

Oxclose Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113973
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	357458
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Moira Fitzpatrick

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	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brian Ogden
Headteacher	Miss Jayne Smith
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited ten lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the school's improvement plan, attainment data, teachers' planning, and safeguarding procedures. The responses in 56 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and 10 completed by staff, were considered.

- How well children of all abilities and backgrounds make progress.
- If the provision for children with special educational needs is helping them overcome barriers to their learning so that they are able to access all learning opportunities independently.
- How well provision has improved as a result of the school's response to its analysis of children's progress across all areas of learning.
- The effectiveness of all staff and governors in contributing to school improvement and the maintenance of high standards.

Information about the school

The Nursery is larger than average. It serves a socially and economically mixed, predominantly White British community. The percentage of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities varies significantly each year and is currently above average. The school shares its site with the local primary school, and has close links with the community through the provision of adult learning courses.

The headteacher has developed numerous links with other nurseries, through advice and consultancy work. The school is currently seeking to form links with nurseries in Italy and New Zealand in order to extend its vision for Early Years Foundation Stage education.

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: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Oxclose is an outstanding nursery. It combines the highest standards of care with excellence in learning. The nursery has gone from strength to strength since the previous inspection because of the energetic and determined leadership of the headteacher, excellently supported by highly-skilled and dedicated staff. Its overall effectiveness has now been judged outstanding in three successive inspections. The school reviews its work rigorously and is constantly looking for ways to improve even further on its consistently outstanding levels of performance. For example, differences in the rate of progress between girls and boys have been successfully tackled since the previous inspection so that now both groups learn at the same rate. Children's achievement is excellent. They make outstanding progress from their starting points to reach and often exceed the expected level in all areas of learning by the time they transfer to Reception. The governing body is very experienced and very well organised. It gives exceptional support to the school's development, ensuring that resources are very well used to get the best for children. The capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

Children's behaviour, their sense of safety and their contribution to creating a happy secure community are all excellent. Children learn a lot from following the kind and caring example set by adults, in whom they have complete trust. They are encouraged to be healthy, enjoy healthy snacks and take advantage of the many opportunities for vigorous and enjoyable exercise, which are available at nursery or when they visit the local leisure centre. Their high attendance is testimony to their enjoyment of school. By the time children leave they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of learning, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is first rate.

Teaching is exemplary because it is always challenging and makes learning fun. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported to learn alongside their friends. They have individual programmes of support that are precisely tailored to their needs and exceptionally well taught so they are able to make the same rapid progress as others. An innovative and imaginative curriculum is carefully designed to follow children's enthusiasms and extend their knowledge of themselves and the world around them.

Parents and carers have very positive views of the nursery. Many share the views of one parent about their children's learning, 'I feel as if my daughter is reaching her full potential at nursery and is soaking up all of her learning. I feel so grateful and fortunate that my daughter is able to attend this wonderful nursery.'

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- There are no significant areas to improve arising from the inspection of this consistently outstanding school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

Children thoroughly enjoy every minute of their time in this happy, vibrant nursery, and this contributes to their high attendance. They enter into activities at the start of every session with gusto, because experience has taught them that there will be many exciting things to explore and investigate before they go home. Their confidence and independence are remarkable for children of this age. These qualities make a huge contribution to children's enjoyment of learning and their rapid progress. Children are keen to succeed with their 'jobs' and they concentrate well for long periods as they develop and adapt ideas and resources to find out things for themselves. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are discreetly encouraged and supported by staff to follow their curiosity and interests and find things out for themselves just as other children do. Children of all abilities make striking gains in their learning so that their achievement is outstanding. While their skills and knowledge on entry can vary considerably year on year, and are usually broadly typical for their age or below when they join the nursery, nearly all children either reach or exceed the levels expected for their age by the time they leave. The most significant gains are made in personal, social and emotional development and speaking and listening, which prepare the children extremely well for the next stage of learning.

Children's strong feelings of safety and security and their excellent behaviour provide a very strong foundation for learning. Children follow routines and rules very well, so they create a happy and calm atmosphere. This helps them to make an excellent contribution to the community as children respect each other's rights and are tolerant and caring towards each other, following the excellent example of adults. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have been taught about healthy lifestyles and follow the rules very well for plenty of exercise and healthy eating.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	1
Children's attainment ¹	1
The quality of children's learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children's behaviour	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	1
Children's attendance ¹	1
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

One of the great strengths of the teaching is the knowledge staff have of the children as individuals. They make highly-effective use of their experience and expertise with young children to provide activities and resources that closely match and challenge the needs of every child. They make excellent use of questions and are alert to where an individual child's interests and strengths lie. They are vigilant in identifying any areas of learning that a child might not be accessing regularly enough to ensure good development. Staff work extremely well as a team and constantly share their knowledge of the children's learning. Radical action in the autumn term to adapt provision to meet the very different needs of the current cohort resulted in significant improvements to the ability of all children to access their learning independently.

The curriculum is very well planned and organised to meet the different needs of the children. There is very good emphasis on developing key personal, social and communication skills through all areas of learning so that children learn how to share, take turns and increasingly co-operate and learn from each other. Senior leaders are improving the methods of teaching early writing skills this year, despite the children already being confident, well-motivated writers who seize the opportunity to 'write' for all kinds of purposes during the course of the day. There is an excellent range of varied and exciting activities, indoors and out, which give children the opportunity to learn in a number of

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areas at the same time. For example, a group who were moving bricks, 'to mend the house', talked about how they would organise this and how many bricks they would need. This involved some negotiation and compromise and eventually led to one boy counting the bricks to ensure there were 'enough'.

Excellent attention is given to all aspects of care to ensure children's welfare and well-being. Children are known as individuals; the excellent links that staff have with families ensure they have up to the minute information about each child's circumstances. Staff monitor children's responses very closely. Excellent teamwork means information is quickly shared and action taken to tackle any difficulties a child may have. Provision for children who have special educational needs and /or disabilities is excellent. Children's specific needs are extremely well met through carefully tailored programmes which are taught with sensitivity and persistence. This is helping many children to overcome barriers associated with speech development and other difficulties.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher inspires staff and governors through excellent example and by her determination to get the very best for and from the children. She displays excellent professional knowledge and vision. She is very well supported in her ambitions for the school by the considerable expertise and commitment of all staff. All staff are involved in identifying areas for improvement, which together with excellent teamwork and regular consultation results in continuous and well-judged developments. Since the previous inspection, planning for learning has improved well under the skilful leadership of the assistant headteacher. This has resulted in a more rapid response to the developing needs of the children, so that their learning is maximised. Staff morale is very high, helping them to manage the increased challenges in the current year successfully.

The governing body gives excellent support to all areas of the school's work. It is very well organised, has a very good knowledge of the challenges the school faces and makes highly-effective use of the expertise of governors. For example, it ensures prudent and astute financial management of resources. Safeguarding procedures are highly effective; they ensure children are safe and secure and show that their well-being is central to the school's work. The promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. The school willingly shares its expertise and success with others, provides good opportunities for adult learning and has a well-formed plan for continuing these developments. The school promotes equal opportunities very well so that all children are supported to achieve their best.

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Links with parents and carers are excellent. They promote high levels of trust and confidence in the school. Excellent links with external services and other providers extend learning opportunities and provide valuable expertise to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who returned questionnaires are unanimous in their positive views of the school. All agree that the school takes good care of their children, that their children enjoy school and, that as parents and carers, they are helped to support their children's learning. Of the many positive comments, these are typical of the majority: 'My child is so happy with nursery, the teachers make time for him and they have great relationships with all children.' and 'My child is growing enormously in confidence and independence since starting here.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oxclose Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 77 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	98	1	2	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	95	3	5	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	43	77	13	23	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	49	88	6	11	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	91	5	9	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	86	8	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	88	7	13	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	42	75	10	18	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	95	2	4	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	80	10	18	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	88	7	13	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	53	95	3	5	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	54	96	2	4	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

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.



17th January 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Oxclose Nursery School, Spennymoor, DL16 6RU

Thank you for letting me join in with all your lovely play and hard work when I visited your nursery. Just as you do, I had a very happy time. I could see why you enjoy coming to nursery so much and why you learn so quickly. Your teachers are very good at knowing what you enjoy learning and they understand that you like to find out for yourself as much as you can. You work very hard, are kind and caring with each other and your behaviour is excellent. No wonder your families and teachers are so proud of you. Well done everyone!

Your teachers look after you very well and they spend time planning many interesting and exciting things for you to do. They are clever at spotting what you are really interested in and make sure you have plenty of ways of finding out about these. Teachers look after you extremely well, this makes your parents feel happy, because they know that you are safe and secure in school. They also know that you enjoy every minute of your time there, being very busy and learning a lot.

Your headteacher and teachers are always looking for ways to make things even better in your nursery. As your teachers are already doing the things that can make it even better, I do not need to give them any other suggestions. You can continue to help by being kind and happy and working as hard as you now do, so that your nursery is always a happy, exciting place in which to learn.

My best wishes to everyone at Oxclose Nursery for a successful year.

Yours sincerely

Moira Fitzpatrick

Lead Inspector

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