

Ashfield Nursery School

101 Elswick Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE4 6JR

Inspection dates 13–14 November 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.

- Children make outstanding progress across the full Nursery curriculum as they move through the school. Most join the school with much lower skills than expected for their age. By the time they leave, the very great majority have reached the expected level and many exceed it.
- Progress of children learning English as an additional language is excellent. They gain great confidence in understanding English and systematically develop the confidence to speak for themselves.
- The children eligible for additional funding make equally outstanding progress as other children.
- Children make outstanding progress in managing their own behaviour. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Lunchtimes are very civilised occasions.
- Teaching staff work extremely well together, both within the classrooms and outdoors. They manage children's behaviour skilfully. They have an excellent understanding of each child's level of development and they target questions carefully to support future learning.
- Activities are of high quality but those outdoors do not always help children build on a skill in a concentrated manner.
- The headteacher and governors have a strong determination to sustain the outstanding provision. The whole-school team is committed to making sure that each child achieves their potential in a safe and highly cohesive learning community. The management of financial resources is very efficient.
- There is a very close and effective partnership with parents.
- The school takes full advantage of its multi-ethnic characteristics. It provides exciting opportunities for children to learn about each other's cultures and beliefs.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons or parts of lessons, all of which were joint observations with the headteacher. The observations included both indoor and outdoor sessions. The four different groups of children having lunch were observed.
- Inspectors met with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, senior leaders, teachers and support staff and talked to a representative from the local authority.
- There was only one response to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector scrutinised the school's own questionnaire to parents, to which more than 70% of parents responded. The inspector talked to a wide range of parents during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on children's current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Margaret Shepherd, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

- The school serves both the immediate area and a much wider area across Newcastle. When children leave the school they go to the neighbouring primary school and to 19 other schools.
- The school is larger than the average nursery school.
- Over two thirds of the children are from 21 different minority ethnic groups. Over one third of all children entering the school have no English speaking skills at all. The proportion of these children has been increasing since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of children receiving funding based on their eligibility through Local Authority Index of Multiple Deprivation and are eligible for free school meals is much higher than average.
- At the time of the inspection there were no children on the special needs register, although some children are going through the process of being registered. There are no disabled children.
- Since the previous inspection the school has moved from full-time provision to a part-time basis. The great majority of children stay for school lunch and an additional session in the afternoon.
- The school shares its building with a private childcare facility. This provision did not form part of this inspection but the report can be found on the Ofsted website.
- The school has the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investors in Children, the International Award and the Healthy Schools Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make the outdoor learning even better by:
 - increasing the proportion of adult-led activities
 - extending more of the daily independent tasks across the week, to allow children to build on the development of a particular skill.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children make excellent progress in communication and language. They develop very effective skills of listening and paying attention, whether this be in a whole group or during individual discussions with adults. Children's development of understanding and following instructions also progresses very well as they express their responses to the different experiences that they encounter across the school sessions.
- Children with no English at the start of the year make particularly good progress in learning to communicate with simple words and then building them up into sentences as their confidence increases. Children who are eligible for additional funding are also making outstanding progress across the full curriculum.
- The many opportunities available for extending small physical skills, such as holding a pen, result in excellent development. Children persevere when trying to master the manipulation of different tools or construction apparatus. When children are in the outdoor area they gain great confidence in making larger physical movements, whether this be developing the skills of riding a tricycle or mastering different ways of coming down a slide.
- Children thoroughly enjoy listening to stories and are proud when they remember key features of characters or plot. They recognise their own names when they are written down and the more confident children manage to reproduce recognisable letters. They all realise that when they make marks they can convey meaning, such as producing marks or letters on the front of envelopes.
- There is outstanding progress in children's knowledge of mathematical shapes and in simple counting. The more-able children can already add on one more to a single digit. Children thoroughly enjoy developing their creative skills. They handle a range of different materials such as paint or collage and are proud of the final outcome. They are keen to try out fresh experiences and have a curiosity about new activities, such as listening to the sounds of scrunching up autumn leaves.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Staff have very high expectations of every child across each aspect of the curriculum.
- The partnership between teachers and support staff is exceptionally good. There are outstanding levels of communication across the full teaching team both within classrooms and when they work together outdoors. Staff play and talk with each child with great skill. They observe individuals' progress very closely, discuss it in the staff team and make sure that the next steps of learning are carefully planned to ensure maximum progress in future.
- Teachers use their own language extremely carefully in lessons. They provide a very clear model for children to copy. They make sure that they use a specific range of vocabulary that matches the children's levels of understanding. They give precise and clear instructions and check carefully that each child has understood.
- The organisation of the school day is very carefully planned to ensure optimum opportunities for learning and a careful balance across different types of activities both indoors and outdoors. Staff use these systems flexibly in direct response to children's different needs.
- Teachers provide a very wide range of stimulating tasks in the very high-quality outdoor area. The key focus is on independent learning, with a few adult-led activities. The school is in a very good position to extend these adult-focussed sessions to provide even more specific learning for groups of children.
- In some aspects, outdoors activities build on the previous day's task. For example, children were introduced to sounds of banging on saucepans and then carried out investigations with handbells the next day. Some opportunities are missed outdoors to extend this strategy across other areas of the curriculum.

- Staff manage behaviour extremely well. They make sure that any minor incidents are followed up and that children understand the impact of their actions on other children. This is carried out very sensitively with clear instructions of what is expected in future.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children have very positive attitudes towards learning. They approach new activities with confidence and enjoy building on their learning from previous sessions.
- A key feature of children's behaviour is the way that they build relationships with each other across all the different ethnic groups and between girls and boys. They appreciate that they are all different and that they need to be considerate to each other and appreciate those differences. They develop a very good understanding of each other's cultures and beliefs through projects such as sharing the different traditions that families have for festivals such as Christmas.
- Children have a very good understanding of school routines. They calmly settle into the morning's activities, transferring from their parents with the minimum of fuss. They are very confident in choosing a task and have higher levels of concentration than expected for their age. They realise that they need to share resources and treat them with respect.
- Children develop a very thorough understanding of right and wrong. They listen carefully to staff when they explain the rules and try their best to carry them out. They carry out these rules whether they are under direct supervision or when they are learning independently. They appreciate that they need to be careful to keep themselves and those around them safe.
- Individuals are becoming skilled at managing relationships. They cooperate very well across different shared activities, whether this be in open-ended activities such as investigating in the sand or the water, or in taking turns in whole-class sessions. They develop skills in adopting different roles in their imaginative play. For example, they realise that they can either be the customer or the staff in the hairdressing salon.
- Children develop strong relationships with adults and are very willing to turn to them if they are worried about anything. They persevere in communicating their feelings.
- Individuals' understanding of the different expectations of their behaviour between indoor and outdoor provision is very good. They move around the building very sensibly and understand the importance of listening to instructions about when to move. They are patient while they are waiting for other children to join them before they transfer between different parts of the building.
- Children show excellent behaviour during lunchtime. They all try hard to use knives and forks and appreciate that eating a meal is a community activity. They know that they are expected to use please and thank you when responding to adults, which also develops their language skills very well. They are developing a good understanding of which types and amounts of food are healthy.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher works very closely with the governing body and staff to create a climate for continuing excellence. Leaders have an outstanding understanding of the needs of each child in the context of their families and their multicultural community. They are united in striving to make the best use of the resources available to provide high quality education. This results in excellent promotion of equal opportunities and a total lack of discrimination.
- Leaders analyse very effectively data of different groups of children's progress and then take carefully focussed action. This is ensuring that the gap is narrowing between how well children who are eligible for additional funding achieve and the performance of other children.
- Leaders focus strongly on improving teaching and learning. There is a very effective combination of formal checking of the performance of each member of staff and daily informal discussion of

how to make teaching and learning more effective. This is brought together very well in whole school and individual professional training.

- Staff provide an excellent model of professional standards across their work.
- The curriculum is carefully organised to match the developing needs of each child as the year progresses. The school has responded quickly to the changes in the nursery curriculum. There is a clear priority to emphasise the three new prime areas of personal development, communication and language and physical development. The provision for high quality spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to the beliefs and values of the school.
- Safeguarding systems are thorough.
- A high priority is placed on creating close partnerships with parents. The school values their views and responds to their suggestions quickly. The daily interaction of the headteacher and staff with parents produces high levels of communication, as do the consultation sessions with parents to discuss their children's progress.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this outstanding school. The school makes good use of the specialist support that is available.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly ambitious in sustaining the outstanding provision for its community. It has an excellent understanding of the practice of the school through regular visits into classrooms to observe learning. There is a very good balance of expertise across the governing body, particularly in experience of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The representation of leaders from the childcare facility and the neighbouring primary school supports transition very effectively. Governors ensure that they are robust in holding the school to account. Together with the headteacher they are managing the reducing budget very effectively.

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	108427
Local authority	Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Inspection number	400980

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	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judy Cowgill
Headteacher	Anne Stoker
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2010
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