

Hirst Wood Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107186
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	377547
Inspection dates	12–13 March 2012
Lead inspector	Kathryn Dodd

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	131
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Craig
Headteacher	Rosemary Morgan / Jayne Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Kathryn Dodd

Jennifer Firth

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 11 different sessions led by four teachers and support staff. The inspectors held discussions with staff, two groups of parents and carers, and three members of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed documentation, including improvement plans, the systems for tracking children's progress, the arrangements for safeguarding children and a sample of children's Records of Achievement. It was not possible to take account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection as no responses had been logged. The inspectors took into account questionnaires completed by school staff and analysed 71 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

Information about the school

The majority of the children at this larger than average-sized nursery school are White British. Most of the remaining children are of Asian heritage. Very few children are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The school provides a 'resource base' for the local authority for up to 16 children with complex or severe learning difficulties or disabilities. These children are fully integrated into the main school. As a result, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.

The school has been accredited with the Inclusion Quality Standard Chartermark. The headteacher is due to retire at the end of the summer term 2012. Since September 2011, she has worked part-time and has been sharing her role with the deputy headteacher. A new full-time headteacher has been appointed for September 2012.

A children's centre, which opened in March 2008, is located within the nursery building. This provision is managed by the governing body and was inspected at the same time but, was not part of this inspection. A separate report for the children's centre is available on the Ofsted website

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 children	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of children	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive. They acknowledge that their children are ‘continually encouraged to learn through whatever captivates their imaginations’ and are ‘always totally absorbed in overwhelmingly busy play’. Leaders and managers monitor the quality of teaching regularly but their efforts lack rigour and a few shortcomings remain. The school is not yet outstanding because of these shortcomings and also the lower attainment in reading and linking letters to sounds.
- Children’s achievement, including those attending the resourced provision, is good. By the time children leave, the proportion that reaches the skills expected for their age is broadly average. This represents good progress from their often below average skills when they join. However, a lower proportion of children reach the expected level in aspects of their reading and linking letters to sounds.
- Teaching is good. Staff work closely together to provide children with good learning experiences. Promoting children’s independence is always kept in firm view. Staff know the children very well. They play alongside them and tailor questions to extend children’s thinking. Although activities are generally well planned, teachers do not always make it clear what children of varying abilities are expected to learn, particularly the more able children.
- Children’s personal, social and emotional development is outstanding, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Behaviour is consistently excellent. This is because activities continually promote independence, curiosity and enjoyment. Children are extremely polite and very respectful towards adults and of one another. They are acutely aware of how to keep themselves safe.
- By working effectively together, leaders, managers and staff ensure children achieve well in an exceptionally safe environment. Performance is monitored well by regular and accurate assessment. Leaders use this information skilfully

to evaluate achievement, pinpoint improvement priorities, adapt the curriculum, introduce new initiatives and ensure staff are well trained.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of children that reach the skills expected in reading and linking letters to sounds by:
 - agreeing and adopting a consistent approach to teaching letters and their sounds and ensuring the staff have the skills to teach this aspect effectively
 - making sure that children can continually access reading resources and activities, both indoors and outside, that are exciting enough to entice the children to choose them as they play independently.
- Improve the quality of teaching further by:
 - making sure that teachers always plan and provide activities that match children's varying abilities, particularly to challenge the more able children
 - improving the rigour with which the quality of teaching is monitored.

Main Report

Achievement of children

Achievement is good. This view is endorsed by the all parents and carers who returned questionnaires, agreeing that their children really enjoy school and 'can't wait to attend each morning'. Children make good progress overall in all areas of learning, and their attainment is broadly average. Many opportunities to chat to staff ensure children make good progress in developing their communication, language and literacy skills especially in their ability to converse and share their thoughts about books. Even so, the proportion of children showing confidence in reading, and in linking the letters with sounds is lower than in other areas of their learning.

Although some children have only attended for a short time, their learning in lessons is good. Their ability to sit and listen to adults or to one another, to share and take turns is impressive. After self-registering at the start of each session, children are keen to greet their friends and the staff. They happily leave their parents and carers, confidently and quickly choosing activities for themselves and submerging themselves in purposeful play. They are very happy, enthusiastic and inquisitive, moving freely and independently between the classrooms and outdoors. Children particularly enjoy opportunities to explore and investigate the outdoor environment, such as, by digging for worms. They show their good levels of creativity and wonderful imaginations, for example, by pretending that the climbing equipment is a rocket and that they are on a journey into space. These exciting, engaging and challenging activities, often supported by staff, effectively sustain their concentration. Children's progress is occasionally hampered as children play independently because the activities are not always exciting enough to sustain their concentration.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including children from the resourced provision, also show high levels of independence, influencing

how, what and where they play, and learning through varied and good quality sensory experiences. These children are well-supported with activities that are tailored to their needs and receive effective guidance from specialist staff.

Quality of teaching

Staff have a particularly good understanding of how young children learn best. Relationships are exceptionally warm and caring. They provide a good balance between leading small group activities or supporting individuals after they have chosen activities and intervene skilfully during these times. Staff ensure resources are accessible and organised so that children's independence is promoted effectively. Even so, some resources and activities aimed at developing children's reading and writing skills, both indoors and outside, are not exciting enough to entice children to choose them for themselves and to sustain concentration as they enjoy them. Staff successfully accelerate learning by promoting the speaking and listening skills particularly for those children who are at risk of not reaching the expected level of development. Approaches to teaching those children who are ready to learn letters and the sounds they make, especially the more able children, are inconsistent amongst staff. A common approach to doing so is yet to be agreed.

Assessing children's small steps in achievement is an integral part of sessions and involves all staff. Effective systems are in place to ensure that every child's learning is assessed regularly across all the areas of learning. Assessments are collated in attractive and good quality Records of Achievement books. Weekly review meetings, enable staff to carefully consider the next steps for those children they are focusing on during that week. Similarly, detailed planning is consistently evident for the children attending the resourced provision. Planning for other children effectively extends skills across all areas of learning. However, staff do not always plan activities that are sufficiently challenging to meet the needs of the more able children. Staff share the Records of Achievement regularly with children, encouraging them to carefully reflect on what they have achieved and express what they would like to learn next. This approach, along with the exciting activities and very warm relationships make a strong contribution to children's outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Behaviour and safety of children

Children's outstanding behaviour and awareness of safety enable them to experiment and enjoy their time at the nursery to the full. Children's mature self-discipline and awareness of others rights and needs, such as their respect for children from the resourced provision, creates a very happy environment in which children grow in confidence and self-esteem. Children's excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development shows in their exemplary behaviour and in how children of varying backgrounds and abilities play and learn so harmoniously together. Any hint of bullying or other unkindness is tackled swiftly and very effectively. Children are continually encouraged to share any issues and to resolve any conflicts. Children say that they really love coming to school. This reflects in their thirst for learning and in their good attendance levels. Parents and carers agree that good behaviour is the norm. They particularly appreciate the impact the school has on improving their children's personal skills and attitudes. As one parent expressed, their child has

`quickly transformed into a confident independent individual from one that was previously nervous and clingy’.

Children’s understanding of how to keep safe is outstanding. They are extremely clear about how to keep themselves safe for example, as they venture out of nursery on a visit into the locality wearing their hi-visibility vests and walking very sensibly in pairs. Ongoing opportunities for taking calculated risks, such as when playing on the climbing equipment, always under very close guidance by staff, ensures they develop a keen understanding of potential dangers and of their own limitations.

Leadership and management

The exceptional way in which children are cared for and nurtured reflects the genuine warmth and care evident in daily practice. This stems from the headteacher’s effective leadership and radiates amongst all staff. Children from the resourced provision integrate seamlessly into the main school. This supports the strong emphasis that is placed on promoting equality of opportunity and to ensure all children can participate in everything the school has to offer. The school’s safeguarding procedures meet requirements and ensure children feel exceptionally safe. Training and ongoing communication amongst staff and with parents and carers ensures safeguarding matters are continually kept high on the agenda.

The governing body provides effective support. Members are clear about the school’s strengths and necessary improvements. By carefully planning ahead, they are helping to ensure the impact of the upcoming change in headteacher is minimised. The acting headteacher plays a pivotal role in evaluating children’s achievements. A more effective system to collate and analyse children’s progress is in place and staff swiftly pinpoint precisely where support is needed. Other leaders and the governing body are starting to use this information on progress to strengthen their knowledge of the school. Monitoring of teaching is leading to effective staff training, such as in improving children’s speaking and listening skills. However, monitoring is not yet fully effective and some shortcoming in teaching remain. Nevertheless, the school is moving forward at a good rate. Recent improvements are evident in areas such as the quality of provision for learning outdoors and overall improved achievement. This demonstrates a good capacity to improve further.

The curriculum is good. It is not yet outstanding because it does not always provide well enough for the more able children. However, the focus is clearly on enjoyment and children benefit from a wide range of memorable and exciting learning experiences provided. Success is evident in children’s outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional development, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and in their exemplary behaviour. Leaders foster excellent partnerships, both with parents and carers, and beyond school. Such partnerships help to extend the curriculum. For example, the numerous art, music and dance workshops contribute effectively to children’s creative development. Similarly, a wonderful range of trips and visitors helps to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world, especially of local culture and history.

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 children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
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 children. 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 child's' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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 children 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 children are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the children' 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.



14 March 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Hirst Wood Nursery School, Shipley, BD18 4NJ

Thank you for the really lovely warm and friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your nursery school. We really enjoyed being part of your school community and watching you have so much fun. Your school is good and you learn a lot. There are many good things happening. These are just a few of the things that we really liked:

- seeing how well you behave and get on so well together
- finding out how much you enjoy your time in nursery and just how pleased all your parents and carers are with your school
- seeing you making lots of choices about what, where and how you play
- watching you concentrating really hard, especially when you were digging for worms, recording your stories in your 'little books' and pretending the climbing equipment was a space rocket
- find out just how well you are cared for by all the adults and that you know so much about how to keep yourself safe, for example, on your visit to Salts' Mill or when using the climbing equipment.

So that your school gets even better we have asked that:

- by the time you leave the nursery more of you develop better skills in reading and learning letters and the sounds they make
- adults make it clearer what you are expected to learn from each of the activities that you can choose from and they make sure these activities are just right for you
- the adults who make decisions in your school make more careful checks on how well you are learning.

I hope that you all continue to have a wonderful time and wish you lots of luck for your future.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Dodd
Lead inspector

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