

Grace Owen Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106975
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	377506
Inspection dates	7–8 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Carmen Markham

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 of pupils on the school roll	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Louise Seymour
Headteacher	Linda Hoyle
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2009
School address	Hague Row Parkhill Sheffield S2 5SB
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Registered childcare provision	Grace Owen Nursery School
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	48
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	January 2006

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited six lessons and observed four teachers. They spoke to children about their learning, observed lessons and analysed children's record books. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body and staff. They spoke informally to some parents and carers. They observed the school's work and observed the child care provision. Inspectors also looked at the school improvement plan, school policies, documents relating to the care and protection of pupils (safeguarding) and details of the progress made by children. The responses to 79 questionnaires from parents and carers, and those from staff were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The records showing the progress of children in the nursery to identify whether all groups are making at least good progress.
- The impact of the new assessment and tracking systems on the performance of children.
- Whether the curriculum effectively delivers all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Whether the governing body has been able to fulfil its role effectively while managing the rapidly-changing circumstances of the school.
- The quality of child care offered by the school.

Information about the school

This very small nursery school provides day care for children between six months and four years of age and provides nursery education for 15 hours a week for children in the first year of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The inspection looked at both these provisions. The school serves an area undergoing a major regeneration programme close to the city centre. It occupies the ground floor of a derelict block of high-rise flats. Half the children are of White British heritage. A total of 20 different languages is spoken in school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high.

The current acting headteacher has been in post for a year. During her headship she has managed the early transfer of the children aged four to five years into the reception classes in local primary schools and the resulting reduction of the school budget and staff. There have been significant staff changes since the previous inspection. The uncertainty about the school's future, referred to in the last inspection report, has yet to be resolved.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Grace Owen is a good nursery school. There are some outstanding features that include the high quality of welfare that it provides for children in receipt of day care and the excellent care, guidance and support for children in the nursery. The school's promotion of equal opportunity and its approach to tackling discrimination are also outstanding. Children feel very safe in school and have an excellent attitude towards healthy eating and physical activity. They behave well and their achievement is good.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The experience, knowledge and vision of the acting headteacher have enabled the school to adapt to the changing circumstances in which it finds itself, and to be resourceful and imaginative in managing the reduction in staffing and budgets. The governing body has been crucial to the success of this approach and has worked diligently to ensure a sustainable future for the school. Consequently, the school's aim to provide excellent child care, equal opportunities and good-quality learning experiences, so that every child can achieve well, have continued to be met. The school's monitoring and evaluation of its performance and the progress of children is rigorous and accurate. Well-targeted development planning effectively promotes improvement. All staff are fully involved in this process and are committed to it. The school's capacity to improve is good.

Most children start the nursery class with well below age-related expectations, but by the end of the year the majority has reached these expectations in all areas of the curriculum. This represents good progress and reflects good teaching. Teachers and Early Years educators have a very good knowledge of all children and quickly identify those who require additional support to make good progress. The curriculum and planning reflect this knowledge well. However, there are too few opportunities for children to develop mark-making skills and to acquire and regularly practise letters and sounds. Children are encouraged to plan and review their learning. However, they are not always told what they will learn in a lesson, which makes it more difficult for them to review their progress. Displays in school do not always effectively support learning and celebrate achievement.

The school's engagement with parents and carers is exemplary. They are very regular visitors to school and benefit from courses to help them to support their children and to extend their own knowledge and experience. Outstanding community

cohesion and close working with local partners puts the school at the heart of its community. It provides excellent support for families.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve children's attainment by:
 - developing more opportunities for children to use and apply their mark-making skills
 - increase the opportunities for children to learn and use letters and their related sounds.
- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - making children more aware of what they are learning so that they are better able to review their achievements
 - using displays to celebrate children's achievement more effectively and to provide ideas and information that can be used to support their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children achieve well and enjoy their learning. The high level of care and the family atmosphere enables them to become independent and confident learners. They respond well to routines and play well together. They show good levels of curiosity and interest in their activities. Older children play with imagination and can develop activities to reflect their ideas. Boys enjoy the home corner and books, while girls are happy to attempt to bang in nails. Children concentrate well and are proud of their achievements. They learn to plan their activities and to reflect on what they have learned.

Children make very good progress in speaking and listening because the school emphasises the importance of this aspect of children's learning, and ensures that children who experience delay in developing this aspect are identified early and supported well so that most make rapid progress. However, children's knowledge of letters and sounds is less well-developed. Good progress in problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy reflects the good use of most opportunities to use and recognise numbers. Children make good overall progress in their personal, social and emotional development, but in this area boys do not achieve quite as well as girls. However, the gap is narrowing quickly. More-able, younger children and less confident older children, are supported well to make good progress. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Children who are learning English as an additional language are well-supported by bi-lingual staff and also make good progress.

Children behave well and are increasingly involved in taking responsibility for their own health and safety. They learn to contribute well to their school community through re-cycling, tidying their play areas and serving each other with healthy snacks and water. They are asked for their opinions about events in school and fund raising; Children in Need is regularly supported by the school. The good attendance record and effective learning skills of most children prepare them well for the next

stage of their education. Children have a rapidly-increasing knowledge of different faiths and traditions, and respect and value others. They are aware of right and wrong, and enjoy opportunities to make music.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	3
Children's attainment ¹	2
The quality of children's learning and their progress	
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children's behaviour	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which children develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	2
Children's attendance ¹	
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and other adults are good role models who have excellent relationships with children and their families. Children's progress in the nursery class is assessed and reviewed regularly. Therefore, the learning needs of all these children are met. This is reflected in the planning. Topics are based on children's interests. Classroom organisation and resources are good, but displays to reinforce learning and to celebrate children's achievements are underused. Children are exceptionally well supported by staff who extend children's learning through good questioning. High-quality speaking and listening opportunities are always evident in all interactions. A new scheme is beginning to develop speaking accurately and with purpose. This is also developing a genuine interest in books and children's ability to retell a story accurately. However, some opportunities for children to learn, recognise and practise letters and sounds are missed. Good use of information and communication technology (ICT) is developing children's co-ordination and their writing skills. However, sometimes there are too few opportunities for children to attempt mark-making. The curriculum fully meets the requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage and effective use is made of the indoor and outdoor learning areas. Visits to the local area provide first-hand experiences for children and enrich the curriculum.

The school's promotion of children's welfare is exemplary and is highly praised by parents and carers. Staff are devoted to the care and development of the children and have created a warm family atmosphere in school. All adults ensure that child protection requirements are fully met. Good hygiene is very well promoted. Key workers are used very effectively to monitor children's progress and to liaise with parents and carers, who are seen as essential partners in their children's development. Very well-targeted support for children has enabled them to benefit

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

from all aspects of the school’s provision. Excellent and regular use is made of specialist outside agencies. There is strong impact of the provision on children whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Transition arrangements into and out of school are excellent and supported well by other providers. The management of attendance is very effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets children’s needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher has been conspicuously successful in maintaining and improving the school at a time of great uncertainty about the school’s future and reduced funding. She is very ambitious for the school’s future in the local community and is driving improvements in the school to ensure that it has a sustainable future. The governing body and staff share this vision and morale is high. The quality of teaching is improving because of the robust systems to manage the performance of teachers. The improvement is also facilitated by improved assessment of children’s progress and by detailed development-planning. The impact is the increasingly good progress of all children. Gaps between the progress of different groups have closed quickly and this reflects the school’s strong promotion of equality of opportunity. As this ethnically mixed school and the local community work together to develop and preserve the school, a very cohesive community is emerging where discrimination plays no part. Community cohesion is outstanding.

The governing body is effective and is very knowledgeable about the school. It has ensured that all statutory requirements are met and is aware of its important role in holding the school to account for its performance and contributing to school self-evaluation and development-planning. However, it freely admits that the protracted negotiations on the school’s future have recently prevented it from playing a full role in the management of the school. Safeguarding arrangements are good; all children are very safe in school; staff are well-trained and the site is secure. However, some policies need updating on minor points. The leadership and management of day care are outstanding as all requirements are met and the quality of the provision is exemplary.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The percentage of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was high. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and recognise the school's many strengths. Almost all made similar comments. They wrote about how much their child enjoyed school, the 'fantastic staff who would always do more than is required of them', their child's good progress and how well their children settle into school. A significant number commented on the help they and their families had received from the school. A comment that sums up many parents' and carers' views is. 'Grace Owen is an amazing, diverse and caring school offering the very highest standards'. These positive views of parents and carers are reflected in the report's findings. There were no negative comments.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Grace Owen Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 57 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	70	89	7	9	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	62	78	16	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	51	65	25	32	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	62	78	14	18	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	60	76	16	20	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	53	67	23	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	62	27	34	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	44	56	25	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	61	77	17	22	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	59	25	32	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	58	73	18	23	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	62	78	15	19	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	71	90	7	9	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



9 November 2011

Dear Children,

Inspection of Grace Owen Nursery School, Sheffield, S2 5SB

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we came to visit your school. You were so helpful and friendly that we had a lovely time with you. I really enjoyed your singing and playing musical instruments. You were amazing!

You go to a good school which is managed very well and full of exciting things to do. You all learn a lot because the grown-ups take very good care of you and are helping you to learn. You are making good progress with your counting and story-telling. I really liked the lesson where you told your teacher the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. You behave well and you are learning to help each other and play together well. You are also learning to eat healthy food and enjoy climbing, jumping and running out of doors. You are very good at knowing how to stay safe. We were also very pleased to see that most of you go to school on every school day unless you are ill.

To help you to make even more progress we have asked the school to do four things:

- give you more help to check your work
- put more of your work on the walls so that everyone can see it
- let you write a lot more when you are working on your activities
- make sure that you have more time to look at letters and make the sounds that match them.

You can help to improve your school by helping each other and learning to look after yourselves.

Yours sincerely,

Carmen Markham
Lead Inspector

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