

New Mills Nursery School

Sett Close, New Mills, High Peak, SK22 4AQ

Inspection dates 5–6 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Teamwork in the Nursery is strong. Staff and governors work well together to ensure that children are supported well in their learning and personal development.
- The headteacher is moving the school forward in a determined manner through a clear focus on the continual improvement of teaching.
- The indoor and outdoor areas are used well to provide an interesting range of activities that stimulate the children's imagination.
- Children behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Most have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and their friends safe.
- Teaching is good and ensures that the children develop an early enthusiasm for learning.
- Children make good progress and leave well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is a little variable. Staff do not always check that children know what they are supposed to do and occasionally miss opportunities to demonstrate how to improve work or to use a wider range of words.
- The monitoring of the work of the school by senior staff and governors is not always rigorous enough in identifying areas for further improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons or parts of lessons. Some of these were joint observations with the headteacher. The inspector also listened to some individual children starting to read or re-tell familiar stories.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other staff. Discussions also took place with groups of the children as well as representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the views of four parents and carers from the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the staff survey. She also noted responses to the Nursery's recent parent questionnaire and spoke to several parents and carers at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- The inspector observed the Nursery's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on children's progress, planning and monitoring information and records relating to behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sue Hall, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a small Nursery school where children attend for morning or afternoon sessions only.
- Almost all children are of White British heritage. None speaks English as an additional language.
- As children do not stay for lunch, none are known to be eligible for free school meals or for pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is below average.
- In the last year, there has been a change of full-time teaching staff, the appointment of a part-time newly qualified teacher and, since the last inspection, two changes to the leadership of the governing body. A children's centre has also opened in the local area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - checking that all children know exactly what they are supposed to do when working with an adult
 - demonstrating to the children how they can improve their work
 - taking every opportunity to encourage children to use a wider range of words to describe what they think and are doing.
- Improve the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school by:
 - ensuring that senior leaders rigorously check the effectiveness of teaching and identify areas for further improvement
 - extending the programme of monitoring by governors to ensure that they have an accurate first-hand knowledge of what is provided for the children.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start at the Nursery with widely varying experiences, knowledge and understanding. Overall their skills are in line with expectations for their age.
- School records and observations indicate that girls often start in the Nursery with slightly better communication skills and self-confidence than some boys, a few of whom struggle to explain what they are thinking.
- Children attend for between two and five terms before they transfer to other settings. Records show that those who attend for more than three terms make a better progress than those who attend for less time.
- Because of good teaching, children settle quickly and develop an enthusiasm for learning. When working outside, children show high levels of interest in their environment and become independent learners by choosing which viewers to use when looking to see if they can spot any birds for which they are making bird-cakes.
- By the time they leave, standards are often slightly above the expectations for their age. Children of all abilities make good overall progress. A few girls work at slightly higher levels than some boys but there is no significant difference between boys and girls in their overall progress and achievement.
- Children who are disabled and those who have special educational needs are well supported. They receive specific additional help, as seen when a small group enjoyed an additional story session. This helped to provide, for those who are much quieter than others or struggle with concentration, the opportunity to discuss a story with a trained adult. The support for children with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties is effective and helps them to develop a calmer approach to what they are doing.
- Those identified as gifted and talented are well challenged and make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Children develop an interest in reading because there is a strong focus on storytelling. This results in many children of all abilities quite confidently re-telling a familiar story. Some more-able children identify a good number of words and name several letters and the sounds they make. Many are well on the way to becoming confident young readers.
- Children make good progress in mark-making and early writing activities, with several able to write their name unaided and form some letters from familiar words. They develop a growing understanding of numbers and are often able to identify the items in a set of five and show how many fingers they need in order to match this and other numbers.

The quality of teaching is good

- There is a strong focus on continually improving teaching through developing activities that promote all the key areas of learning for this age. The staff team work well together and with a shared aim to improve teaching further.

- Teachers are well supported by the higher level teaching assistant and other staff. Planning ensures that each member of the team knows what is expected of them and what focus is appropriate in any given activity. As a result, activities flow well, with staff being responsive to children's ideas and interests.
- Staff are enthusiastic in their approach and ensure that learning is fun and challenging. Very effective use is made of the outdoor area to ensure that there are lots of practical activities to take part in. Photographic evidence shows that the outdoor area is very well used throughout the seasons, with several parents and carers noting this as a particular strength.
- Adults manage activities well so that most are conducted in a calm and purposeful manner. This enables children to concentrate well and complete the work they are doing.
- Staff usually introduce activities well so that children know exactly what they have to do. Just occasionally, adults do not explain this well enough so that, for example, children playing a picture-matching game are uncertain what to do and simply collect any cards they can. Similarly, in a painting activity, adults do not always demonstrate well enough how children can improve their work.
- Adults give children lots of praise, which helps to raise their confidence and self-esteem. Most ask a good range of questions to encourage the children to describe what they are doing, which helps to improve their understanding. Occasionally, however, some staff miss the opportunity to introduce new words or encourage the children to use them more. This means that a few children struggle to explain themselves well.
- Staff training activities, as well as monitoring by the headteacher and support from the local authority, have ensured a good focus on improving teaching. Staff are involved in in-service training which has been particularly successful in ensuring the effective use of the outdoor area

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Children say they like coming to Nursery and that they feel safe. The large majority are well behaved and helpful to each other and the adults around them. They co-operate well and usually share resources quite happily. Boys and girls work happily together, sharing their ideas.
- Children have positive attitudes to learning. Most concentrate and try hard with their work. Several readily offer their ideas to discussions. They like music sessions and use a range of percussion instruments carefully and with obvious enjoyment. Children are proud of their 'Treasure Keepers' awards for good behaviour and effort.
- Parents and carers are confident their children are kept safe. Children say they particularly enjoy being outside. This was well illustrated even in very cold weather, when they were keen to get out to see if there were any birds about and to play on the trikes. When pedalling around, they know they have to be careful and ensure that others are kept safe.
- There is a good focus on children developing their independence and they have lots of opportunities to follow their own areas of interest. They know that they have to look after animals and, for example, when looking at a woodlouse, they explain that they soon need to return it to its home.
- Children look forward to their sessions at Nursery and their attendance is good. For their age, children have a reasonable understanding of what bullying is. They know that they must not hurt

others and they say that there are plenty of adults to talk to if they are feeling sad.

- Children with additional needs are well supported, which ensures that their behaviour does not affect the learning of others. When children are not as enthusiastic about learning or lack confidence in speaking in a group, they are well supported through small-group activities. Those who struggle to share with others have lots of encouragement to develop this skill. Children know the rules of listening, looking and sitting still during story time.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher works well with the staff team to ensure that there is a good focus on continuing to improve teaching. She works quietly but in a determined manner to ensure that the Nursery maintains its many strengths while continuing to take account of new ideas.
- Staff work well together to plan and provide a range of activities that meets the different needs of the children. Recent work has ensured that outdoor activities are particularly stimulating and promote children's learning and personal development well. There is also an appropriate focus on developing early reading, writing and mathematics. Developments such as these show that the Nursery has good capacity to continue to improve.
- Teacher's performance is monitored closely and the headteacher and governors use information from lesson observations and data about children's progress to decide whether teachers and other staff should be paid more. This is linked well to a programme of staff training.
- The monitoring of lessons has involved the headteacher and other teaching staff. This has been completed conscientiously but not always rigorously enough. Monitoring has not always identified exactly how effective teaching is or the areas for further improvement. Staff who have recently taken on more teaching responsibilities have as yet had limited opportunity to formally monitor teaching and learning and, for example, make a greater impact by sharing good practice with newly qualified staff.
- The local authority provides effective support for the school when needed and has recognised the continuing effectiveness of the setting.
- While the Nursery receives little additional funding to support specific groups of children who find learning difficult, staff are skilled in providing extra help where it is most needed.
- The very large majority of parents and carers spoken to during the inspection and those who responded to the school's questionnaire are very pleased with the quality of care and education provided for their children. Many declared themselves 'delighted' and think their children are very safe and happy.
- The Nursery provides the children with a strong moral code. There is considerable emphasis placed on enjoying and caring for their environment. Since the last inspection, the school has developed links with others, including in Manchester and Canada, and has been successful in developing children's awareness of other cultures.
- Staff ensure that all children have equal access to learning and are provided with a good range of opportunities to achieve well whatever their background and ability.
- Procedures to safeguard the children meet current government requirements.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body is a very new group that has made an effective start to developing its role in the short time since most were appointed. Governors know about the progress children make, the quality of teaching and salary progression of staff. Governors are already asking more challenging questions of senior leaders to ensure that they have a better understanding of all areas of the school's work. They are starting to hold the staff to account for the standards achieved and to develop their role and involvement in reviewing what is provided for the children. Governors have an appropriate emphasis on development planning. They are now keen to extend their programme of focussed visits to ensure that they have an even better first-hand knowledge of the areas for improvement and are not dependent on the staff for information. Newly appointed governors have already attended some training to undertake their role and more is planned for all governors.

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	112477
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	401268

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	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Emma Hughes
Headteacher	Claire Inman
Date of previous school inspection	14 September 2009
Telephone number	01663 745098
Fax number	01663 745098
Email address	headteacher@newmills-nur.derbyshire.sch.uk

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