

Rainhill Community Nursery

Deepdale Drive, Rainhill, Merseyside, L35 4NW

Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Children make excellent progress. By the time they leave, they achieve high standards especially in their personal, social and early reading and writing skills. Children are very happy, busy and inquisitive.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress in response to the excellent care and support they receive.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Lessons are extremely well planned and inspire children to make the best progress they can. Adults' very thoughtful questions help children learn to think for themselves and to understand more about the world around them.
- Relationships between staff, children and their parents are very good. As a result, children feel safe and their behaviour is excellent.
- The well-organised classrooms and attractive resources stimulate children's curiosity and make them eager to learn. They especially enjoy finding out about the natural world in the extensive outdoor spaces.
- The headteacher is highly ambitious for the school and sets a clear direction which staff successfully follow. The governing body is extremely well informed and effective. As a result of outstanding leadership and management the school has successfully maintained children's excellent achievement and high quality of teaching since the last inspection.
- The school makes a very good contribution to the development of the Early Years Foundation Stage education within the local authority, particularly through its partnerships with other schools.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a wide range of sessions in the nursery over the two days, including joint observations with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with children, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority, and members of staff including the senior teacher.
- Inspectors took account of nine responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the results of the school's consultations with parents. Inspectors also talked to several parents at the start of, and during, the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including data on children's current and previous progress, the school development plan, performance management documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Andrew Clark, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average sized nursery school.
- The large majority of children are from White British backgrounds.
- A small proportion of children are from families who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs supported by Early Years school action is broadly average.
- The proportion of children supported at Early Years school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school provides additional 'wrap-around' care for children outside normal school hours through its breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The headteacher is the Local Authority Strategic Lead for Early Years and is seconded for three days a week when the school is run by the senior teacher.
- There is a children's centre on site. This is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain the high quality of children's achievement by building on the already excellent partnerships with other schools, particularly those most children move to when they leave the nursery.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Overall, children start school with skills that are generally typical for their age. Children of all abilities make outstanding progress during the time in the Nursery school and leave with levels that are often much higher than typically expected for their age.
- There has been a very good trend of improving standards since the last inspection. This is because teachers expect the best for all children. Both boys and girls make outstanding progress in a wide range of areas of learning.
- Children make excellent progress in developing their personal and social skills. This lays a firm foundation for their future learning. For example, they listen very attentively to their teachers and to each other and follow instructions carefully. They make decisions about their work and play, and stick at activities until they are completed. They work together very well, share ideas and support each other kindly.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs make excellent progress from their individual starting points. For example, the use of photographs and picture timetables helps children make decisions for themselves and recall the new skills they have learned. The strong focus given to their speaking and other communication skills, often with specialist support, allows children to make their thoughts and ideas clear to others.
- Children's progress in their speaking and communication skills is outstanding. They speak clearly and purposefully to each other in response to teachers' carefully framed questions and good example. They use an increasingly wide and pertinent vocabulary through their role play and group time activities. The strong focus on communication skills ensures that children who speak English as an additional language also achieve extremely well.
- Children's early reading and writing skills are very well developed. They learn to recognise writing in the many attractive labels and displays which are regularly referred to throughout the day. They make excellent progress in beginning to recognise the relationship between letters and sounds to form words. They identify and write their own names when they register at the start of the sessions or at snack times. Children frequently make marks to represent writing on many different surfaces from sand to paper, in chalks, felt tips, crayons, pencils and many other media.
- Children make outstanding progress in their early mathematical skills. They count and order numbers well in a wide range of activities. They make very good progress in recognising written numbers and matching them accurately to the correct number of objects, for example, in magnetic fishing games. They count their footprints in the muddy play area and order their dinosaurs and other animals by size and shape.
- Less-able children make extremely good progress so that there is little difference between the levels they reach when they leave nursery and those reached by other children. However, the school receives little information from the schools the children move on to in order to make sure this is sustained throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- More-able children also make excellent progress because they have many opportunities to practise the skills they have learned in different circumstances. For example, they use their knowledge of letters and sounds in their role play as the doctors' receptionist or in looking at non-fiction books in their studies on worms and snails.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The outstanding quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. School leaders have rigorously and systematically ensured teachers' on-going effectiveness and have raised expectations even higher.
- Teachers make excellent use of accurate assessments of children's progress to set work which enables them to do their best. They make frequent and detailed observations of children's

learning in different circumstances and frequently gather information from parents to reinforce these assessments. All staff are involved in the thorough lesson planning so that their expectations are consistently high and activities challenge all children to do their best.

- Teachers and other adults ask searching questions to explore children's understanding and develop their thinking skills. They enable children to make a full contribution to activities through, for example, talking with a partner and group discussions. This successfully reinforces their knowledge and understanding. They involve the children very well in thinking about their own learning and how they can improve it. For example, they make extremely good use of rhymes, songs and catch phrases to remind them to be good listeners and to try hard.
- Teachers promote children's independence extremely well. All resources are stored in easily accessible and attractive containers both indoors and out with clear labels and photographs of the contents. Children are successfully encouraged to make decisions about what they want to use and to tidy up afterwards.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given work which helps them to make outstanding step by step progress. Teaching assistants and other adults provide sensitive and skilled support when needed, whilst encouraging children to work as independently as possible.
- Teachers make extremely good use of a wide range of different ways of teaching. They make very good use of information and communication technology to interest and inspire children. For example, by encouraging children to use hand held electronic microscopes in their studies of wildlife and recording the results in their mark making and art work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children's behaviour is exemplary in the classroom and around school. They respond extremely well to the high standards of care and support they receive.
- Through very well planned group sessions children are fully involved in making rules for school conduct. They use the school's 'Good Bear's Guide' to manage their own behaviour. For example, they understand why it is dangerous to run in school and they use quiet voices so that everyone can be heard.
- Children have a good understanding of how their behaviour affects others and that they should be kind and considerate. Children collaborate very well in their work and play. They tidy up with enthusiasm afterwards. Teachers make very good use of a wide range of children's literature, songs and rhymes to reinforce children's positive attitudes and to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Teachers work closely with parents to help children settle in to school life quickly and effectively. They help children with social and emotional difficulties to manage and improve their own behaviour by providing a good sense of security and offering specialist support when it is needed.
- Well-planned initiatives, such as 'Bike Right', a cycling project, walks in the local area and role play activities based on the police, fire and medical services all reinforce children's awareness of safety and well-being.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's very clear vision for maintaining and improving on the school's success is shared by all staff. The systems to help teachers and leaders to be even better at their jobs are very thorough. The headteacher and senior teacher provide excellent role models and are skilled in observing teaching and setting targets for improvement. Staff are aware of their accountability for the progress children make and understand how this is linked to their salary progression.
- The school receives appropriate, but challenging, 'light touch' support from the local authority.

The headteacher and other senior staff take a lead role in a group of local schools in sharing ideas on leadership and teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the nursery receives regular visits from other teachers to observe the high quality of education.

- The school works very closely with parents and keeps them fully informed through weekly diaries, newsletters and the school's website. As a result, parents rightly hold the school in high regard.
- Policies for safeguarding pupils meet legal requirements and are supported by detailed record keeping.
- The school makes learning exciting and memorable through the purposeful links between different areas of children's learning. The well attended breakfast, lunchtime and after school clubs provide effective 'wrap-around' care which contributes well to the promotion of children's personal development and preparing them for their future learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is extremely well led and is very well informed through high-quality reports from the headteacher and the governors' own systematic checks on the school's work. As a result, it makes a full contribution to improving the school. Governors ensure that they manage the school's budget and that it is matched very well to improving pupils' achievement and that the impact of actions is carefully scrutinised.

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	131447
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	402467

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amy Bradley
Headteacher	Mavis Smith
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2010
Telephone number	01744 677635
Fax number	01744 677633
Email address	mavis.smith@sthelens.org.uk

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