

Chatham Nursery School

Picton Children's Centre, Earle Road, Liverpool, L7 6HE

Inspection dates

13–14 November 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children thrive in the friendly, safe and caring school atmosphere and become confident, enthusiastic learners. Staff show a deep interest in children's learning and have high expectations of each individual.
- Children make good progress and achieve well. Their development is recorded and celebrated by staff and carefully checked by senior leaders. By the time that children move to primary school, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Teaching is usually good and there are some examples of outstanding teaching.
- Children's behaviour is good and is the result of good relationships with staff, including their key worker groups. Good relationships between staff and parents help to ensure that children attend school regularly.
- The headteacher, well supported by the governing body, gives a clear and effective lead to improving teaching and raising achievement. As a result, the school is moving forward at a time of much change in staffing for the small team.
- Areas of learning are planned well and staff take great care to make the classroom and outdoor areas inviting and well-suited to children's needs and interests.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Opportunities for children to paint are not as good as other aspects of provision for Expressive Art and Design.
- Teaching does not always make enough use of information and communication technology (ICT) to promote children's learning.
- Staff do not make enough use of their hands and fingers to help their communication with children whose language is at an early stage of development or are learning English as an additional language.
- Teaching when children are sitting together is not always as good as at other times of the day.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning and teaching in four nursery sessions and spoke to children.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents, including the school's own monitoring of teaching, assessment data, self-evaluation and the school development plans.
- There were no responses available in the online Parent View survey at the time of the inspection. However, the inspector did talk to some parents and carers.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized nursery school; it consists of one classroom, staffed by one teacher and two nursery nurses.
- Since 2007, the school has operated as part of a hard federation with St Hugh's Catholic Primary School, which is located close by. Both schools are led and managed by one federation headteacher and a single governing body.
- The proportion of children supported through school action is 31% and 8% are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The large majority of children are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- A small minority of children are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The school is situated within Picton Children's Centre, a phase one children's centre designated in March 2006. Neither the federated primary school nor the children's centre were part of this inspection.
- The nursery school has achieved a number of awards including Investors in People.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - using all opportunities to use hands and fingers when communicating with children who are at an early stage of language development or learning English as an additional language
 - increasing the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons
 - improving the provision for children to represent their ideas and feelings through painting
 - making sure that times when children sit together are as well planned as other times of the school day.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below those typical for their age.
- When starting at Chatham, children's skills are strongest in making relationships and gaining self-confidence. Staff build upon these skills with great success, giving children opportunities to make choices and to find, use and return resources in their play. Children discover that their classroom and playground are exciting and interesting places to learn. This is because of the planned and carefully evaluated efforts by all staff to continually improve the quality and access to the indoor and outdoor learning areas.
- By the time that children leave the school they have developed so that their achievements are broadly in line with that of other children nationally. This represents good achievement given their low starting points. Parents and carers recognise the positive impact that the school is having, for example, saying 'My child has made a lot of progress since coming to Chatham,' and 'My child runs into school every day and misses it when they are not here'.
- Children from minority ethnic groups and those who are bilingual, for whom English is an additional language, make good progress during their time at the school. This is because key workers use their well-developed knowledge of individual children to ensure that activities are suited to children's stages of development. Together with the careful planning and extra support from the special educational needs coordinator, disabled children and children with special educational needs also make good progress.
- Children make good progress because they are motivated and willing to 'have a go' at new opportunities as well as bringing together what they already know. For example, children look happily at a wide range of high-quality books and enjoy familiar stories as well as contributing with staff to making up exciting new books and stories. Opportunities to make meaningful marks and behave as a writer are widely promoted, including outdoors, where one child observed during the inspection, copied his name onto a large chalkboard then shouted 'I did it!' and keenly showed others.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching overall is good, and although some is outstanding, teaching occasionally requires improvement. The best teaching is found across a range of activities and includes careful planning to make learning meaningful and fascinating to children.
- Activities are thoughtfully planned around children's needs and interests across the areas of learning of the Early Years Foundation Stage. All staff involve children successfully in the many opportunities to talk, listen, investigate, get involved and concentrate. As a result, children enjoy school and achieve well.
- Writing, drawing, model-making, block play, stories and puppets are promoted well by staff whereas opportunities for children to be creative through painting are limited. This means that they are not fully developing their skills to create and represent their ideas using paint.
- Children's physical development is encouraged through many opportunities for children to climb, run, cycle, slide, crawl, lift, dig, carry and stretch. This has a good impact on children's physical coordination, skill and confidence and is particularly enhanced by staff playing with and alongside individuals and groups.
- Staff give careful consideration to promote festivals such as Eid and Divali and celebrations such as Black History Month. These activities support children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Staff benefit from good training opportunities which have improved their teaching skills and increased their expectations of all children.
- All staff speak gently to children, often echo back to them what they have said, use reassuring facial expressions to encourage conversation and get down to children's physical level. As a

result, children including those experiencing difficulties with language or learning to speak English as an additional language become confident communicators. However, staff do not make good use of their hands and fingers to help their communication with children. This prevents some children from making even greater progress in activities.

- Staff observe children regularly and listen carefully to what they say. The teacher and nursery nurses gather a range of information to make accurate assessments and use this to inform their teaching. Consequently, learning activities are interesting and relevant to children. Staff use open-ended questions successfully such as 'what happens if..?' to support children's thinking.
- Occasionally, teaching is less effective when children are sat together. At other times, opportunities are missed during nursery sessions to make frequent use of ICT.
- All staff have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. They demonstrate this through their displays of children's learning in the classroom and through the excellent areas that they have created to aid their teaching both indoors and outdoors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- From the moment that children start at Chatham, all adults take a keen interest in each individual. This is helped by a clear key worker system, which means that children have an identifiable adult with whom to build a close relationship. Children say that they like being in their group with their nominated person. Parents regularly ask key workers about their child's learning and progress.
- Staff recognise that many children need to learn about managing their feelings and behaviour. Staff are patient and children respond well when learning about school routines and expectations. As a result, behaviour is mostly good and this is acknowledged by parents and staff.
- Children are friendly to one another and mix well together. They are accepting of differences between people, partly because the school places an emphasis upon valuing each child and family as unique. There are no recorded instances of bullying.
- Children benefit from good learning about daily routines around the school. Procedures for checking visitors and risk assessments for the outdoor area mean that the school is a safe environment. Children know how to take sensible risks in their play and know how to stay healthy by washing their hands.
- Children care about their school. They respond with enthusiasm to opportunities to tidy up at the end of activities. During the inspection, one child was observed to spontaneously select and shake the 'tidy-up time tambourine' for those children outdoors, after the teacher had already done so for children indoors.
- While attendance is not compulsory, the school promotes prompt and regular attendance as important preparation for future life. Therefore, absences or regular lateness are carefully followed up with families and links made with children's centre colleagues as appropriate.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads teaching effectively and keeps a close eye on how well the school is doing. She makes good use of checks made about the quality of the nursery classroom and as a result her judgements and analysis are accurate. She is clear about the direction that the school must take to continue its momentum. For example, she is aware that the learning activities are good and not yet outstanding and that ICT needs to be better used in teaching.
- Staff feel that the headteacher helps them to learn and to improve. They are confident that she is able to recognise and sensitively support staff. This has been very important for the school during a period when the two staff sharing the one teacher post have needed to take a long period of leave from work. The replacement teacher has been supported very effectively.
- Developing the system of checking children's progress and using this information to improve was a recommendation at the previous inspection. This has been fully tackled by the school and is

now a strength of its work. These systems are used to help the good partnership with parents and carers, giving families clear advice about how to support their child's learning at home.

- The headteacher works successfully to keep herself learning and to improve the learning of all staff. As a result, the work of staff is well managed through clear individual targets, success is rewarded through levels of pay and there are good opportunities to access training.
- Safeguarding requirements are fully met and the training for staff in safeguarding is excellent. For example, recent training included learning from a review of child protection at another nursery setting. This has helped staff to gain a good understanding of safeguarding issues.
- Staff work very effectively to include all children and ensure that they have an equal chance to succeed. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and enhanced by trips, visitors to school and good links to St Hugh's Catholic Primary School.
- The headteacher is open to positive debate with others and during recent upheaval in staffing has made good use of support from the governing body and the local authority. This has improved her own work and that of staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body holds the school to account very effectively and provides a good level of challenge, including about budget issues. It knows what is happening in the school, its strengths and the areas for improvement. Effective support is given to the headteacher and members of the governing body have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and the links to staff pay. The governing body has a clear and shared vision for the integration of Chatham with the federated primary school and the on-site children's centre. It believes strongly in creating better services for local children and their families. Members of the governing body know families well and constantly seek to find ways that the school can better serve local needs. The governing body regularly reviews safeguarding policies and checks that children, staff and buildings are safe and secure. Members of the governing body are well-supported in their roles through regular training about safeguarding and other priorities.

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

Unique reference number	104503
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	400718

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Glanville
Headteacher	Andrea Connearn
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2010
Telephone number	0151 233 1200
Fax number	0151 233 1203
Email address	chatham-ao@chathamplace.liverpool.sch.uk

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