

Hetton-le-Hole Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108747
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	377809
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2012
Lead inspector	Jayne Utting HMI

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	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Wilkinson
Head teacher	Sarah Dixon-Jones
Date of previous school inspection	11 September 2008
School address	Brewery Field Hetton-le-Hole Houghton le Spring DH5 9DG
Telephone number	0191 5536700
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Registered childcare provision	EY302067 – Hetton-le-Hole Nursery
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	28
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	September 2005



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Introduction

Inspection team

Jayne Utting

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed thirteen sessions led by one teacher and six early years practitioners. Meetings were held with parents and carers, members of the governing body, health professionals, community members and staff. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school development plan, the safeguarding policy and policies about the childcare provision. The on-line questionnaire (Parent View) was looked at but no responses were recorded. The inspector analysed 36 questionnaires from parents and carers and others completed by staff.

Information about the school

The nursery school is located in the small town of Hetton-Le-Hole which is situated on the South Western outskirts of Sunderland in a former coalfield area. The nursery was extended in 2008 to incorporate a community room. This has enabled the school to develop its links within the community. This facility is currently used to run a toddler group twice a week as well as family learning activities throughout the year.

The large majority of children are of White British heritage. Approximately 13% are disabled children or have special educational needs, and the number known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The nursery provides a number of commissioned places for children from vulnerable social backgrounds.

There is on-site childcare managed by the governing body and children from birth to age five years use this provision throughout the year. This was inspected as part of this inspection.

The current headteacher took up post in September 2011.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Hetton-le-Hole Nursery is a good school. Its strengths include the promotion of children’s good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, children’s behaviour is good, and they settle well due to the warm, sensitive relationships established with staff.
- From birth, children receive effective individualised support from skilled teachers and early years practitioners who have a good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff understand the principles of learning through play and this approach to children’s learning is highly valued. As a result, all children, including disabled children and those with special educational needs, make good progress from their starting points and achieve well.
- The headteacher has introduced clear pathways for development in relation to ‘linking letters and sounds’ and children’s personal development and welfare is successfully nurtured. The environment is rich in resources to develop early literacy and communication skills and as a result children have made significant progress in this area of learning.
- Robust systems for tracking and assessment, introduced by the headteacher, ensure that staff now have a good knowledge of individual children’s needs, interests and talents. They use this information to provide a varied curriculum, which engages children and fosters a positive attitude to learning which children carry with them through their time at school. However, teachers and practitioners do not consistently use this good assessment information in order to extend some activities further, to challenge children to take the next steps in their learning.
- The quality of teaching overall is good. In most lessons work is planned well to meet the needs and abilities of the children and as a result they are actively involved in activities which both stimulate and engage them in learning. There is an emerging recognition by leaders of a need to refocus monitoring and evaluation activities onto the quality of children’s learning in order to identify

those characteristics of teaching which will further improve the achievement of children.

- The determination and drive of the headteacher has been successful in improving children's achievement and in improving teaching. Self-evaluation is accurate and so improvement planning is clearly focused.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and increase children's rate of progress by:
 - focusing monitoring and evaluation activities on the quality of children's learning in order to identify and embed those characteristics of teaching which will further improve children's progress
 - ensuring the consistent use of the good assessment information available so that lesson planning and delivery always take account of children's current levels of ability and the next steps in their learning, particularly for the higher-ability children.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The majority of children enter the nursery with skills which are just below those expected for their age. They respond positively to the exciting opportunities both indoors and outside which develop their interests and learning across the curriculum, but particularly in relation to emotional development and communication, language, and literacy. By the time they leave school, a large majority of children have made good progress, especially in relation to these two key areas, entering Reception with skills and abilities just above expectations for their age. However, the focus on developing children's communication, language and literacy skills has meant that some specific skills in other key areas, particularly calculating, are less well-developed. Children's early mark-making is valued through a range of opportunities across the nursery and children attain well in writing. Role play in particular is used as a meaningful context to encourage children's writing. Children were observed writing out prescriptions in the vet's area as well as writing stories and poems about their new guinea pigs.

Comprehensive systems to track children's progress are used effectively to identify those children who need extra support and to plan appropriate intervention activities. The inspector observed children in effective small-group focused activities to improve their speaking and listening skills, which enabled them to make rapid progress and improve their self-esteem and confidence. The good daily sessions where children learn to link sounds and letters are also enabling all children to make good progress in this key area of their learning. Disabled children and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers due to the effective support they receive from teachers, early years practitioners in, where necessary, additional individual or small group sessions.

All parents and carers who responded to the inspection survey report that the school helps their children to develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics and all consider, justifiably, that their child is making good progress.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching overall is good and this is reflected in comments by parents and carers all of whom consider their children are well taught. All staff have a secure knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and understand how young children learn and progress. Staff are adept at using the interesting and well-equipped environment to encourage children's active participation. For example, the teacher led a 'shape walk' with a small group of children, encouraging them to identify basic shapes in the outdoor environment and take photographs of them. Good use was made of open-ended questioning which encouraged children to describe the properties of the shapes they were looking for, encouraging and extending children's thinking and learning further. This activity illustrated the way in which adults consistently promote children's good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, in this instance, by inspiring children to appreciate the natural world.

The teaching of communication, language and literacy has been a recent area for development. There has been a renewed emphasis on talking with and listening to children, with daily intervention groups planned for those children who need additional support in this area. The daily teaching of letters and sounds is undertaken in smaller groups, made up of children of broadly similar ability, with a focus on developing an awareness of rhythm. Children flourish in this praise-rich environment which works to build their confidence and ability. For example, a teacher used rhymes to encourage children to listen carefully and follow instructions to clap. At other times staff were observed correctly enunciating to children the sounds that individual letters make and using a range of contexts to make this meaningful.

Teachers and early years practitioners carefully assess children's learning through observations of their play and these are used to inform the school's robust tracking and assessment systems. These assessments are then used effectively to identify the next steps in each child's learning across all six areas of learning. However, in the minority of instances where learning slows, this is because staff do not consistently use this good assessment information in order to challenge children, particularly the more able, to take the next steps in their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Children's good behaviour is a strength of the school and this is reflected in the views of parents and carers, none of whom raised any concerns regarding the behaviour of children in school. Staff set clear expectations and boundaries through the nursery's golden rules and these are consistently reinforced and are well understood by children. As a result children are polite and courteous to one another and the majority understand the importance of sharing, listening and taking turns. Daily opportunities to meet in key worker groups ensure that children build up warm, secure relationships with these specific adults, and were observed turning to them for support if they felt upset or unsure at any time. There are no recorded instances

of bullying and parents and carers express confidence in the school's systems for dealing with any issues that might arise.

Children become active, independent learners quickly because they feel secure and are encouraged to manage risk in a safe and supportive environment. For example, they are given the opportunity to climb on outdoor apparatus, jump off tall soft play blocks and enjoy the icy conditions safely because they are aware of the rules and boundaries and understand how to keep themselves safe. In a discussion about the new nursery pets, one child reminded her classmates to wash their hands carefully after they had held the guinea pig so they 'didn't get sick'.

The school promotes prompt and regular attendance as an important preparation for primary school. Absences or regular lateness are carefully followed up with parents and carers. As a result, the school can demonstrate a marked improvement in attendance over the past term and have exceeded the local authority's 87% target for nursery school attendance. The school routinely celebrates differences between individuals and children enjoy learning about other cultures, both through specific activities and their termly 'Around The World' weeks.

Leadership and management

The headteacher leads with a clear vision for excellence and a firm commitment to improving the life chances of local children and families. She is focused upon developing a school where all children not only attain well but also make outstanding progress. This is now the key priority and sits alongside the well established 'We Care' commitment that promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The school curriculum is good with a strong emphasis on learning through talking, play and exploration, encouraging children to develop into active, confident and curious learners.

Since her appointment in September, the new headteacher has undertaken an in-depth review of the impact of the school's work and has developed a robust system to assess and track the progress of all children. This prompted a renewed focus on the promotion of communication, language and literacy, with recent data showing a marked improvement in children's achievement in this key area.

There are now a range of professional development opportunities for staff which are linked to robust strategies to monitor the quality and impact of teaching. These include regular lesson observations and meetings with key workers to discuss their individual children, ensuring they are held to account fully for their achievements and progress. There is a growing recognition of a need to focus on the quality of children's learning in order to identify those characteristics of teaching which will further improve the achievement of children, ensuring they become embedded in practice. Given the school's in-depth self-evaluation and recent track record of improvement, the capacity to improve further is very good.

Members of the governing body are knowledgeable about the school and support the senior leadership team well. They support the drive to improve the life chances of every child by ensuring that robust safeguarding procedures are in place. Records are regularly updated and staff are trained well to support the most vulnerable

children in the school. The governing body discharges its statutory responsibilities well and governors are regular visitors to the school.

The school places a great emphasis on ensuring equality and tackling discrimination of any kind. The school can point to striking examples where children whose circumstances make them vulnerable have been well supported, enabling them to engage fully in school life and learning. Extremely productive partnerships with relevant external agencies have ensured involvement with individual families and children is effective. The care and support provided by the school is commendable, and this is reflected in parents' and carers' comments in the returned questionnaires, all of whom feel that the school communicates with them effectively.

The Early Years Foundation Stage delivered in the registered childcare provision

The governing body manages provision on the school site for children under the age of three years. The provision complies with the requirements of registration and the overall effectiveness is good. Strengths in provision include the good quality of care, effective adult-child interactions, good opportunities for meaningful play indoors and outdoors and the attention given to building children's confidence and well-being.

Opportunities to investigate and explore are a key part of the curriculum, and the learning environment is well-planned and appropriate to children's needs. Babies and young children thoroughly enjoyed playing with jelly and frozen lemonade, exploring the feel and texture on their hands. Staff commented on how the children were independently using descriptive language such as 'squashy' and 'squidgy' to describe their experience, including those children who were more reluctant talkers. The 0-2s room is also well resourced with baskets of natural objects to excite and interest babies and cosy den areas to explore. Communication is a consistently strong aspect of the provision with all staff regularly talking with children in age-appropriate ways, including babies and toddlers. As a result, children who attend the provision make good progress in all areas of their learning.

The provision is a fully integrated part of the nursery school and the childcare manager is a member of the senior management team. Staff are part of the school team and involved in all school training and development. Consequently, staff have a good knowledge of the learning and development and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and use this effectively in practice. Assessment through detailed observations ensures that activities are well planned to meet the individual needs of children as well as ensuring any disabled children and those with special educational needs are quickly identified and supported.

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	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage for the registered provision	2

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 head teacher, 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.



9 February 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Hetton-le-Hole Nursery School, Houghton le Spring – DH5 9DG

Thank you for showing me around your nursery when I came to visit. I really enjoyed helping you to make bird food and listening to you telling me about all the shapes you found in your fantastic outdoor area. You all took the time to tell me about the things you enjoy best when you are at nursery. I hope you are still enjoying having your guinea pigs and that you have now chosen names for them. Everything you told and showed me helped me to decide that Hetton is a good nursery school.

I was very interested to see all the different places where you can play in nursery. Most of all I liked the pet corner, the book area and your brilliant outdoor area. You behaved really well and I was impressed by how you help and look after each other. I also visited childcare and enjoyed playing with the jelly, digging in the sand and listening to the band playing on the stage. All your teachers showed me that they know you well and they understand the next things that you need to learn so you are ready to start big school in September. You told me that you like going to nursery, love your teachers and feel safe when you are there. Your parents and carers also told me that they are happy with the nursery and that you have good teachers.

It was lovely to hear how well you are doing at learning new rhymes, letters and sounds. To help your school to be even better, I have asked your teachers to find ways to help you learn even more during your time at Hetton Nursery School.

You should be very proud of how hard you all work at school and how kind you are to all your friends there. Well done!

Yours sincerely

Jayne Utting
Her Majesty's Inspector

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