

Ham Drive Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113051
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	378635
Inspection dates	4–5 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	0–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Wendy Rees
Headteacher	Brian Lee
Date of previous school inspection	28 April 2009
School address	Ham Drive Ham Plymouth PL2 2NJ
Telephone number	01752 366389
Fax number	01752 366813
Email address	ham.drive.nursery@plymouth.gov.uk

Registered childcare provision	Ham Drive Neighbourhood Nursery
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	21
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	28 April 2009

Age group	2–4
Inspection date(s)	4–5 October 2011
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 learning sessions taught by nine teachers and nursery nurses. The inspectors also observed break times and the breakfast club and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff, children, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at plans and policies, records of assessments and the tracking of children's progress. In addition, questionnaires completed by 29 parents and carers and 15 staff were analysed.

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

- How effectively the relatively new leaders and managers, at all levels, ensure continued improvement, including developing consistency of good practice in teaching and learning.
- The progress that children make in their learning and whether this is equally as good for all groups of children, including those who find speaking and communicating difficult.
- How well assessment is used to improve teaching and learning and to secure improvement for individuals and groups of children.

Information about the school

This nursery school is broadly average in size and caters for the needs of children within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Most children attending the school are of White British heritage and there is a below-average percentage of children who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high in relation to the national average. There is an assessment centre with 10 places for children with a diverse range of complex special educational needs and/or disabilities. Although some move on to special schools, many complete their nursery education at Ham Drive. Currently there are six children attending this unit who receive close adult support to integrate them as much as possible with their peers in the day-to-day life of the school. The school has the adjoining Neighbourhood Nursery, which provides day care to supplement the local authority maintained nursery education. It offers a variety of provision, including a breakfast club, lunch club and after-school club, as well as full day care for children aged under five years. As this provision is managed by the school's governing body it is part of this inspection and report. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2011.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Ham Drive Nursery is a good school and caring community, where children feel valued and develop self-confidence. This year, determined leadership by a new headteacher has brought a fresh approach, which is building systematically on the very positive attitudes to learning established securely by previous leaders. As a result, parents have confidence in the school. As one parent typically wrote, 'Ham Drive Nursery is a fantastic nursery and I wouldn't put my children anywhere else!'

- The headteacher has steadily raised staff morale through skilful organisation and expert management. With good support from other senior leaders and the governing body, the headteacher has re-established a strongly shared vision and commitment to drive the school forward.
- Good self-evaluation has further quickened the pace of improvement, secured the necessary checks and balances to safeguard children's welfare and has strengthened links with parents. As a result, the children become confident and happy learners.
- The skilful work of the senior staff has resulted in good, and improving, achievement of children across the range of ability including the more able and those considered potentially vulnerable. As a consequence of these improvements, the school is demonstrating a good capacity to sustain improvement into the future.
- Good, and occasionally outstanding, teaching and academic support have helped to promote good progress for most children and have led to broadly expected levels of attainment across the areas of learning. Staff know the children very well and are able to give them a lot of individual assistance.
- Most staff are effective in the way in which they use recorded assessments and interact with children to develop their speaking, reading and writing skills. One or two staff are not yet so effective in this, or in modelling good practice, and this means that a few children are held back in those sessions, particularly in their language skills.
- Provision for children attending the assessment centre is good. The additional teaching and caring support given to children within this group is closely matched to their complex needs. This enables these children to be fully included and to enjoy learning with all the other children in the nursery and to make good progress in relation to their particular needs. Childcare provision in the Neighbourhood Nursery is good and complies fully with its requirements for registration. It is well led and enables children to achieve well.
- Across the school, all the staff sustain exemplary care, guidance and support and

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safeguarding procedures, which enable children to feel and be very safe. This high quality care is reflected in the children's excellent behaviour, above average attendance and the school's good partnerships with parents and carers and outside agencies.

- The curriculum is enriched by a wealth of interesting practical activities and is further enhanced by a good number of extra-curricular clubs, often developed in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Nursery in the form of breakfast, lunch time, after-school and holiday clubs and events. These have a very positive impact in promoting the children's good social skills and great enjoyment of school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the development of all children's language skills by:
 - more systematically recording and using information about children's progress to target the next steps in learning for individual children
 - making sure that all adults more frequently model good reading and writing and seek a spoken response from the children when questioning them.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

Children are admitted into the maintained nursery school usually at the age of three years and can attend the Neighbourhood Nursery for childcare at a younger age. In general, children enter both settings with skills below those expected for their age, with several having particularly low levels of skills in communication, language and literacy and emotional development. Observations of children's learning, including for those receiving childcare, and interactions across the range of learning activities show that by the time they leave the school most children have achieved well. Good, and sometimes even better, progress is evident for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those with complex needs attending the assessment centre and for children who have English as an additional language. This is because additional specialist adult support enables them to work independently, by marking themselves as present, for example, or by happily playing alongside other children. Evidence from case study assessments shows that children with more ability derive much benefit from the individual attention they receive from adults. Timely support during a group session, for example, enabled children to show a good understanding of the days of the week and could explain changes in the weather.

A key strength of the children's learning is their willingness to engage in learning activities and to sustain their effort and concentration. Children are always very busy, including the babies in the Neighbourhood Nursery, and respond industriously to the staff's encouraging and often challenging guidance. Children are motivated to learn by their great enjoyment of all the activities they are offered as seen, for example, during their willingness to take turns on the outdoor slide and to share using the

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computer. As a result, physical, creative and social skills are developed well. The children's communication skills are developed well during most group sessions. However, on occasion, the children's willingness to speak, to choose books and make marks or practise early writing skills for themselves are not consistently promoted by staff and this constrains their progress.

Children behave extremely well and play sensibly together. Children show that they feel very safe in school and confidently approach adults to deal with any problems. They enjoy the range of outdoor activities and contribute fully to their own learning. The children's excellent relationships reflect their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Despite their complex needs, which often include low self-esteem and emotional needs, children in the assessment centre are enabled to enjoy happy relationships with other children and attend regularly because of the sensitive support they receive from caring adults. Young babies receiving childcare enjoy their activities together. Children adopt healthy living well and can talk about the importance of washing hands before handling food. This good understanding of the need to keep food clean was clearly evident as one little girl exclaimed, 'It's only plastic!' when the inspector asked why a 'loaf of bread' was on the floor. The children's good achievement and social skills and their above average attendance show that the children are well prepared for their future education.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment ¹	3
The quality of children's learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children's behaviour	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance ¹	2
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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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How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning is mostly good in all parts of the school, including for children in the assessment unit, those attending the Neighbourhood Nursery, including those receiving childcare. At times, teaching and learning are outstanding in the maintained nursery, for example during keyworker-led small group sessions and during outdoor child-chosen activities. This is because on these occasions, teaching and learning activities are focused very successfully on enthusing the children and on building new learning on the children's previous levels of understanding and experience. This was seen, for example, during a group session when children were challenged at just the right level to count horse chestnut 'conkers'.

Strong features of the teaching and support throughout the nursery school include very warm relationships between adults and children and full engagement and good challenge for all children across a wide breadth of lively practical activity. These include, for example, in the exhilarating sensory room where children under three were captivated by the moving lights and colourful bubbling water. The children's interest is often sustained well by the staff's very good modelling of speaking and social awareness. These strategies have a particularly beneficial effect in lifting children's self-confidence, enjoyment and social interaction and their physical and creative development. At times though, one or two staff are not persuasive or persistent enough in ensuring that, appropriate to their stage of development, children respond orally to their well-focused questions. This slows the development of their speech in those sessions. Similarly, on occasion, opportunities for children to freely choose to attempt writing or to look at books are not given enough emphasis or adult guidance. Children greatly benefit from the close support they receive from adults who, because they know the children really well, interact effectively to promote good learning. However, recorded assessments of the children's achievements are not always used quickly enough to target the next steps in developing children's skills.

Excellent pastoral care and strong links with outside agencies, specifically for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those considered potentially vulnerable, underpin the children's improving ability to sustain their concentration in learning. Systems to promote the children's good attendance and to secure their safety are fully secure. There are good links with parents and carers that have improved this term as result of the open invitation given to parents and carers to join in with their children at the start of each school day. These links help sustain and promote the children's very positive attitudes. The curriculum is enhanced by the school's spacious extensive indoor and outdoor learning facilities opportunities, which support an optimum balance of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children themselves. Popular choices include role play in 'Mary Cook's Bakery' or in the outside 'building site', modelling with dough, painting and energetic outdoor bike

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riding or climbing. These activities increase children's enjoyment in learning and encourage their creative and physical development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's well-focused leadership has secured a shared vision, which with good self-evaluation and accurately identified areas for development have given a good momentum to the drive for improvement. The new leadership team has had a very positive impact on the school's effectiveness by securing more consistency in staffing and by sustaining the much needed additional support for vulnerable children and those with complex needs. Together with the governing body, senior staff have updated the necessary policies and procedures to establish excellent safeguarding practice. Safeguarding checks now include, for example, exemplary staff and child protection procedures. Parents and carers have been more openly welcomed into the school to share in the education of their children. These initiatives have refreshed the children's self-confidence, enjoyment and engagement in learning at school. The governing body fulfils its duties and supports the headteacher very well. Effective strategic planning, well-considered staff training and a united commitment to sustain exemplary care, guidance and support ensure good value for money.

The school promotes good links with parents and outside agencies, which complement the learning activities provided for the children in the maintained nursery, especially for children with complex needs, and the additional childcare support in the Neighbourhood Nursery. The staff's diligence in treating all children as unique individuals and promoting their equally good progress reflect the school's successful promotion of equality of opportunity and refusal to tolerate any form of discrimination. The school lies at the heart of its community and promotes community cohesion effectively through topic days such as 'Dads' Day', by inviting parents and carers from minority ethnic heritages to visit the school to talk to the children and by noting the cultural similarities and differences when celebrating children's birthdays.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers expressed close to full agreement with most of the statements. In particular all those who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they are happy with their children's experience at this school. The few written comments were almost all very positive with particularly appreciative views expressed about children enjoying learning and being safe at school. There were very few negative comments. These concerned individual issues about readiness for the future and managing behaviour. The inspection team found that children are prepared well for the next stage of their education and that, because of the staff's outstanding support, their behaviour is excellent.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Ham Drive 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 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 56 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	76	7	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	76	7	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	48	14	48	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	59	11	38	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	52	13	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	55	12	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	52	13	45	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)	12	41	13	45	2	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	62	9	31	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	45	12	41	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	55	12	41	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	72	8	28	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	79	6	21	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.



5 October 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Ham Drive Nursery School, Plymouth PL2 2NJ

Thank you so much for welcoming us to your school. We really enjoyed talking with you and seeing you at work. We were very impressed by many things, but especially by your excellent behaviour, the way you play and learn so well together and the way that all the adults who work at the school care so much for you. We are pleased that our findings match what your parents and your headteacher say - that Ham Drive Nursery is a good school.

These are the other main things we found.

- You make good progress because the staff ensure that you feel happy and safe and enjoy your learning at the school.
- The staff teach you well and use your own ideas to make sure that activities, both indoors and outside, interest you. As a result, most of you develop skills that are close to those expected for your age.
- Your headteacher, staff and members of the governing body work well together and with your parents and carers and visiting staff to make sure that you achieve well.

To help you to achieve even more, we have asked your headteacher and staff to help you to improve your speaking, reading and writing skills.

You can all help by choosing to look at books and trying to write more often and by making sure that, as much as you can, you speak back to adults when they ask you a question.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter
Lead inspector

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