

Sunny Brow Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105760
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	377290
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2012
Lead inspector	Sarah Drake

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Henry West
Headteacher	Julie White
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2008
School address	Sunny Brow Road Archer Park Middleton Manchester M24 4AD
Telephone number	0161 643 3306
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	office@sunnybrow.rochdale.sch.uk

Registered childcare provision	Sunny Brow Nursery School
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	24
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	2 December 2008



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Introduction

Inspection team

Sarah Drake

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed 12 different sessions in the nursery school led by a total of three teachers and five support staff. She held meetings with members of staff, two groups of parents and carers, and three members of the governing body. In planning the inspection, the inspector took account of the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but no responses had been logged. She observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation relating to children's achievement and school management, including children's work and Learning Journeys, evaluations of teaching and planning, minutes of governing body meetings and whole school development planning. The inspector took into account questionnaires completed by school staff and 43 parents and carers. She also observed three sessions in the additional childcare setting.

Information about the school

Sunny Brow is smaller than the average-sized nursery school. It serves a population to the south-west of Rochdale. The great majority of children are White British. A small number belong to a range of different minority ethnic groups and a few speak English as an additional language. As a nursery school, no children are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.

Children attend the maintained nursery school part-time for 15 hours throughout the week. Parents and carers may also buy additional sessions at the childcare provision that is run by the governing body. This provision offers before-school and after-school care, plus additional hours with lunch on four days a week for those attending the nursery. The nursery school is registered to provide playgroup sessions for a maximum of four children over the age of two years at any one time; this it does four days a week. It also runs a weekly eight-place 'tots group' for children aged up to two-and-a-half years old.

The school holds many awards including Healthy Schools status, Extended School, Eco School Silver and the Leading Aspect award for outdoor play.

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	1
Achievement of children	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of children	1
Leadership and management	1

Key Findings

- This is an outstanding school. Using the words of three parents, ‘It is the most magical and enchanting place for children’, ‘instilling good behaviour and boundaries in a fun environment’ so that, ‘by the end of their year, children are more than ready to start school, not just academically but physically, socially and emotionally’.
- Children achieve exceptionally well, whatever their ability, interests or circumstances. Most children’s skills on entry to nursery are broadly as expected for their age. After just one year, most children leave with skills that are above, or well above, those typically achieved by four-year-olds. Children’s spiritual, moral, social, cultural and emotional development is particularly strong.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. All adults work together as a close-knit, highly effective team dedicated to providing children with optimal learning experiences. Skilful organisation ensures that children have every opportunity to engage in purposeful learning. High-quality questioning and the promotion of their independence extend children’s thinking skills exceptionally well.
- Children’s understanding of potential hazards and how to overcome them is considerable. They are fearless when, for example, attempting to climb trees, confidently make sensible decisions as to whether or not they are ready for the challenge, and self-possessed if they stumble and fall. They are unfailingly polite, understand about taking turns and behave exceptionally well. Above all, they thoroughly enjoy themselves.
- Leadership and management of the highest quality underpin the first-rate opportunities that children experience at Sunny Brow. The determination to remain at the forefront of early years practice means that the school has maintained its high quality over many years. Rigorous observation and assessment of individuals’ skills and abilities ensure that provision is closely adapted to their needs. However, as identified by school leaders, the system for recording children’s achievement is not as useful as it could be.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Establish a more effective system to provide an overview of children's progress, in particular to record the achievements of more-able children.

Main Report

Achievement of children

The children are exuberant and thoughtful learners who are eager to share their thoughts but equally appreciative of others' achievements. At the start of sessions they competently self-register and happily greet their friends and staff members as they settle in the main room, sharing books or their experiences since they last met. Over recent years, the proportion of children who join the nursery with social or communication delay or disorders has increased. Disabled children and those who have special educational needs achieve outstandingly well because the exceptionally well-thought-out provision enables each child to thrive. For the same reason, children who speak English as an additional language and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable also achieve as well as others. Parents and carers are, understandably, delighted by their children's progress. One commented, 'My child has come on in leaps and bounds and is now talking in sentences.' On entry, boys' skills tend to lag behind those of girls. However, by the time they leave for primary school, there is little difference in children's attainment, which is above expectations for their age, because the imaginative curriculum and adults' interaction with children are so well adapted to suit different ways of learning.

Children are happy, confident and inquisitive. They concentrate exceptionally well on their chosen task. The very great majority independently hang up their aprons, stow equipment in the right place – 'We don't like mess' they say, – or mutually agree to use a sand-timer to decide the fair sharing of resources. Children know the nursery routines and so they quickly quieten on the given signal, without need for adult reminders. Their highly tuned observational and listening skills support well their early mark-making and their understanding of the links between letters and sounds. Children confidently count items to 10 and beyond, and they accurately use vocabulary relating to position and size. They use their imaginative skills to initiate a 'tiger hunt' in the forest or when deploying the concrete mixer for making 'porridge' inside. They know that snow is soft when it falls but can turn to hard ice and that playing in the fresh air will blow away colds and offer physical exercise that will make them feel warm. The nursery instils in children a thirst for learning which, parents and carers say, they eagerly share with their new classmates when they move to their Reception classes.

Quality of teaching

The planned curriculum has a very positive impact on teaching because adults are flexible in adapting activities to suit the children's needs and respond to their interests. Exceptionally detailed observation of individual children's skills and preferences, combined with excellent communication between staff, means that all adults skilfully adjust their interactions to help individuals reach the next level in their learning. Parents and carers rightly believe that their children are extremely well taught. Open-ended questioning and the encouragement to

'have a go' extend children's thinking skills and ensure that, for example, those who are initially reluctant to choose a musical instrument or to engage in peer massage, happily join in, in their own time. While children were making models from junk material, the teacher's question, 'Why do you want to cut it?', prompted a visible rethink by one child. Who then carefully cut round the edge of the paper plate, rather than across it and used the centre for a robot's eye and, in a moment of inspiration, decided to use the discarded rippled rim as eyelashes!

Adults regularly encourage children to recall and build on their prior learning so that they develop independence and are aware of their own progress. All staff make excellent use of eye contact, and gently but firmly insist that children listen carefully and express themselves clearly. The adults never make assumptions about what a child intends or wants. If the adult has not understood, then they couch their words carefully and ask children to repeat themselves in such a manner that it extends the children's communication skills while building their self-esteem. Adults' excellent subject knowledge and their understanding of how children learn mean that they are adept at guiding children to refocus their attention. For example, they invited some children to help them find a 'skeleton leaf', or to use the numbers on the wall clock to guide their drawing of a watch. Specific sessions bring together children with different levels of communication skills so that they can support one another as well as benefit from adults' input. Pictures of the events planned for the day provide structure, and the consistent use of signs ensures that children of all abilities and those at an early stage of learning English are fully included and develop their communication skills at a swift pace. Adults' excellent use of the outdoor environment provides children with a wealth of memorable experiences that develop their skills in every area of learning, and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to a high level. This is shown, for example, in the simple, assured strokes of children's charcoal drawings of winter trees, or their reproduction of the 'drrr' sound made by a woodpecker. Adults extend the thinking skills of more-able children through, for example, discussing the environmental impact of humans on the planet.

Behaviour and safety of children

Children's mature self-discipline and awareness of others' rights and needs create a happy environment in which all grow in confidence and self-esteem. Children say that they love coming to nursery and demonstrate this through their enthusiasm for learning and good attendance levels. Parents and carers are united in their view that excellent behaviour is the norm, and some praise the difference that the nursery has had on their child's attitude towards themselves and others. One wrote, 'My son is now a happy boy who listens and responds to requests. He now has friends; 12 months ago he didn't.' Any hint of bullying or other unkindness is tackled swiftly and effectively. Children are well aware of the hazards posed by, for example, toadstools or slippery surfaces. They understand the need to hold a rope so all are linked together when moving from the immediate surroundings of the nursery to the forest, and they know the boundaries to observe when there. They negotiate icy slopes with care and call out a warning to each other to 'avoid the fire' when building an imaginary bonfire with sticks. Children's outstanding behaviour and awareness of safety enable them to experiment and enjoy their time at nursery to the full.

Leadership and management

Clear-sighted and highly skilful leadership over a number of years has built an outstanding staff team that works exceptionally well in the children's best interests. Good access to

professional development, efficient organisation and excellent delegation of responsibilities mean that all staff are involved in school improvement. Members of the governing body are closely involved in school life and its strategic development. All actions are based firmly on rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness of the nursery's current practice combined with wide-ranging research into new ways of thinking. This can lead to, for example, new ways of helping children to organise their thoughts and develop resilience. The school's track-record of maintaining high-quality provision through self-evaluation and effective action gives it an exceptionally strong capacity to improve further.

Innovative and detailed observations of individuals' progress provide, in the words of a parent, 'a unique and wonderful window into our son's world'. They also identify for staff the next areas that the child needs to work on, which they use highly effectively when planning activities. The records clearly demonstrate children's outstanding achievement. However, the formal system for recording progress does not provide a readily accessible and clear overview of the achievements of different individuals or groups, particularly the progress of the many who develop skills beyond those expected for their age. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Promoting equality of opportunity is intrinsic to the school's work and results in all groups of children achieving outstandingly well. The exciting curriculum is exceptionally well adapted to support the needs of individuals while engaging the interest of all. It promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development outstandingly well through helping them, for example, to appreciate the wonders of nature, to develop empathy and to celebrate others' culture by learning French or creating banners for Chinese New Year. The school works in excellent partnership with parents and carers, respecting them as their children's prime educators and involving them fully in their children's learning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage delivered in the registered childcare provision

The quality of the childcare provision is outstanding. Highly qualified staff, all of whom also work in the nursery school, take care to provide children with different but complementary experiences to those they receive in the nursery. Children thoroughly enjoy their time learning alongside their friends. This might involve hiding and seeking a small world character, while learning about the importance of giving accurate directions, or thinking about the different properties of materials while playing games with a parachute or a large piece of stretchy Lycra. Similar routines, expectations of behaviour and promotion of respect apply here as in the nursery, creating a happy environment in which children feel secure. Outstanding leadership and organisation ensure that rigorous attention is paid to children’s safety and that children have an excellent balance between choosing their own activities and engaging in those led by an adult. Communication with parents and carers is relaxed but informative. Children who attend the playgroup sessions join the nursery children for part of the morning so they become used to the wealth of opportunities available there and accustomed to building relationships within a larger group. This means that they settle very easily once they attend daily nursery sessions and can help newcomers to do the same.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage of the registered childcare provision, inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage for the registered provision	1

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



10 February 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Sunny Brow Nursery School, Manchester, M24 4AD

Thank you very much indeed for your friendly welcome when I came to visit you before half-term. I was so pleased when you invited me to join in your fun and I really enjoyed my time with you all. You told me that you love coming to nursery and I can fully understand why you do. It is an outstanding school, which means that all the adults work really well together to give you the best time possible.

You behave beautifully and are really good at taking turns and thinking about others. You are very sensible about deciding whether what you would like to do is safe or not. You are very polite and try extremely hard to do things, like putting on your outdoor clothes, for yourselves. You listen very well to your teachers and to each other. All this means that you have a very happy time at nursery and learn a great deal. I was very impressed by how much you know about plants and birds, by your huge models made from junk materials and by your knowledge about recycling.

All the adults are very good at asking you the sort of questions that help you to think for yourselves, but also at giving you a helping hand when you need one. They know the different things that you each like and are good at, and also those things that you find a little bit harder. I know that you and your parents and carers like sharing all the information in your special books and when it's your turn to feature in Friday assembly. The senior teachers are now going to try to find a better way of recording how much progress you each make so that they can see this more clearly than is possible at the moment.

You have an excellent start to your learning at school. I hope that you continue to enjoy learning and to attend school as well as you do now. This letter comes with my very best wishes for a happy future.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Drake
Lead inspector

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