

The Sue Hedley Nursery School

Campbell Park Road, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear, NE31 1QY

Inspection dates 4–5 December 2013

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.

- The achievement of all children is outstanding. Regardless of their starting points or any barriers to learning, each child receives the care and support they need to make excellent progress.
- Outstanding teaching ensures that learning is always interesting, challenging and follows children's curiosity.
- Staff understand very well how young children learn. They are highly skilled at supporting their play without hindering their independence.
- Children's behaviour and sense of safety are outstanding, because of the excellent pastoral care they receive. Children make the nursery a safe and happy place, by following the well thought out rules and routines; they are always eager to help at tidy-up time.
- First-rate links with parents are a cornerstone of the nursery's success. Staff fully understand the importance of involving parents in their children's learning. They go to great lengths to make them feel valued and welcome at school, including at such events as, Stay and Play.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The nursery has gone from strength to strength since the previous inspection. Achievement and teaching have sustained their very high quality because all staff have a role in leading further improvement.
- The headteacher's inspirational leadership fires all staff with the enthusiasm and determination to provide the very best for every child to succeed.
- Future plans to extend provision further to improve achievement and opportunities especially for the most vulnerable children are underway although not yet complete.
- The governing body is expert, astute and highly effective in both supporting and challenging the headteacher to make the nursery even better.
- The Sue Hedley Nursery is a very special place for children and their families, because the joy of learning is wholeheartedly shared and enjoyed by everyone.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 14 lessons or part lessons.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, all staff, four members of the governing body, a school improvement consultant, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work, looked at children's learning journeys, progress information, safeguarding procedures and other documents relating to the school's work.
- There were not enough responses to open the online questionnaire Parent View, so the inspector took account of the most recent school parental survey (November 2013), as well as a letter from one parent and 11 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average sized nursery school.
- The vast majority of children are from White British heritage and none speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of children with special educational needs at Early Years Action Plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average; the proportion at Early Years Action is also above average.
- The Nursery offers school lunches and flexible times which extends its provision and meets the needs of families. Day Care with breakfast and tea is available through the Children's Centre.
- Since the last inspection, the school has ceased to be responsible for the South Tyneside Children's Centre. The nursery retains very close links with the children's centre to support children and their families in the locality.
- The headteacher took up post in January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensuring that actions to raise the achievement of some children even more by expanding the provision for two year olds in response to identified community needs focus on:
 - developing leadership and management skills even further to manage the anticipated demand for places at the nursery
 - adapting the building so that it is fit for purpose to meet the needs of younger children and their families.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- When children join the nursery, their skills range from above to well below what is typical for three year olds. Overall, it is well below. All children make outstanding progress in their learning and the vast majority reach, and some exceed the expected level of development by the time they transfer to the Reception class in the primary school.
- Each year a good proportion of children join the nursery with delayed development in their communication and language skills. They, and all other children, make excellent gains in speaking, listening, thinking and early mark making because of the relentless focus on developing these skills whenever staff interact with the children. Staff lead by example in listening to and respecting children's ideas. They speak clearly and simply so that children imitate and learn correct speech patterns.
- Children rapidly gain the confidence to become independent learners who choose and plan their activities. They enjoy drawing their plans, and take care to follow these as they investigate and explore possibilities of, for example, building a stage or making an ornament from play dough. They eagerly explore whatever is on offer; add to the equipment as they need, then settle with good concentration to find out things for themselves.
- Nursery data, and observations during the inspection, show that children consistently make exceptional gains in their emotional development and personal and social skills, which prepare them very well for the next stage of learning.
- The teaching of letters and sounds is introduced gradually in the course of children's play. Staff are now aware of which children are ready for more challenge. They have plans for more regular input to sounds and letters for these children in the spring term.
- Early mark making is a regular part of the day; many develop good control when writing letters, and are able to write their name and simple captions for their work.
- Children learn to count objects and order them by size. Teachers include several rhymes and songs from which children learn the names and order of numbers through regular repetition.
- The on-site forest school provides a wealth of opportunities for children to explore, examine and reason about the natural world, as well as invent pizza shops, transport stones and earth around the site, or climb under and over objects in this very stimulating, safe environment. They develop great resilience and perseverance when sustaining their interest or renewing their energies while playing in this outdoor environment. They just keep going regardless of weather, because they are totally absorbed in what they do.
- Children with special educational needs make exceptional progress to overcome some significant obstacles to their learning. The nursery has highly effective systems for observing and measuring each step of progress. Parents and other staff are kept informed of each child's development so that these gains can be built upon at home and at nursery.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because staff are very well trained, share their ideas and skills freely with each other, and are ambitious for every child to be the best they can.
- Teachers prepare children exceptionally well to become independent learners from the day they join the nursery. Simple, well-practised routines help children to know how to register for themselves using their wooden name discs, where to find the toys they need for play, as well as knowing the rules for sharing and caring for each other. They quickly understand their responsibility for keeping the nursery a pleasant place to learn and all join in at tidy-up time. These simple routines give children a very strong sense of well-being, because they teach them how to manage this new, exciting environment.
- Excellent teaching is based on very close observation of the children and accurate assessments of their developing needs. The daily reflection time amongst staff provides a wealth of detail

about individual children so that these needs are met with either more challenging resources or with additional support to help children over 'bumps' in their learning.

- This way of planning is fixed very firmly on the children's emerging needs and is one reason why they make such rapid progress. The next step in learning is always there, ready for them to take.
- Staff have a very clear understanding of how young children learn best. They provide plenty of opportunities for children to play, invent and explore independently, so that their confidence to direct their own learning grows quickly. Staff understand that children need to lead their own learning and are skilled at knowing when to ask a question to help move them on, and when to step back to allow children to discover for themselves.
- Teachers ensure that children's sustained active learning is balanced by review time when children share their learning and explain what they have found out. This sharing often prompts others to follow their example. One boy was very keen to find out where his friend got 'money notes' for his pizza shop. Next day, both boys were delighted to find a till with money in so they could develop their play even further. Such experiences make a strong contribution to the development of early literacy and numeracy skills, and add greatly to their achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children develop excellent attitudes to their learning because it is always active, exciting and based on their interests and curiosity. They enter the nursery eagerly at the start of each session keen to explore and decide what they will do. The children relish finding out for themselves and delight in sharing their learning with others.
- Behaviour is outstanding because the children are carefully taught the rules and routines that help the nursery to run smoothly. They know what is expected of them when activities change and always move promptly, for example, into their keyworker groups. School records show that occasional incidents of minor misbehaviour are quickly and firmly managed and parents informed.
- Children work happily alongside each other and sometimes play together, sharing resources and ideas, and taking turns as they have been taught to do by adults. For example, several children made great use of a huge cable wheel, first as a pizza shop, where they sold pizzas with all sorts of toppings, before moving on to use it as a drum to beat with sticks they found on the ground.
- Children are taught to understand risks to their well-being from the time they start at nursery. They are taught to think about the effect of rain on the paths in the forest school before going to play there. They know that, 'things will be slippery and you have to be careful'.
- The children have complete trust in adults to look after them and keep them safe, and their attendance is good. Their parents unanimously agree that their children are safe in nursery.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The recently appointed headteacher has successfully built upon the existing strengths in the nursery by introducing new ideas and challenges for staff. Her outstanding leadership of change and innovation has re-energised staff after a dip in morale following the children's centre reorganisation. Staff morale is now very high and all staff fully support the headteacher's plan for the future development of the nursery and her uncompromising drive to improve the excellent provision and outcomes for children even further.
- The headteacher and governors are committed to meeting the developing needs of the local community, and to improving the achievement of all children. They currently have plans in hand to make provision for two year olds who meet the government's requirements for early placement. These plans are at an early stage of extending staffing experiences and ensuring the suitability of the accommodation.
- All staff are now fully involved in leading improvement in the school. Currently, two research

projects are underway with four key staff leading them. Both are the result of the school's rigorous evaluation of children's needs and possible barriers to further progress. One is concerned with the further development of early literacy skills, the other with improving the emotional well-being of identified children.

- The headteacher has introduced rigorous systems for checking and recording children's progress. These are very well used to pinpoint if a child is falling behind so that remedial action can be taken quickly and to ensure that the level of challenge is always just right for individual children.
- Staff performance is managed very well. Excellent leadership of teaching ensures that this continues to improve from already high levels. All staff are held to account for children's progress and welcome this as a way of celebrating how well children are learning.
- All children have excellent opportunities to succeed. Those with special educational needs or experiencing other difficulties benefit from detailed planning to meet their needs and from the support of the highly skilled inclusion manager.
- The outstanding curriculum is constantly developing to provide new interests and innovative challenges for the children. The well-established forest school now extends its use to other schools and is seen as a training centre for their staff.
- South Tyneside local authority provides light touch support and advice, and made termly visits over the last year. In addition, the school receives support and advice from a neighbouring local authority. Educational advisers recognise that the school has much to offer other schools and encourage other staff to visit and learn from its outstanding practice.
- All safeguarding requirements are met. Staff are very well trained to have an excellent awareness of risk assessment and child protection issues.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Many see it as the community hub, and make use of the extensive programme of parent learning classes. The school benefits from these too, as seen in the lovely displays of sculptures, produced from recyclable materials, by the Crafty Mums' Club. Other parents enjoy and benefit from the family cookery classes, Stay and Play days, and know that the door is always open if they need advice or support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are passionate about the school and have fought hard to retain its excellent reputation and service to the community following the recent changes. They bring a huge range of expertise and experience to the service of the school, as well as a hands-on approach to helping to improve it further. They are extremely well informed about the quality of teaching, the performance management of staff and how they are rewarded for promoting children's excellent achievement. Governors' knowledge of the school is detailed and has sharpened with the introduction of new systems to review data and check children's progress. Finances are managed effectively and governors ensure that regular health and safety checks keep children and adults safe on site.

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	132799
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	425909

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 (acting)	Heather Walton
Headteacher	Judith Reay
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2011
Telephone number	0191 4287656
Fax number	Not applicable
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