

# Horden Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113986
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	378779
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 April 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Linda Buller

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	
<b>Age range of children</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of children</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of children on the school roll</b>	100
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Elizabeth Wood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Natalie Parkinson (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	Cotsford Park Horden Peterlee SR8 4TB
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Linda Buller

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed three teachers and five support staff in eight lessons and during sessions providing independent, continuous learning. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and the local authority school improvement officer. The on-line questionnaire (Parent View) was looked at, but no responses were recorded. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school development plan, the safeguarding policy, information regarding the monitoring of the school's work and records of children's experiences in their 'learning journey' books. Questionnaires received from 33 parents and carers were analysed in addition to those received from children in the nursery.

## Information about the school

The school has a similar number of children on roll as other schools of its type. The vast majority of children is of White British heritage and approximately 25% of children in the current cohort have been identified as having special educational needs. The school draws 98% of its children from Horden, an ex-mining community which falls within the bottom 7% of the 8th most deprived area in Durham County.

The nursery offers education on a split site with the provision of the equivalent of 13 part-time places offered at Horden Children's Centre. The headteacher has been absent from school due to illness since November 2011. The school is currently led and managed by the assistant headteacher on an acting basis.

The school has Investors in People status and Basic Skills accreditation.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Achievement of children</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of children</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key Findings

- This is an outstanding school. Every child is treated as a unique individual by highly reflective practitioners who have an excellent understanding of child development and the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Leaders and managers rigorously seek out innovative curriculum initiatives in order to continually develop staff expertise and meet the specific needs of each child.
- Staff in-depth knowledge of each child, including the skilful identification of how each one learns best, is a key strength of the outstanding teaching. As a result, all children, including those who have special educational needs, make outstanding progress from their starting points and achieve exceptionally well.
- Children’s experiences are recorded diligently and imaginatively in ‘learning journey’ books which are highly valued by children, their parents and carers. The best examples provide detailed information regarding the child’s attainment and the next steps which are needed to maintain their outstanding progress. This level of outstanding practice is not yet fully evident in the ‘learning journeys’ of all children.
- The outstandingly rich curriculum supports their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Together with outstanding teaching, this contributes significantly to children’s love of school, their outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning and a heightened awareness of their own and others’ safety.
- Leaders and managers are highly effective in the implementation of systems of self-evaluation which inform the detailed plans put in place to sustain and build upon previously identified outstanding provision. They manage staff performance exceptionally well and are adept at drawing upon the strengths of every individual staff member to excellent effect. The governing body is accurate in its evaluation that the nursery provides children with an outstanding education. However, it does not have systems in place to support the school in the monitoring of the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the support provided by the governing body in monitoring the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Bring greater consistency to the recording within 'learning journeys' so that children's attainment and the next steps to be taken in every area of learning are made clear to all parents and carers.

## Main Report

### Achievement of children

Each year, on entry to the nursery, only a very small minority of children is attaining at the expected levels for three-year-olds. In most cases, attainment is at best, below expectations and in many instances, significantly below. Children are eager to attend and respond positively to the exciting and stimulating opportunities provided both in the nursery and through regular visits to places of interest. They quickly settle into nursery routines and show exceptionally high levels of curiosity, imagination and concentration. The relationships which they build with staff are highly successful in developing independent, active learners who make outstanding progress to reach the levels expected of their age by the time they leave the school. Those with special educational needs also make exceptional progress because their learning needs are clearly identified and expertly met. These children respond particularly well to the nursery philosophy of learning through music and rhyme. They, together with their peers, enthusiastically 'squiggle while they wiggle', a programme designed to develop gross and fine motor skills within dance and mark-making.

Early reading skills are carefully developed through clear teaching of phonics (the sounds made by letters) and regular reading activities in which adults share books with children and talk to them about the stories. The use of the initial sounds of children's names and books, which reflect children's own interests, captures their interest and fosters a desire to learn more. For example, non-fiction books linked to the recently acquired guinea pigs are used expertly by staff to bring about outstanding progress in children's understanding that information can be retrieved from books. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire report that the school helps their children to develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. These skills, together with a strong emphasis on the development of social and emotional well-being, are at the heart of all learning activities and are key to children's outstanding achievement and their excellent preparation for the next stage of their education.

### Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is outstanding and this is reflected in comments by parents and carers, almost all of whom consider their children are taught extremely well. Inspirational and innovative teaching ensures that all children are motivated to learn.

Staff are highly adept at following children's interests and weaving together all six areas of children's learning. Children's keenness for planting and growing for example, has led to the creation of raised beds, where children happily develop their physical skills in digging. Alongside this, staff make excellent use of open-ended questioning to encourage and extend language, to enhance counting and measuring skills and to further children's knowledge and understanding of nature. Staff are very skilled at early identification of any barriers which children have to their learning. They leave no stone unturned in accessing alternative curriculum provision and support so that those children identified as having special educational needs are enabled to make the same outstanding progress as that of their peers.

Planning is meticulous and all adults work extremely well as a team. Staff use their in-depth knowledge of early child development to great effect. As a result of this and the skilful observation of children's learning, the planned curriculum is regularly fine-tuned in order to ensure that the level of challenge increases as children's skills improve. An excellent ratio of staff to children means that there is always an adult on hand to ensure children's learning is maximised from each activity provided. For example, accessing the snack table, as well as being highly effective in promoting outstanding social skills, provides excellent opportunities for children to marvel and wonder at how from cows comes milk which can become butter and cheese. From the visit to the farm, children understand the moral issues of sustainability and can compare different cultural experiences between this and their visit to China Town. These are examples of the many activities which illustrate the way in which teachers consistently promote children's outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **Behaviour and safety of children**

Children's excellent behaviour contributes significantly to their outstanding achievement. They are exceptionally polite and courteous and most understand the importance of sharing, listening and taking turns. In a highly effective music session their ability to follow instructions ensured that learning moved at a fast pace. As a result, they made outstanding progress in understanding how to follow the conductor, responding expertly to hand signals to vary the dynamics of their playing. Children are able to explain what behaviour staff expect of them and confirm how well they get along with each other. Any rare instances of challenging behaviour are quickly turned by staff into a learning opportunity and, as a result, children rapidly learn how to improve their behaviour and no learning time is lost. Records show that there have been no instances of bullying and no exclusions from school. Parents and carers express absolute confidence in the school's systems for dealing with any issues that might arise.

Children have, for their age, an excellent understanding of safe practices and use tools carefully, for instance when digging or cutting. At every opportunity, children are encouraged to manage risk in a safe environment. They have every confidence that staff will always be there to offer support if it is needed. Children are able to identify for themselves areas which pose a risk and are adept at explaining how to manage these situations. In role play for example, they clearly explain the need for the use of oven gloves when removing cakes from the oven so that they do not burn their hands.

The school promotes prompt and regular attendance as an important preparation for primary school. Absences or regular lateness are followed up carefully with parents and carers and the school can point to significant improvement as a result.

### **Leadership and management**

The acting headteacher has stepped seamlessly into the role of leading and managing the school. Through her own outstanding practice she leads by example with a clear vision for excellence and a firm commitment to improving the life chances of local children and families. Professional development is a key aspect of the success of the school. Staff are actively encouraged to look beyond the school boundaries and take inspiration from a wealth of innovative initiatives so that children continue to benefit from inspirational teaching. Children are very well safeguarded. Leaders and managers are committed to continually assessing and ensuring their safety through rigorous procedures and regular risk assessments.

The outstanding school curriculum is wide and varied with a strong emphasis on learning through music, rhyme, play and exploration. This philosophy of Early Years education promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development outstandingly well. Excellent systems of monitoring and evaluation ensure that curriculum planning is adjusted as required so that children's needs are fully met. In this way, every child has an equal opportunity to succeed. Parents and carers typically comment that they find the nursery 'a fantastic, stimulating, supportive, environment ..... staff are keen to promote interest and learning and are also very caring about us as family on a personal level.' They appreciate the highly productive relationship the school has fostered with them and how well children's experiences are shared through detailed records in 'learning journey' books. The quality of information shared with parents and carers' regarding their child's individual attainment and their next steps in learning is good, but not yet consistently outstanding.

The governing body shares the ambition of staff to provide the best possible education for all children in their care. Its members appreciate the detailed reports provided by the school, and are well known to parents and carers. Their confidence in staff is well placed but they have not fully ensured that they have systems of their own in place to support the school in monitoring the implementation of statutory requirements. Nonetheless, given the school's exceptional track record of sustaining improvement and building upon previously identified outstanding performance, the capacity to improve is excellent.

## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the child's' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of children at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well children behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Children's punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	The national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the children' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe children are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Children's freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



24 April 2012

Dear Children

**Inspection of Horden Nursery School, Peterlee SR8 4TB**

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to your school. Thank you for making me so welcome. You are a credit to your school and your families. Your behaviour is excellent and you are considerate and kind towards others. Well done! Everything you told and showed me helped me to decide that Horden is an outstanding nursery school.

Your teachers and all the adults provide you with lots of exciting activities to make sure that you thoroughly enjoy your time at school. They make sure that the activities are those which you like doing and that there are lots of new things for you to try. This, as well as your excellent attitudes to your learning, means that by the time it comes to going to a new school, you have made outstanding progress.

I hope you have decided on names for the guinea pigs and that all the information which your teachers helped you to find out is helping you to understand how to care for them well.

Your headteacher and all of the adults are keen to make your school even better. I have asked them to make sure that all of your 'learning journey' books help your parents and carers to fully understand what you have already learnt and what you need to learn next. I have also asked the governing body to provide your teachers with more help in carrying out all of the checks which they must make to be sure that your school continues to make outstanding provision for you.

You can also help by making sure that you continue always to try as hard as you can.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller  
Lead inspector

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