

Hednesford Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123962
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380766
Inspection dates	19–20 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Andrew Clark

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	17
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Gwen White
Headteacher	Christine Wood
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2009
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Age group	3–4
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited seven lessons and parts of lessons led by a teacher who is the headteacher and teaching assistants, one of whom is a senior teaching assistant. The inspector held meetings with representatives of the governing body, the staff, *parents and carers*. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including essential policies, the school improvement plan, information about children's progress and attainment data. The inspector analysed nine completed questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as questionnaires completed by staff.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress made by all groups of children in letter recognition and counting skills.
- The quality of the questions that staff ask children and whether they encourage meaningful learning.
- The effectiveness of the governing body in holding the school to account.

Information about the school

Hednesford Nursery School is much smaller than other schools of this type. The majority of children are of White British heritage. There are fewer children with special educational needs and/or disabilities than usual. The school has achieved National Healthy Schools status. The headteacher has received a European leadership award.

There is a children's centre on site which is subject to a separate inspection.

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

Hednesford Nursery is an outstanding school. Parents and carers are extremely pleased with the excellent start children receive to their school life. 'This is such an outstandingly wonderful place for children to learn,' is typical of their views. The headteacher's clear vision, passion and commitment to the school is mirrored in the work of all staff and the governing body. The school has excellent systems to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses and establish clear priorities for improvement. This has enabled the school to maintain the high standards in all its work that were found at the previous inspection. As a result, the school has an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Children's achievement is excellent. They are eager, curious and enthusiastic to learn. They start school at around the age of three with skills which are generally typical for their age. They leave to start Reception with levels of attainment which are well above those usually found. Children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve extremely well from their starting points. They make very good gains in the early stages of reading, writing and number work. Their behaviour is excellent and they feel extremely safe. Children are very fit and active, making excellent use of chances to move, dance, run and jump indoors and out in the promotion of excellent healthy life styles. Attendance is high. Children become very independent and are extremely well prepared for their future learning. They make an outstanding contribution to their community, delivering food to the elderly and regularly participating in sponsored walks. The very well-planned use of thought-provoking story books and adults' strong guidance mean that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

The quality of teaching is outstanding. Highly effective relationships are quickly established. Staff make extremely good use of detailed measures of children's progress to plan for the next steps and hasten their learning. Children are challenged to think for themselves and make decisions. They quickly grow in confidence. There are very well-planned learning opportunities and an excellent balance between adult-led activities and those that children select for themselves. The excellent outdoor area is used very well to promote all areas of learning. This warm and friendly school provides excellent levels of care, guidance and support for all its children. Staff are very reflective and there are extremely rigorous procedures to keep children safe from harm.

There is an outstandingly good partnership with parents and carers, and the school

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makes very good use of links with many other professional services. The views of a parent sum up its many strengths: 'We love the facilities provided by the Nursery and go out of our way to attend. It is a wonderfully supporting and encouraging environment.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to maintain the high quality provision, use existing self-evaluation systems and thorough development planning to drive continuous school improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

It is clear that children love coming to school. The warm and caring ethos means that they very quickly settle in and establish strong, confident relationships with the other children and adults. They are extremely curious and keen to explore the many stimulating activities. For example, they really enjoy investigating the 'mystery bags' of objects; guessing what might come out and giggling with excitement. Children express themselves very clearly and also listen extremely well to others. They thoroughly engage with stories, following them carefully and offering thoughtful suggestions as to what happens next. A very large majority learn to count well beyond 10 and calculate one more or one less. They identify the names and properties of many shapes including circle, semi-circle, square and rectangle. They use their knowledge well to solve problems. For example, they arrange patterns of giant shapes in an exciting obstacle course outdoors. Children make outstanding progress in recognising initial letters, writing their names, simple early sentences and developing an excellent understanding of the value and purpose of writing. They use language rich in meaningful adjectives and adverbs in response to the adults' excellent questioning and high expectations.

Children make excellent progress from their individual starting points. Those of all abilities, including children with special educational needs and or/disabilities, make outstanding progress in all areas of learning. Both boys and girls achieve equally well from their starting points. They consistently achieve particularly well in developing communication and personal skills as a result of the extremely rich curriculum and careful tracking of their individual progress. The few children from minority heritage backgrounds also achieve very well. Detailed recording and tracking of children's achievements shows that high standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The more-able children achieve very well because staff set consistently high expectations and encourage very good levels of independence and decision-making. Children who find learning more difficult also make excellent progress because of the rigorous attention to their individual needs and the very good quality adult support they receive.

Children feel extremely safe in school and it is a very friendly place. The close relationship staff establish with parents and carers from the beginning effectively

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builds trust and security. Children's behaviour is excellent because they develop high levels of self-awareness and self-control. They develop an excellent awareness of healthy lifestyles. They produce models and collages of foods which are good for them, making the choices themselves. Through fun activities with giant teeth and brushes, they learn about dental hygiene. They are active throughout the day with dance, games and challenges indoors and out. Children rarely miss a day and stay for extended periods from the start. They are extremely well prepared for their future learning. They reach a high level in many basic skills and have very positive attitudes to school life. They develop extremely good skills in managing information and communication technology through computer programmes which they select for themselves, the use of cameras and recording equipment. From the beginning, children learn to think deeply in response to very thoughtful questions and to explain the reasons for their decisions. Through imaginative role play and meeting several visitors, they learn to appreciate different cultures and lifestyles from celebrations of Saint George to dancing, singing, playing instruments and taking part in a variety of exciting activities linked to Diwali and the Chinese New Year as well as Christian Festivals.

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

How effective is the provision?

The outstanding interaction between adults and children, combined with extremely thorough planning, organisation and use of resources, ensures that provision is of a high quality. Staff work very closely together to provide an outstanding quality of

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

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teaching. They provide excellent role models for children because they are actively involved in all elements of their learning. For example, they participate fully in children's role play subtly asking questions which reinforce and deepen their learning. They sensitively manage children's behaviour. A key strength of the teaching is the excellent balance between adult-led activities and tasks children choose for themselves, encouraging high levels of independence. Many activities are linked by a central theme that skilfully reinforces the key points of the learning. For example, children act as explorers using maps, telescopes and magnifiers linked to a range of measuring and comparison games and puzzles indoors and out. Regular and detailed observations of children's progress are carefully analysed to plan the next steps in their learning. The pace of teaching is excellent and effectively matched to children's maturity and experience.

The curriculum is rich and exciting. The promotion of communication, language and literacy is an extremely strong focus within the school's curriculum. Staff frequently talk with and alongside children in engaging ways. For example, using mirrors to investigate their faces, staff talk about 'bright, sparkling eyes' and 'flecks of grey'. They extend children's language constantly. As a result, all children are becoming confident communicators. The stunning outdoor provision contributes significantly to children's experience and ensures that learning is fun and full of surprises. Children have the space to enjoy a full range of challenging tasks, including opportunities to climb, crawl, dig, build, talk, read and write. They learn about the world around them through exciting sensory role play activities on themes such as 'space' and 'light', and a very good range of visits to local venues such as the supermarket or further afield to the Severn Valley railways or the Reindeer Centre. The school offers a very flexible day for children through the luncheon club, crèche and strong links with the on-site children's centre. The school provides an exciting range of book and toy library services enjoyed by children and adults in partnership with the children's centre. In this way, the school offers the best for children and their parents and carers. As one parent writes, 'I feel the school handles the different learning needs and levels very well. They provide a strong moral code and diverse cultural experiences.'

Excellent care, guidance and support are paramount to the school's provision. Other professionals are used extremely well to support children with special educational needs and or/disabilities when needed. Staff have significant experience and training themselves to draw on. Rigorous monitoring and promotion of good behaviour and attendance, working alongside parents and carers, means those standards are high. A key feature of the care the school provides is the well-planned procedure to welcome in new children and support their parents and carers, particularly as for many this is their first experience of separation. Daily meetings and regular parents' evenings ensure parents and carers are very well informed about progress and how they can support their children's learning at home.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

1

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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 outstanding leadership. She is extremely well supported by the staff and governing body. They are exceptionally passionate and ambitious for the school's ongoing success. They share a very clear vision and bring a depth of experience to their role. Above all, the staff understand the needs of young children very well and bring this to bear on all their work. There are very well-established systems for monitoring and improving the quality of provision including teaching. Although the staff is small, responsibilities are effectively shared and performance is very well managed. The governing body is very efficient and fully involved in the life of the school. Its members hold the school to account well. This is very evident in their contribution to the development of a new early 'letters and sounds' scheme. The school knows its strengths and areas for improvement extremely well and draws strongly on the views of parents and carers and children in self-evaluation. There are very sharply focused priorities for school improvement and the staff are energetic in response to them.

The headteacher and governing body are very diligent and systematic in all their work. Record-keeping is excellent and contributes to outstanding safeguarding procedures. The school makes very good use of modern technologies to keep children safe from harm. Procedures to ensure adults are suitable to work with children are very rigorous and all staff are well trained in child protection procedures. The school promotes equality of opportunity very well so that all groups of children achieve exceptionally well and reach high standards. The school is effective in taking steps to avoid any discrimination. Leaders have conducted a rigorous audit of the school's contribution to the wider community. It plays an extremely active part in the local community involving children in the lives of the elderly and many fund-raising activities as well as links with other nationalities and children in different circumstances. As a result, this small school makes an excellent contribution to community coherence.

Overall, the energy, drive and efficiency of the headteacher and staff mean that children really benefit from their time at Hednesford Nursery and get off to a flying start to their education.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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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

The percentage of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was higher than usual. A number of parents and carers spoke to the inspector or sent in further written comments. Parents and carers are wholly supportive of the school. They particularly commented on the warm, caring ethos and the stimulating learning opportunities. They feel their children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning. 'I think the staff at this Nursery are excellent. I would recommend it to anyone' is typical of their views. The inspection report reflects these opinions because it found that all areas of the school's work are outstanding.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Hednesford 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 inspector received 9 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 17 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	9	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	9	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	7	78	2	22	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	67	2	22	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	67	2	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	100	0	0	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)	6	67	3	33	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	89	1	11	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	89	1	11	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	67	3	33	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	8	89	1	11	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	9	100	0	0	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



21 September 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Hednesford Nursery School, Cannock WS12 1AR

It was lovely to see you all when I came to visit your school recently. You made me feel very welcome and I enjoyed watching you work, play, sing and dance. I want to tell you about some of the things I found when I was there.

- You go to an outstanding school.
- You are very well behaved and everyone takes excellent care of you.
- Your teachers make learning lots of fun so you love doing your work and finding out about new things.
- You are very proud of things you make and do and your teachers are very proud of you.
- You find out lots of interesting things about the world around you and go on exciting trips.
- Your parents and carers are very proud of the school and give lots of help.
- Your teachers give you many exciting things to do indoors and out.
- You learn to decide what you want to play with and to tidy up after yourselves.
- You know how to keep yourselves very safe and healthy.

I have asked the school to make certain that it always does the very best it can for you and keeps making things even better.

You can help your teachers by working and playing hard and looking after each other.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Clark
Lead inspector

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