able children in what they can achieve are missed and this is an area for development.

The centre excels at the heart of the community it serves. It offers parents and children extended day care, summer play schemes and crèche facilities, on-site specialist services, parental courses, and workshops. The family support team and family learning coordinator provide high quality individual support for families experiencing difficulties as well as courses in parenting and other skills. Parents particularly value the way the whole centre provides a focal point for support and activities that include adult education. These are key elements of the outstanding quality of care, guidance and support and excellent contribution the school makes to the community.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership for the Nursery class and is ably supported by the senior leadership team. School self-evaluation is thorough and accurate and governance has continued to be outstanding in the way it has enhanced the status and quality of what the centre provides. The centre gives good value for money and has very good capacity to maintain and improve provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further challenge the more able children to raise their attainment and develop their independent thinking and problem solving.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Many children have speech and language difficulties when they start in the Nursery class and most have extremely limited vocabulary. They make good progress in communicating because staff encourage the children so well to join in and answer questions and to take part in the many role-play activities indoors and outside. By the time they move onto Reception classes most can talk in sentences. This was evident when one child sold a customer a parrot and a spider in the pet shop. Children are encouraged to try their hand at writing, for example labels for their pictures and lists in the shop. They make good progress and soon try to write their own names, though very few more able children use their writing spontaneously in their everyday play. They gain a good awareness of numbers up to ten through rhymes and counting songs, and they recognise different shapes. The children make good strides in their knowledge and understanding of the world because of the many opportunities they have to explore and investigate. Their physical development is very good, thanks to the activities outdoors and in the hall to develop skills of coordination and balance. There are many examples of the children's good artwork on display, using paint, simple computer programmes and various tools to print with.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Children feel safe and know what to do if they are unhappy with anything. Their behaviour is excellent. The atmosphere in the classroom is always calm with children busy, thoroughly enjoying the many activities they can choose to do. Outdoors they have a good awareness of the safety of others when they use the tricycles and other large equipment. Children learn about healthy foods at snack time and when they help to cook. The arrangements for taking lunch provide excellent opportunities for them to sit together with an adult to talk to and help serve the food. These are enjoyable social occasions. Attendance is satisfactory, being similar to that found in most Nursery settings. The children's skills of independence are good, for example in selecting what they want to do. However, the staff do not take full advantage of the available information and communication technology (ICT) to allow the children themselves to access, store and print out what they have accomplished. So these skills are more limited.

Quality of provision

Effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development

Grade: 2

All staff contribute well to the children's learning and development. They are each responsible for small groups of about ten children who soon identify with their key person. Children become confident to make conversations in these small groups and staff take every opportunity to encourage speaking, listening and counting when they greet their group at the start of each session. The last inspection report found there were times when children were not active and engaged enough in their learning but this is no longer the case. Time is used very effectively and children are fully occupied in purposeful activities. The curriculum covers all areas of development exceptionally well and fully caters for the individual needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The very few children who are learning English as an additional language benefit from the staff's expertise in signing and other techniques that help all children to communicate. The reason children's learning and development are not judged outstanding is because there are missed opportunities to help the more able children to think independently and to challenge them to solve problems.

Effectiveness in promoting children's welfare

Grade: 1

These aspects are key strengths, which have been acknowledged, for example, in the centre gaining the Inclusion Award. All procedures to ensure the safety and welfare of children, including the safe recruitment of staff, meet current government requirements. Links within the centre and with outside agencies provide excellent assistance for families, particularly the most vulnerable, so that the children can have the best chance to thrive during their early years. Parents are unanimous in their support for the centre, summed up in this comment, 'many thanks to all concerned for their outstanding care and concern.' In addition, there are good opportunities for dads to be involved in their children's education through special events and courses. Procedures to assess and track the progress of the children have improved since the last inspection and are good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Since the last inspection, the senior leadership team has been extended to include representation from the family support service and has widened its monitoring role. As a result, curriculum planning and provision for the children's welfare have significantly improved. All staff contribute well to the overall leadership and management of the centre and the Nursery class. The reason leadership and management are not outstanding overall is because there is still scope to raise the expectations of staff about what the children, especially the more able, can achieve.

The centre's development plan is produced after consultation with all staff, governors and parents and is comprehensive in its overview. Clear targets are used to improve the provision for children and families and to bolster the links between the Nursery class, pre-nursery playgroup and the 0–3 years facility as well as primary schools. In addition, the centre now hosts successful courses on parenting skills and ante-natal and early childhood matters. All these initiatives illustrate how the leadership team promotes exceptionally well the best

opportunities for all children and their families. The centre is a shining example of how a nursery can be at the centre of the community, forging excellent links with agencies for the good of all.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do children in the EYFS 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/or disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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	1
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I enjoyed my inspection of your Nursery class so much! I loved watching you all having a wonderful time outside playing in the sand and water pools and exploring the adventure trails and gardens. You have so many things to do! It's no wonder you all love coming to Nursery every day.

I came to the Nursery to see how well everyone helps you to learn and grow and I was very impressed! I really enjoyed looking through your journals and the photographs of what you've been doing. They showed me just how well you are improving. Your headteacher and all the staff really care for you. They look after you so well.

Part of my job is to see if there is anything that might make your Nursery even better. There is just one thing for your teachers to do. I want them to sometimes give you things to do that will mean you will have to think very hard about them and maybe work them out for yourselves without an adult to help.

So enjoy your time in Nursery and learn as much as you can.