

Dorking Nursery School

West Street, Dorking, Surrey RH4 1BY

Inspection dates 16–17 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Outstanding leadership and management, linked to an ambitious vision for the school, have resulted in the exciting and nurturing environment in which all children flourish.
- Children of all abilities, including those who are disabled and those with special educational needs, as well as those in receipt of additional funding, do exceptionally well during their time at the school, often from low starting points.
- Outstanding teaching as a result of very strong understanding of the new Early Years curriculum, results in children making rapid progress in their learning, particularly in communication and language and in personal development.
- Children love learning outdoors. Working in the wild area of the garden engages children's interests and promotes their excellent behaviour.
- Leaders are rigorous about ensuring the teaching is first class.
- An excellent training programme helps staff keep up to date and fine-tune their skills.
- Very strong links with the children's centre ensures that individual needs are very well met.
- Parents and carers are extremely pleased with the school and rightly say their children achieve well and are safe at school. A few would like more support from the school to help their children learn at home.
- Through their highly efficient planning and careful controls the governing body ensures the best possible use of the money available, to the benefit of all groups of children.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons, some jointly with the headteacher. In addition the inspector made a number of other short visits to different sessions to observe children playing.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior teachers, and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector also had a telephone conversation with a local authority representative and spoke to a few parents, carers and children.
- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of documents, including the school's own data on children's progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information and children's profiles.
- The inspector took account of the 23 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and spoke to 12 parents and carers during the inspection. Questionnaires were received from 31 staff members and these were also analysed.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Dorking Nursery School is part of a Sure Start Children's Centre, sharing the same site, staff and leaders. A range of children's services are provided by the centre which is inspected separately.
- The school is an average-sized nursery school. It has two classes, one for children aged two to three years old and another for children from three to five years old. In this class there is also specialist local authority provision for up to 18 children who are disabled or have special educational needs, including communication and language difficulties, autism spectrum disorders or learning difficulties.
- The vast majority of children come from Dorking, but the school also has children from the surrounding areas.
- A few children, mainly from European backgrounds do not speak English.
- The school regularly provides conferences linked to nursery education to support other schools and practitioners.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Work closely with parents and carers to support children's learning at home by:
 - providing support and advice so that parents and carers gain practical ideas about how to help their children learn at home
 - providing advice on managing behaviour
 - encouraging parents and carers to bring their children to school as often as they can and spend time with their children in the nursery.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- All groups of children, including those who are disabled and those with special educational needs, achieve exceptionally well during their time at the Nursery. The vast majority make outstanding progress, often from low starting points, as they play joyfully and learn quickly in the nursery's exciting environment.
- Children eagerly run into their classrooms in the morning, registering themselves and checking out the range of activities available. They quickly settle and thrive in the creative and caring environment, making rapid and sustained progress.
- The strong focus on improving children's speech and language skills is evident in the wide range of resources that quickly engage their interests. Three year olds, for example, use a class 'office' which regularly encourages them to have pretend telephone conversations. Two three year olds were observed 'talking' to their mummies and to each other on 'mobiles'. One child quickly passed the phone to the teacher saying 'my mummy needs to talk to you.'
- Older children are well prepared for their futures as they learn to listen to stories and recognise initial sounds in names. In a group session, children sat quietly listening to nursery rhymes. They made some outstanding gains in learning about rhyme as they played a game with their teacher. The teacher held Humpty Dumpty and asked children what happened to him. They said he 'sat on a wall and had a great fall'. Children then made up other rhymes saying, for example, 'Humpty Dumpty sat on a log, Humpty Dumpty saw a dog', showing exceptional understanding.
- In the younger class children from the age of two regularly share books, listen to stories and respond to questions.
- The use of technology has improved since the last inspection and is helping to promote children's independence. This is particularly evident in the way that children press a switch to check whether they can play outdoors and what clothes they should put on. Two boys were observed using the mouse accurately on the computer to dress a snowman. They showed very good skills as they clicked and dragged clothes, made changes and checked out the options.
- Developing independence is a particular focus in the nursery. Children regularly initiate their own learning, make decisions and choose resources. A 'choosing shed' in the garden contains a very wide range of resources that children can use to make up their own play. A group of three year olds decided to make a bus. They fetched a large steering wheel, positioning it at the front of their bus and then gathered six chairs behind it. Children had great fun driving their bus, getting on and off, going shopping, singing songs and working together.
- Recent innovations, such as the introduction of a 'forest school' in a large wild area of the garden, has added opportunities for children to improve their knowledge and understanding as they learn about nature, observe small creatures, build shelters and develop resilience and teamwork.
- Parents and carers are very pleased with their children's progress. 'I cannot tell you enough wonderful things about this nursery,' commented one parent. Most parents and carers who spoke to the inspector agreed that the school provides lots of courses for parents and carers but a few said that they would like more help to support their children's learning and behaviour at home.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Inspirational teaching is evident in all areas of this nursery. Sessions are very well planned and organised with exciting experiences and innovative approaches. Because children know and understand the routines, lessons move at a fast pace. High expectations of children's behaviour and engagement are evident in all activities. Teachers are skilled at moving children on to the

next steps.

- Questioning is a key strength. Teachers frequently ask children about their learning, questioning and seeking to extend children's skills. An example of this was evident when children with speech and language difficulties were playing with farm animals. They were required to find a cow, a pig or a horse, for example, from a selection and put them in a required place. The teacher then asked, 'Where's the cow?' to check understanding and improve language and listening skills.
- Children's successes are accurately recorded, often by observing their learning and noting outcomes, and sometimes through photographs. In the very best lessons teachers create awe and wonder in learning which fully engages almost all children and promotes their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Evidence from pictures taken during a zoo visit shows that children were excited by the opportunity to hold snakes, large snails, and spiders.
- Teaching typically enables children to make rapid progress because of exciting resources and tasks that are very effectively planned to meet each child's individual interests and needs. For example, children with special educational needs were able to improve their language skills as they played a word game with their teacher. The very good use of signs and symbols helped the children to understand what was expected and succeed on the task. All staff regularly undertake training to improve their own knowledge, ensuring that they are abreast of new initiatives. They make very good use of the new Early Years curriculum to improve learning.
- All of the parents and carers who responded to the on-line questionnaire rightly agree that their children are very well taught. High levels of staff expertise and the outstanding use of resources mean that lessons move at an excellent pace.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children's very positive attitudes and their eagerness to take part in all the school's activities are evident in their full engagement from the moment they arrive. They are keen to play with others and with staff. They show their enthusiasm by undertaking simple jobs, such as giving out name cards, collecting rubbish, tidying up and clearing away their toys. Behaviour is excellent and no evidence of any bullying was seen during the inspection and none is evident in the school's records.
- Children show clear understanding that eating fruit is good for them and many children try new or different pieces of fruit daily. They understand the need to wash their hands before eating. Examples of safe risk taking are evident in many activities, particularly outdoors. For example, children recently completed a challenge to walk across a see-saw, balancing carefully as they negotiated movements. These activities ensure that children are able to weigh-up risks and take good care of themselves.
- Children are kind and ensure that they keep others safe. This was evident as several three year olds rode bikes and trucks down a slope going faster and faster. While sharing his ride with a girl, one boy stopped suddenly because she wanted to get off. He waited to ensure that she was safely away from the bike before continuing.
- Staff manage behaviour well and there are examples of children who have difficulties with their emotional and social skills, improving their behaviour because of specific targets and use of rewards. Parents and carers rightly say that behaviour at the school is excellent.
- A very few parents and carers do not ensure their children use their school place as regularly as they should.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leaders and staff have successfully built on previous outstanding provision and outcomes to increase the exciting and innovative environment in which children thrive and feel valued.
 - Leaders have embedded a capacity for further improvement through high levels of staff training and by introducing new initiatives such as forest school to provide even more challenging experiences for children. The new curriculum is successful in helping children to take more responsibility for their own activities and games.
 - Leaders at all levels are fully involved in improving the school. A very strong emphasis on supporting children's individual needs means that all children, including those who are disabled and those with special educational needs, can overcome barriers to their learning. All have equal opportunities and there is no discrimination. Leaders are rigorous about ensuring that there is an adult attached to each activity both in the classrooms and outdoors, so that children's questions can be answered and their knowledge extended.
 - Effective use of the 'Teachers Standards' demonstrates the commitment to high quality training which helps staff to improve their skills and seek promotion. Training in the use of signing and symbols, for example, has helped to make the nursery fully inclusive and also enables the few children who speak English as an additional language to quickly understand what is being said.
 - Parents and carers are highly supportive of leadership and value the work they do to promote the well-being of their children. There is a strong partnership with parents and carers, other schools and local support services, and school regularly sets up conferences to improve the skills of others. The school is designated one that needs low levels of support by the local authority.
 - Exceptionally close working relationships with the children's centre have a very positive impact on all of the school's work.
 - Safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements and give no cause for concern.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - shows very clear strategic direction, promoting a welcoming and challenging ethos
 - is fully involved in evaluating the school's strengths and areas for improvement, holds leaders to account and insists on regular updates
 - manages the school's finances very well, putting on regular educational conferences which raise money for the school
 - uses the money allocated for children with additional needs very well to ensure the funds benefit these children.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124912
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	402298
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandy Horvath
Headteacher	Susan Beckett
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 January 2010
Telephone number	01306 882397
Fax number	01306 882397
Email address	admin@dorking.surrey.sch.uk

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