

Tenterfield Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117078
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	358075
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Mary Hinds

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	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Blackburn
Headteacher	Hannah Isher
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2008
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Age group	3–4
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Ten lessons or parts of lessons, involving two teachers and a number of other staff were observed. Meetings were held with parents and carers, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at policies, planning and assessment information as well as scrutinising questionnaires from 42 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- It considered the achievement of all groups of children to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging and promoting outstanding progress.
- It looked at the impact of recent improvement strategies on provision and children's outcomes.
- It examined how well the school promotes community cohesion and how this supports children's understanding of life in a multicultural society.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average nursery school where most children attend five sessions per week, either mornings only or afternoons only. A few children have full time, flexible places. The school provides fully integrated care, and the governors manage the wraparound service, which includes a breakfast club. As a lead agency for the new children's centre, the school offers a variety of parent, carer and community support programmes, such as a toddler and child-minding group, baby-massage classes and monthly 'saturdads and super-mums' sessions. The majority of children are of White British heritage. Small proportions of children come from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is low, and none has a statement of special educational needs. The headteacher has been in post since September 2010 and is leader of both the school and the children's centre. The two settings are subject to separate inspections and reports.

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

Tenterfield is an outstanding school. The headteacher's drive for excellence is shared by staff and governors because she is an outstanding role model, both as a leader and a teacher. Leaders are always looking for ways to improve still further. For example, assessment procedures have been strengthened and provide rigorous tracking of children's progress. The system leads to accurate self-evaluation and high-quality provision. This means that all groups of learners are making outstanding progress, which leads to high attainment. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make exceptional progress, because of early intervention work and highly tailored individual programmes. These are supported by a range of specialists from the children's centre personnel and external expertise. From their varying starting points, this represents outstanding achievement and demonstrates excellent capacity for further improvement.

The governing body is fully involved in the strategic development of the school, and has an excellent overview of the school's effectiveness. It systematically reviews the work of the school. However, although planning for improvement is focused on the right priorities, it lacks clear criteria for gauging effectiveness. It does not use the accurate data from the effective tracking of children's achievement, thereby reducing leaders' ability to assess more precisely the success of their actions.

Since the headteacher took up post last September, her role has been extended to that of head of centre for the on-site children's centre. The impact of collaborative working has built on the success of the nursery, where the integrated children's centre and a range of external expertise ensure that care, guidance and support are outstanding. Hence children flourish, and behave exceptionally well, showing resilience, responsibility and maturity. Before children start the nursery, staff have already begun the assessment procedure as home visits are now a permanent and regular feature. This means that no time is lost for learning, as information is used extremely well to match provision precisely to individual needs and abilities. This proactive way of working is typified in the smooth transition arrangements, where children quickly and confidently settle into school, and later are ready to move on to the next stage of their education. This highly positive and productive partnership with parents and carers is summarised by one parent who wrote, reflecting the views of many, 'This is a brilliant, well-run and exceptional nursery. Standards are high. The teachers and headteacher are very warm and welcoming. My child has never been happier. Many thanks to Tenterfield for an effective and important start to my daughters' education'

The learning environment, both inside and outside, has been significantly improved, due to extensive building work, including the new children's centre. As a result, children have access to large learning areas which provide a vast array of carefully-planned, stimulating and rich activities. The curriculum is relevant, dynamic and supportive. The quality of

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teaching is at least good and often outstanding. Adults are adept at both supporting and challenging children's learning, through well-thought-out activities which optimise all areas of learning. Particular emphasis recently has been on developing children's independence, investigative, language and complex thinking processes. This has been highly successful. More recent enrichment activities, such as the Forest School, further enhance children's learning, particularly in the way they develop self-assurance and independence.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine school improvement planning so that there are clear and measurable criteria by:
 - using the accurate analysis of achievement made by all groups of children to identify the extent of success in securing further improvements.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

Children enter the nursery with skills that are typical for their age, in all areas of learning. Children's current knowledge and skills, as well as the school's data, show that all groups of learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are already achieving levels that are higher than those typically expected by the end of the year. Therefore, almost all children are on track to exceed the expectations for their age when they transfer to Reception classes. This rapid progress is a result of the exceptional and varied opportunities for children to explore, investigate and learn. The progress of children with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities is carefully tracked, which enables staff to identify and target support as swiftly as possible. The highly-stimulating indoor and outdoor play environments enable children to engage and learn in relevant and meaningful ways.

Children are highly motivated to try new things out, such as building a house or ice-cream van, where they are able: to practise and reinforce their skills of lifting and transporting bricks via the new bike track; to make decisions as they are consulted on how many bumps the bike track should have; to take on leadership roles, where one child busily organises a team of builders and carriers; to be part of a collaborative team where children negotiate with each other; and to continually develop their early mathematical and literacy skills, including speaking and listening.

Activities are carefully planned to enable the children to appreciate working safely, and to begin to assess and take calculated risks: by making models, using hammers, nails and screw drivers, where the children wear safety goggles; by cutting up their own fruit; and by digging in the garden.

Children strongly appreciate the need to stay healthy, as one child said, 'Fruit makes you big and strong', whilst another said, 'Brushing your teeth keeps then clean'. There is a strong commitment to using information and communication technology. Children confidently use a range of technology, including computers and interactive whiteboards. The school provides many opportunities for the children to experience cultural diversity, through resources, visits and celebrating festivals, which expands their understanding very well. Children are able to make choices for themselves and show high levels of enjoyment, concentration and resilience in their learning. The recently-hatched chicks provide a myriad of activities including: writing, using children's excellent knowledge of letters and

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sounds to write key words in a relevant context; creative artwork; and appreciating life cycles and caring for living things.

It is clear from the vast range of experiences and activities undertaken that children make a considerable contribution to the school and wider community. These range from a recent children's, parents' and carers' pancake race within the community, to raising money for a number of charities, including a homeless mission in London. Children's achievements and excellent personal and social development are underpinned by the very positive and trusting relationships they share with their key workers and other staff. This prepares them very well for the next step in their education.

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: 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: 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?

Staff are exceptionally nurturing and ensure that all children settle quickly into the routines of the session. Sessions are well organised, and children have a key worker for registration and for adult-led sessions. Adults use a wide range of teaching methods successfully to involve children in their own learning, making sure that learning is great fun. Assessment procedures are very well organised and are recorded in individual portfolios which are routinely shared with parents. This assessment information is used

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exceptionally well in planning the next steps in learning for each child. It is also used to make sure that each child experiences a balanced set of learning opportunities.

The curriculum is well planned, because staff know the children's needs well, and those who require support have targeted and specific intervention when required. Children choose their own activities, which integrate all six areas of learning, both inside and outdoors. Teachers have made sure that the quality of outdoor provision matches that inside. Adults are skilled in creating learning opportunities by sensitively intervening to model learning. They paraphrase the children's speech and ask probing questions which develop the children's thinking skills, knowledge and understanding. Equally, adults are skilled in allowing the children to work for sustained periods of independent learning when appropriate.

Care and support shown for all children are exceptional and are fundamental to the overall provision. Safeguarding, health and safety and child protection procedures are fully in place and are implemented with the greatest of care. The wraparound care, including the breakfast club, provides a host of different activities, where children enjoy a safe and stimulating environment.

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 provides inspirational leadership and has managed, in a short period of time, to secure the support, commitment and drive of everyone. She is exceptionally well-supported by the deputy headteacher. Staff morale is high, and they are motivated to share her relentless commitment and exceptionally high expectations to ensure excellence for all children and their families. Staff are highly effective because they have up-to-date and excellent knowledge of early childhood education and development; and because professional development is central to the nursery's continuing success. As well as regular staff meetings to discuss the progress of each child and to decide how best to support each individual's future learning, the headteacher has recently introduced termly meetings, where the progress of all groups of learners is monitored. Specific intervention strategies are identified to boost achievement still further if needed. This is complemented by the rigorous tracking of children who may need additional support. Staff are able to quickly identify potential barriers to learning and the highly effective liaison with parents, carers and specialists ensures that these children have provision that draws on the most appropriate expertise. They therefore make outstanding progress.

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The school's focus on ensuring that all children achieve their full potential means that it promotes equality of opportunity remarkably well. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are entirely robust and all required risk assessments are carried out extremely well. Governance is outstanding. The governing body is knowledgeable, supportive and has worked extremely effectively with the headteacher to steer the school's move to become a successful children's centre, and to improve outcomes since the last inspection. Members know the school well and are fully involved in self-evaluation and improvement planning. The school is highly successful in promoting community cohesion at all levels, including at the global level, where it has a link with a nursery in Tanzania.

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 are overwhelmingly positive about this nursery school and value greatly what it provides for them and their children. They say that their children are happy and eager to come to school. They believe the children's behaviour is impeccable. They are full of praise for the headteacher and the staff, who they say are highly professional and caring. They are very appreciative of the all the new and varied facilities. Inspection evidence confirms that these aspects of the nursery are outstanding.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Tenterfield Nursery 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 75 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	88	5	12	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	86	6	14	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	30	71	11	26	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	74	10	24	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	36	86	6	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	74	11	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	69	13	31	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)	28	67	13	31	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	69	13	31	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	62	15	36	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	71	11	26	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	36	86	6	14	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	93	3	7	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



19 May 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Tenterfield Nursery School, Welwyn, AL6 9JF

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. All of your parents think that your school is excellent and we agree. We thoroughly enjoyed seeing you working inside the classrooms and in the wonderful outside area. It was very impressive to see how well you all work together and have such a super time. These are the reasons why your school is outstanding.

All adults give you exactly the help you need to help you learn really well.

You all thoroughly enjoy all the activities and you concentrate very well.

Adults look after you exceptionally well and keep you safe.

Your headteacher makes sure that the nursery is a fun and exciting place to be where everyone enjoys working and learning because your school it is such a happy and well organised place to be.

This means that you all make outstanding progress in your learning.

Your headteacher and the other adults want your school to be even better. I have asked them to use the information that they collect about how well you are doing and use this in their planning, so that they know exactly how successful everyone is. You can help by continuing to behave well, listening to the adults and trying your best at everything you do.

Thank you again for making my time at Tenterfield so happy.

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds

Lead inspector

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