

Cleator Moor Nursery School

Ennerdale Road, Cleator Moor, Cumbria, CA25 5LW

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.

- The school has a warm and welcoming ethos where every child is valued and nurtured to achieve a high standard and to be an independent, confident and happy learner.
- Achievement is outstanding. Children start school with skills that are well below those typically expected for their age. They make excellent progress in all areas of learning and development. By the time they leave, most children's skills are at the levels expected for their age.
- The curriculum is rich in resources and experiences that lead to the children's outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Teaching is outstanding overall and never less than good. The teaching of letters and sounds and of mathematical skills is particularly effective. Teachers assess children's learning very well but do not yet set them simple targets to help them understand how to become even better learners.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. They come to school happily each day, keen to start on new and exciting learning in an extremely safe environment.
- Strong leadership from the headteacher coupled with the support of a highly effective governing body means that staff are enthusiastic and continually strive to provide even better learning opportunities for children.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons and small group sessions.
- Discussions were held with parents, members of the governing body, one local authority representative and school staff.
- The inspector took account of a recent school survey of parents' views. There were insufficient responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for the lead inspector to be able to access them.
- A range of documents were looked at, including the school's data on children's progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Janette Corlett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average size nursery school which serves the local town of Cleator Moor and also attracts children from the wider local community.
- The vast majority of children are of White British heritage and no children are at an early stage of acquiring English.
- The proportion of children supported through early action is above average. The proportion of children supported at early action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- Children attend the school for up to five terms following their third birthday and prior to beginning the Reception class in different schools. All children attend for either five mornings or five afternoons each week.
- Some children attend for additional, paid sessions, including lunchtime and after-school sessions which are managed by the governing body in the adjoining Dent Educare facility.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve children's achievement by setting simple, individual targets for children's learning and personal development which help them to understand how they can be even better learners and how to develop excellent thinking skills for a lifetime of learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Excellent relationships, supported by careful observation and recording of achievements, ensure that each adult knows each child very well. This means that children quickly develop confidence and make rapid progress in their learning. Parents appreciate this and typically comment that staff are very friendly and approachable.
- Staff provide exciting and stimulating activities to support communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, pitched at exactly the right level and this leads to children's outstanding progress. For example, a small group of children were guided to learn about shape, space and measures as they enjoyed making a cup of hot chocolate through recognising numerals on a measuring jug and carefully adding milk up to the right amount. They also made toast and were able to recognise rectangle and triangle shapes when this was cut up to eat.
- Children quickly gain confidence in reading simple words and many can already recognise their own names. This is because of the well-planned activities to help them develop reading skills using letters and sounds, and frequent opportunities to enjoy hearing stories and acting out well-known tales in role play. As a result, most children enter the Reception Year with skills and abilities in these areas within the range of those expected for their age.
- Support that is tailored to the needs of each child ensures that they all make rapid progress. Those children with special educational needs make the same outstanding progress as that of their friends in class because of the excellent support they receive from adults.
- Children's skills and knowledge in all areas of learning develop equally well both indoors and outdoors because of the wide range of resources and stimulating opportunities that are available. No chance to develop a child's individual interest is lost. For example, one child was fascinated by the discovery of a very large spider in the outdoor play area. The teaching assistant engaged the whole group of children in counting the number of legs and describing its appearance.
- Children show great curiosity and independence. They confidently share their ideas with one another and with adults who offer very skilled guidance as partners in their play and learning.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is of outstanding quality both when children are supported in activities led by adults and when adults are supporting them as they learn through playing in ways they have chosen for themselves.
- Adults expect the very best from children and act as excellent role models. They show real enthusiasm and excitement in learning and always offer children praise and encouragement to gain their confidence. During an activity, which successfully developed children's personal, social and language skills, the teacher dressed up in her pyjamas and let the children talk her through their bedtime routines, not forgetting the importance of washing and cleaning her teeth. The children then sang her to sleep beautifully and took great delight in fetching an alarm clock to wake her up with an appropriately startled response.
- When adults are supporting learning during activities that children choose for themselves, they are adept at allowing the children to lead, but are always alert to opportunities to develop children's understanding and help them to think things through for themselves. A group of children playing with model cars and ramps were skilfully guided to think about how to make the cars slow down or speed up. Further explorations by the group with sand and cooked spaghetti on the ramps proved effective in slowing things down and the children had a great fun as they developed their understanding of the world through scientific enquiry around forces and friction.
- Each adult's knowledge of individual children is based on careful observation and tracking of their progress. This means that children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, receive the correct type of support that they need to make outstanding progress.

- Adults share information about children's interests and progress exceptionally well with one another and with parents. This means that staff are constantly able to plan activities which will build on children's experiences in the classroom as well as at home and, so, they enjoy their learning even more.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children's behaviour is excellent. Nearly all children understand the importance of listening, sharing and taking turns. Daily 'circle time' supports children to feel safe and secure. They develop their personal and social skills through light-hearted activities and song, including sharing their feelings and thinking about how others are feeling. Children understand that everyone feels sad or angry sometimes, but that they should never hurt someone else when they are angry.
- Children learn to sort out minor squabbles for themselves and to understand the importance of respecting each other's differences. They treat each other well almost all of the time. There are no recorded incidents of bullying or racism.
- As they move very sensibly around the building and outdoor area, children demonstrate that they understand how to keep themselves safe and to manage risk. A recent visit from a policeman helped them learn how to keep safe while crossing the road. Similarly, a fire-fighting activity with a member of the fire brigade helped them learn about the dangers of fire and the importance of using tools and equipment safely.
- Nearly all children attend school every day because they enjoy it so much. Any absence is appropriately followed up by the school. A good attendance habit from such an early age provides children with a very strong foundation for the rest of their education. The school further supports this by taking children to visit the primary school in the summer term before they start in the Reception class so that they feel comfortable from the earliest possible stage.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has created a whole-school atmosphere of excellence which has ensured that the school has continued to be outstanding for well over a decade. Her unfailingly positive approach and emphasis on the importance of teamwork means that all staff, no matter what their role, are fully committed to ensuring that her views on how to continue the school's success are fully realised. There is never a sense that the school cannot become even better.
- The school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance are thorough, including those to check on the quality of teaching. Highly effective performance management of all staff means that they receive the right training to help them develop their practice and become even better at helping children to achieve to the very best of their ability. For example, recent training on children's learning outdoors helped the school to make outstanding use of the outdoor play area to promote all aspects of children's learning.
- Systems to track and target children's progress are very detailed and highly effective at pinpointing for adults what needs to be done next. However, the school does not yet provide simple, individual guidance for children on the next small stages in their development so that they become even more independent life-long learners.
- The curriculum is tailored exceptionally well to meet the individual needs of new groups of children when they come to school and it takes full advantage of opportunities for learning through local and national events. For example, recently children raised funds for Macmillan Cancer Relief and presented a cheque to one of the Olympic torchbearers who visited the school and allowed the children to hold the torch. The school held its own Olympic Games which further supported children's outstanding physical development.
- The school's approach of knowing and supporting individuals to achieve as well as they can

means that all children are given an equal opportunity to succeed without any fear of discrimination.

- The excellent extended care provision, which is also managed by the governing body, supports working families and gives children valuable opportunities to continue learning and playing in a homely setting run by familiar school staff.
- All staff have developed excellent relationships with parents, who wholeheartedly support the school. They are very successfully involved as partners in their child's learning journey, through daily planning, regular discussions with staff and home-school activities.
- The local authority provides effective but light touch support for this outstanding school.
- Wide and varied opportunities within the curriculum make a significant contribution towards children's outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A recent visit to the aquarium in Maryport gave children a real sense of awe and wonder, as they carefully handled starfish and learned about the need to care for animals and our environment. All this, together with the excellent support provided by adults, means that achievement continues to improve year on year and demonstrates the school's outstanding ability to carry on making improvements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body provide excellent support for the school and offer appropriate challenge to school leaders. Governors are very well informed and ensure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements and are rigorously checked.

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	112088
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	401232

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Walton
Headteacher	Valerie Bailey
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2009
Telephone number	01946 811189
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