

Hart Hill Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109418
Local Authority	Luton
Inspection number	377918
Inspection dates	4–5 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Anna Coyle

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	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	William Holes
Headteacher	Anthea Saunders
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 activity sessions and observed three teachers and all the early years' educators and teaching assistants. They also held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, members of staff, a representative of the governing body and groups of children, parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including assessment and tracking information, the school development plan, monitoring reports and pupils' workbooks. The inspection questionnaires were analysed, including 72 from parents and carers.

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

- How effectively does teaching use assessment to build on children's skills when they first transfer to the nursery from the children's centre?
- Has the school developed its curriculum effectively since the last inspection to provide more opportunities for children to learn letters and sounds?
- Is the governing body sufficiently involved in the life of the school, given the recent focus on improving governors' roles?

Information about the school

This fairly large nursery school provides for children from a very wide range of cultural backgrounds. The majority of children are of White British or Asian heritage, and a very large proportion, (currently 50%), learn English as an additional language. A total of twenty-four languages are spoken at home, of which the main one is Urdu. A high proportion of children join the school at different times throughout the year. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is very high. The school has a 16-place, specially resourced provision for children with special educational needs, whose severe and complex needs include cerebral palsy, Asperger's syndrome, global delay, autistic spectrum disorder, behaviour difficulties, speech and language needs and medical conditions. The school has achieved the under 5's Healthy Eating award.

The school offers a range of day-care provision for children from 2 - 8 years including 'Little Harts' sessions. It also shares its site with the children's centre which was inspected separately, but at the same time as the nursery school.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding nursery school, which has maintained its excellent reputation since the last inspection under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher who, along with the deputy headteacher, is passionate about the school. Their very strong sense of ambition and purpose and hard work for the benefit of the children and their families, have created the expectation of outstanding achievement and enjoyment of learning. Self-evaluation is accurate and the governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well. Governors are fully and systematically involved with the school, although they do not always ask enough challenging questions of senior leaders.

The school is highly inclusive and its care, guidance and support for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding. This leads to children's excellent achievement and personal development. Children from minority ethnic backgrounds, most of whom learn English as an additional language, acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a rapid rate. The high proportion of children who benefit from the school's resource-based provision for special educational needs make excellent progress in their learning. The majority of children attain above average standards in many areas of learning, especially in personal, social and emotional development where they excel. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their behaviour are outstanding and they make excellent contributions to the school.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff celebrate diversity exceedingly well and value all children equally. They treat them with great respect within a very happy and harmonious environment. The school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable due to their circumstances very effectively which has had a significant impact on their learning. All staff have exceptionally high expectations of the children and they ensure that they are kept very safe during activity sessions, indoors and outside. They monitor and track children's progress carefully throughout the nursery by using assessment profiles and photographic evidence, although there is limited use of data from the children's centre. Even so, children benefit from a superb range of exciting activities. The excellent outdoor area is used extensively by the children for physical activities and for exploring the forest trail and woodland area.

The school actively promotes excellent community cohesion and is developing links with wider communities to enhance learning even further. It has outstanding links with parents and carers who confirm this and say that they are very pleased with the school. One summed up the views of many by saying: 'Hart Hill Nursery School has been the best thing my children have attended. It has given them confidence and an excellent start in life! The teachers are friendly, competent and trustworthy, and I

cannot fault the nursery on any level. The facilities are fantastic and my children's progress is improving all the time.'

Based on its outstanding track record, inspirational leadership and excellent outcomes and provision, the school has outstanding capacity to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Fine-tune the assessment procedures to incorporate the use of data from the children's centre when children transfer to the nursery.
- Strengthen the role of the governing body so that it provides even greater critical challenge for the school's senior leaders.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

From very low starting points, children achieve exceptionally well and reach above average attainment by the time they leave the nursery, especially in personal, social and emotional development where they really surpass expectations. Children have an excellent understanding of right and wrong, play harmoniously together and are very tolerant of each other's beliefs and cultures. The very high proportion of children who are new to the English language when they first start school and those who have severe and complex needs are integrated extremely well within the 'Red, Green and Blue' classrooms. This helps them to settle quickly and join in with activities. One parental comment praised the school for helping her child with special educational needs by saying: 'The staff at Hart Hill really understand my child's condition. He has really come a long way since starting and we are extremely pleased with his progress.'

All groups of children make outstanding progress. They learn to take turns, share toys and listen to adults and each other very successfully. Children with particular learning or language needs benefit from the quiet, calm approach shown by adults in the 'Attention Skills' sessions in the library. Children's early reading, writing and number skills are developing well, and they show good imagination in creative play. The school's strong focus on the 'every child a talker' (ECAT) programme is helping children to increase their speaking skills rapidly. Children explore the outdoor area with great interest and energy so that they increase their knowledge and understanding of the world around them and develop their physical abilities very well. For instance, they love to discover wildlife such as ladybirds in the 'forest school' area and look through the windows in the 'hide' to see if they can find any birds in the trees. Children thoroughly enjoy coming to school and learning. Behaviour is outstanding. Children show that they feel very safe and understand how to live healthily. They thoroughly enjoy contributing to the school by participating eagerly in activities for 'World Orphan Week' and helping adults very willingly during 'tidy-up time!'

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	2
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?

Parents and carers appreciate all that the teachers and other adults do for their children, and one said: ‘This is an excellent school with fantastic and welcoming staff who create a unique and friendly learning atmosphere. My child looks forward to school and is always very happy here.’ Teachers, teaching assistants and keyworkers liaise exceedingly well together as a very strong team. They have very high expectations of the children and relationships between them are extremely positive. All adults who work with the children have excellent knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and use questioning, sign language and picture-exchange techniques very skilfully. Children’s progress is tracked and recorded conscientiously by keyworkers to help them plan activities, although information from the children’s centre is not used well enough yet to aid children’s transition into the nursery. Nevertheless, excellent assessment profiles are kept for every individual child as they develop over the year and these are shared with parents and carers regularly. The profiles contain a huge amount of detail about children’s successes and plenty of photographs of them at work and at play, which are passed on to children’s families when they leave.

The school provides an extensive range of exciting activities that inspire and motivate the children. Activities are adapted very carefully for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they have equal access to all that the nursery has to offer within its excellent inclusive environment. Children have plenty of opportunities to develop their independence indoors and in the excellent facilities provided outside. In addition, they are provided with a wide range of activities in the day-care and all other care provision. One parental comment stated that, ‘The staff encourage and bring out the best of my children in a warm, friendly and amazing

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

environment... (in which they) ...have flourished and loved attending.'

Outstanding care, guidance and support of children stem from adults' in-depth knowledge of families and excellent understanding of children's needs. Meticulous liaison between staff and external agencies ensures that children are given very sensitive support. For example, children with severe and complex needs and those who may be vulnerable because of their circumstances receive expert guidance under the watchful eye of the coordinator for special educational needs. This helps them to learn effectively and thoroughly enjoy their time in the nursery with other children of the same age. Excellent support is provided for the many families from minority ethnic backgrounds who have little or no knowledge of English. The school does all it can to promote good attendance and follows up absences diligently.

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	2
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 is an inspirational leader whose energy and determination have helped maintain the school's outstanding provision over the last two-and-a-half years since the previous inspection. She is highly respected by all and very well supported by the deputy headteacher and staff, who all work exceedingly well together as a very effective team. There is a very strong sense of ambition and drive in the school, and highly accurate self-evaluation helps senior leaders to set challenging targets for the future. The quality of teaching and children's progress are monitored very carefully, which ensures equality of opportunity for all children, including those who benefit greatly from the resource-based provision for special educational needs. The governing body has good capacity to fulfil its role and keeps a close check on how well the school is doing to make sure that it provides excellent value for money, although governors do not always ask leaders enough challenging questions to 'keep them on their toes'.

The school's good systems and procedures for safeguarding and child protection mean that children are kept safe while they are at school. This includes effective procedures for the safe recruitment and suitability of staff and regular risk assessments to ensure that the school maintains children's safety. Several policies are due for review and staff are shortly to undertake training to update their knowledge of safeguarding. The school has an excellent track record of actively promoting the professional development of its staff with some achieving high levels of expertise, such as a university degree in early years education. Community cohesion is promoted very effectively and diversity is celebrated extremely well

through the many strong links with the local neighbourhood. In addition, the school has excellent links with local providers, external agencies, health services and national groups to support children and enhance their learning about the multi-cultural world around them. Staff successfully encourage parents and carers to become involved in their children’s learning and provide plenty of information to help them support their children at home. Parental comments indicate that they appreciate this and feel valued by staff. One wrote: ‘I am extremely happy with the way my child has settled at Hart Hill. Staff visited at home prior to his start which gave him familiar faces to aid his confidence. The staff at Hart Hill always go the extra mile to ensure that they can keep me abreast with his progress - meeting me at a time to suit me, such as before school.’

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	2
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	2
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

A higher than average proportion of parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. The vast majority who responded expressed their satisfaction with the education provided by the school. They feel that the school is led and managed very well and that staff make sure that children are safe. Written comments included a lot of praise for the headteacher and the staff, and confirmed that their children really enjoy coming to school. There were no significant concerns raised by parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Hart Hill 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 72 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 113 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	83	12	17	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	83	12	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	47	65	22	31	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	72	16	22	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	57	79	12	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	63	25	35	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	68	21	29	2	3	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)	47	65	19	26	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	74	18	25	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	63	18	25	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	58	23	32	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	56	78	12	17	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	82	13	18	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.



6 October 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Hart Hill Nursery School, Luton, LU2 0JS

Hello everyone! Thank you for being so kind to us and helping us to learn about your school when we came to see you recently. We found out lots of things, with your help.

- You go to an excellent nursery school.
- You told us that you love coming to the nursery and really enjoy learning.
- We think you make exceptional progress and achieve very well by the time you leave.
- You are very kind and thoughtful towards each other. Well done!
- Your behaviour is outstanding and you all help the teachers, teaching assistants and keyworkers extremely well, especially during 'tidy-up time'.
- You understand that healthy food is good for you, and you love to run and play in the outdoor area. We really enjoyed seeing you explore places like the 'hide' and the 'forest school' area.
- The adults who work in the nursery take excellent care of you and make sure that you are very safe when you are in the school.
- The headteacher is an outstanding leader and is supported really well by the deputy headteacher and all the other adults.

We have asked your nursery school to make some small improvements so that it gets even better. These are; to make more use of the information received from the children's centre and to persuade the governors to ask more questions about the school. You can help too by always doing your best and continuing to play nicely together.

Yours sincerely

Dr Anna Coyle
Lead inspector

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