

Tudhoe Moor Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113991
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	378780
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2012
Lead inspector	Margaret Shepherd

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	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Anderson
Headteacher	Steph Collings
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Margaret Shepherd

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent four hours observing teaching in indoor and outdoor provision, as well as children's learning in adult-led groups or during their independent learning. The school's one teacher was seen and all of the support staff. Discussions were held with parents and carers, children, members of the governing body and staff. The inspector observed the school's work, and scrutinised documents relating to self-evaluation, safeguarding children, assessment, tracking information and teachers' planning. Forty nine parental questionnaires were analysed. There were insufficient responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to show results for this school.

Information about the school

The school, which is of broadly average size for a nursery school, serves the area of Tudhoe Moor. The great majority of children are of White British heritage. Five per cent of children have special educational needs. No child has disabilities. Children spend a short time learning in key worker groups. Children attend for different periods and in different ways. These include attending each morning or afternoon for the full week, spending two and a half days a week or combining half a day of nursery and half of day care. There is also extended provision of a breakfast and after-school club. The day-care provider and the extended provision are not run by the governing body. They share some of the accommodation and staff with the nursery. This provision did not form part of this inspection but a report of its quality can be found on the Ofsted website.

Since the previous inspection, the school buildings have been extended. There is a new hall, a bigger porch for children and parents and carers to gather at the beginning of sessions and a large covered area linking indoor and outdoor provision. The school has the Healthy School status.

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. The headteacher, the governing body and staff are committed to creating a cohesive learning community. The partnership with the day care provision is excellent. Parents greatly appreciate the school’s work. Children’s achievement in independent learning is outstanding but it is inconsistent in the key worker group time. This is currently preventing the school from being outstanding.
- The organisation and teaching during independent learning time is high quality. Children develop skills at a much faster rate than expected for their age. Attainment is above the expected level by the time they leave the school. More-able children make particularly fast progress. Progress sometimes slows, however, during key worker sessions.
- The teaching team work very effectively together during the independent learning. Staff support child-initiated learning skilfully. They plan a high quality and stimulating curriculum with memorable experiences. Outdoor provision offers high levels of challenge for all children. However, the quality of teaching is sometimes no better than satisfactory during the key worker time.
- Children’s behaviour is outstanding across every part of the school session. They cooperate extremely well with each other. They respect each other’s needs, are courteous to adults and handle resources carefully. They have a very good understanding of the importance of keeping safe. They follow the school rules carefully.
- The headteacher has strong ambitions of providing high quality provision for every child and family. She implements change skilfully. The leadership of teaching and management of performance are generally good but targeted improvements to key worker sessions have not yet fully impacted on provision. There are outstanding opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a close and productive partnership with parents and carers and outside specialists.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the consistency in the quality of teaching and children's progress in the key worker group sessions by:
 - ensuring that in all sessions, a lively pace is maintained, that activities capture children's interest and that questioning is systematic and challenging
 - sharing the outstanding features of key worker sessions with all staff
 - supporting staff to increase the quality of their teaching to match the best in the school and agreeing targets for improvement
 - monitoring these sessions more regularly to evaluate the impact of the targeted improvements.

Main Report

Achievement of children

Children have high levels of confidence in choosing activities during independent learning. They have excellent concentration levels and persevere to solve problems. Children are very confident when practising their numeracy skills, such as counting the number of children in their groups. They select books enthusiastically and thoroughly enjoy working with adults to find out what happens in the stories. They develop much higher skills than expected in physical development. For example, they tackle the long climbing wall with confidence and balance carefully when crossing the rope bridge or moving between apparatus. They have excellent skills of observation and investigation. They were enraptured when watching baby chicks hatching and made astute observations about how the chicks were managing to struggle out of their shells. Children make excellent progress in creative development and use the wide range of high quality resources very imaginatively to extend their role-play. For example, they used maps of the area in order to find places for putting out 'fires' in their roles as 'fire fighters'.

Children enter the school at slightly lower levels than expected for their age. More-able children make outstanding progress and a much larger proportion than usual reach levels higher than expected for their age by the time they leave the school. This is particularly the case in reading, where they identify letter sounds confidently and read simple words by combining the sounds. Children who have special educational needs make very good progress during independent learning. They respond very well when they are given special tasks, such as threading straws into the tops of the milk bottles for snack time. Children who have been identified as making slower progress than other children respond very well to additional support and this reduces the gaps in performance between them and their peers very effectively.

Progress in key worker groups sometimes slows. When it is outstanding children develop an excellent understanding of sequences in stories and are able to judge characters' emotions from the pictures and key words in the text. They respond

readily to any questions and speak with confidence. They sing sweetly and understand the meaning behind the words, such as songs about chicks emerging from their eggs. In the satisfactory sessions, children's concentration levels are lower, they are not as confident in responding to questions or joining in with the activities. All parents and carers agree that their children make good progress. The inspection confirms their views.

Quality of teaching

A key strength of the teaching is the high calibre teamwork in the independent learning. The organisation is exemplary and ensures that there is a member of staff within each area to support children's learning. Every member of staff has a very clear understanding of the expected learning and their role, whether this is in supporting child-initiated learning or in working with a planned task. Staff are very adept in posing questions to extend children's understanding and skills. They expect children to solve their own problems and support them carefully when they develop risk-taking skills. They give great encouragement to children to persevere and tackle higher levels of learning than expected for their age. They have very high expectations of children's behaviour and support individuals very effectively in extending skills of cooperation and turn-taking.

Staff plan the curriculum very thoroughly together to provide an exciting and carefully balanced range of activities. There is strong emphasis on building a curriculum on children's own ideas. The deployment of resources is excellent. For example, once the chicks had started hatching, staff produced a wide range of related resources such as toy chicks of different colours, sizes and textures, a range of plastic eggs, some with chicks inside, incubators and bowls for their pretend food. They capitalise skilfully on these strategies to develop numeracy and communication skills. Staff build carefully on previous learning, for example, children's learning of chick-related songs supported their understanding extremely well when they observed the hatching process. This detailed planning ensures that there are frequent opportunities to extend children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which staff take advantage of very effectively.

In the best sessions during key worker time, teaching proceeds at a brisk pace and there is an excellent balance of different activities to sustain children's concentration. Activities are interesting and based very carefully on previous learning. Teaching is lively and enthusiastic. Questioning skills are high quality and every child receives a carefully targeted question at some point during the session. In the satisfactory sessions, there is a slower pace. Fewer activities are covered during the session and they are not planned as well so as to capture children's interest or challenge them to think. Questioning is not as systematic or challenging.

Assessment systems are thorough and staff use them carefully to identify where individuals need additional support or encouragement to widen their choice of activities to ensure they learn across all the areas of learning. Parents and carers strongly agree that their children are taught well, which the inspection endorses.

Behaviour and safety of children

Children have an extremely good understanding of the importance of behaving sensibly, whether they are indoors or outdoors, carrying out child-initiated learning or working in a group. They are delighted to accept responsibility, particularly in being the 'mini-teacher' in their key worker groups where they show great confidence in deciding the order in which the rest of the group can move on to independent learning. They have an excellent understanding of the school rules, such as how many are allowed in each of the different activities, and are willing to wait their turn on key resources such as computers. Children make decisions about their own learning extremely confidently and move between the different areas of the nursery very sensibly. They are proud to carry out tasks that contribute to the organisation of the session, such as working together to prepare the snacks. They have much higher levels of cooperation than expected for their age and delight in solving problems within their play.

Children have a high level of awareness of the importance of keeping themselves safe and of the impact of their actions on others. They are very respectful to adults and listen carefully to instructions, cooperating sensibly. They are sensitive to the needs of others and other living things. For example, no child crossed the line around the chicks' incubator, despite their great excitement at the action unfurling before their eyes.

Parents and carers are very positive about the standard of behaviour throughout the nursery, and all agree that the school deals effectively with any cases of bullying. The very close links with the day care means that many children have understood the expectations of their behaviour by working within the nursery environment before they even join the school. The inspection evidence confirms the parents' and carers' views that behaviour and children's awareness of the importance of keeping safe are key strengths of the school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher works closely with staff and the governing body to consistently extend and improve provision in order to ensure that all children achieve their full potential within a stimulating and safe environment, and to serve the community more effectively. Links with the day-care provider are now extremely effective. The new accommodation and the integrated staffing arrangements greatly enhance the range of opportunities for children's learning. There is a clear emphasis on monitoring the performance of teaching and learning during independent learning activities in order to improve practice. Although there is a well-organised programme of staff development, and performance management makes a strong contribution to the quality of teaching, the monitoring and evaluation of key worker sessions has not been rigorous enough. Features of good practice during these sessions have not been shared with all staff and there has been insufficient use of targets for improvement.

Systems for collecting and analysing data of individual children's progress are very thorough. Analysis considers many different groups of children very effectively and is then used carefully to give additional targeted support for individuals. This leads to

good levels of equal opportunities overall. It is excellent for the majority of the provision but there are some inequalities during the key worker sessions. The school is very effective in combating discrimination through the curriculum. For example, children appreciated the different customs and characteristics of another nursery school in Africa. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is carefully balanced to meet the children's needs and it contributes very well to children's achievement and their excellent spiritual, moral and social development. The emphasis on safeguarding is strong, with particularly effective systems for child protection.

There is a mixture of experience on the governing body, with several governors being very new to their posts. They are all very keen to learn their new roles and responsibilities and to develop their monitoring skills. School leaders have very effective self-evaluation skills to share with the new governors, which gives the school a strong capacity for further improvement.

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's 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.



22 March 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Tudhoe Moor Nursery School, Spennymoor DL16 6EX

I thoroughly enjoyed visiting your school this week. Thank you very much for welcoming me into your nursery and telling me all about the wonderful things that you do. I would like to tell you some of the things that I found out.

You go to a good school. You are very good at deciding what you want to do from all the very exciting things indoors and outdoors. You are very brave when you are on the climbing frames outside and you solve problems very well indeed. The teaching staff all work very well together to help you learn more quickly. They give you so many different interesting things to do. I could see how excited you were when the chicks hatched and you were very careful to keep really quiet so that you didn't frighten them.

Your behaviour is excellent and you know how important it is to keep safe. You are very sensible when you move around the nursery. You share things very well and understand that you sometimes have to wait for your turn. I was very impressed with how well you organised the rest of your group when it was your turn to be a 'mini-teacher'. When you are in your key worker groups you sometimes learn very well but sometimes it is not as good. I have asked the staff to make sure that you always learn very well and that you do your best to work very hard in these groups. Your headteacher knows you all very well, and she encourages everyone else to make your school an even better place for you.

I wish you every success in your future learning.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Shepherd
Lead inspector

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