

Madeley Nursery School

Bridle Road, Madeley, Telford, TF7 5ET

Inspection dates 11–12 December 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 and achieve exceptionally well in all areas of learning. They become independent and very enthusiastic learners, with excellent learning habits that prepare them well for the next stage in their education.
- All groups of children make equally outstanding progress in developing their key skills. The 'Celebration' books do not have enough examples of children's work to show this progress.
- Staff provide an excellent, imaginative range of rich and exciting activities for children. Recent changes to the time spent in adult-led groups have ensured a better balance with child-initiated learning. Much of the questioning is effective in extending learning but, at times, staff do not extend children's thinking skills sufficiently.
- The headteacher provides the school with outstanding leadership based on a clear understanding of how children learn. There is a strong focus on high expectations, high achievement and children's creativity.
- The governing body challenges the school through regular checking of its work. This results in deep thinking about how improvements can be made. There is no complacency in the school.
- There are excellent links with parents and carers. They say how happy their children are and how safe they feel.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 sessions and parts of sessions. Some of these were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings took place with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff, parents, and a representative of the local authority. Informal discussion also took place with children.
- Samples of children’s work and their ‘Celebration’ books were scrutinised.
- Five parents and carers responded to the online Parent View survey.
- Questionnaires from 11 staff were considered.
- The inspector looked at key inspection documents, including performance data produced by the school, procedures for safeguarding, self-evaluation work, reports to the governing body and the school improvement plan.

Inspection team

Geof Timms, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Madeley is an average-sized nursery school. Children attend for a morning or afternoon session on a part-time basis.
- A below-average proportion of children are supported through early years action.
- An average proportion of children are supported through early years action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The large majority of the children are White British. Very few are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The school has close links with other nursery schools in this country and in Sweden as part of a joint international project on researching and improving the impact of teaching and learning on children's achievement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Review and improve the questions adults ask to promote children's thinking and problem-solving skills to a higher level.
- Improve the evidence of progress in 'Celebration' books by adding more samples of children's work to supplement the photographic evidence.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Many children join the nursery with skills and knowledge in all areas of learning that are well below those expected for their age. A small number are disabled or have special educational needs or are at an early stage in learning English.
- Children make outstanding progress during the time they spend at the school. This has been a consistent picture over a number of years and is clearly shown in the available data showing children's progress. For the past three years, almost every child reached the expected levels for their ages and over three quarters exceeded this. This is outstanding achievement and many children leave with high levels of attainment.
- Boys have levels of attainment that are slightly below those of the girls, especially in their reading, physical and creative development. Even so, they make outstanding progress. The school has set itself a very challenging target to help more boys reach levels in line with the girls. They are working hard to provide a wide range of activities that stimulate and promote boys' learning, especially outdoors. This happened, for example, when children were able to use torches to explore a dark space created in one of the buildings in the garden.
- The small number of children from minority ethnic backgrounds, and those who find learning difficult, make outstanding progress in all areas of learning. This is due to the excellent support provided by all staff and the very effective and close links with parents and carers. The use of home visits to aid transition as children start school has been of great benefit in helping them settle quickly. Staff identify very early any barriers to learning or any vulnerable children who may need extra support.
- Children enjoy looking at books with an adult and often choose to spend some quiet time in the book corner, acting out stories with puppets. They handle books with care, enjoy being read to and acting out stories and games such as 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' In one session, an excellent retelling of the *Snow Queen* led to a lot of discussion around what happened to the characters and what they were feeling. Early skills in linking sounds and letters are continually developed through reinforcing the initials of children's names and the learning of sounds with actions and songs.
- Although attainment in number remains slightly below other areas, children still make excellent progress. Their counting skills are developed very effectively through a wide range of songs, rhymes, games and activities. Knowledge and understanding of the world is outstandingly well taught through a range of activities, such as exploring shadows so that one child could say, 'I move and do acrobatics and it copies me, my shadow, and when I run it follows me.'
- The outdoor area is used extensively every day. This has a very positive impact on children's physical development. During the inspection, one boy made excellent progress in jumping off a frame until he was performing excellent forward rolls. There are plenty of opportunities for messy play with mud or sand, and the chance to explore the properties of ice in shallow trays.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because the staff reflect on their practice at the end of every session in a meeting when individual children's learning is discussed in depth and their next steps planned. The methods used to teach are continually under review. All staff are extremely committed to

doing the best they can for the children in their charge. The school has not stood still since its last inspection but built on its strengths and improved still further. This can be seen in the outstanding achievement.

- One of the most important changes has been to the balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities. More focus is now put on planning work for small groups and this is helping develop excellent learning habits for children's future education. For example, a session when children watched a video and listened to music to inspire thoughtful drawing was held with a group, but other children were also drawn in to the task by their own interest in the film.
- There is an excellent mix of experience among the teachers, nursery nurses and early years practitioners. They work extremely well as a team, planning and assessing children's learning together. There are some excellent interactions in which staff extend children's learning or suggest other options they might consider. However, some opportunities are missed to think about more open questions that would lead to deeper thinking skills and ways of looking at solving problems. Even so, staff provide excellent opportunities for children to think about how they feel about their work. When talking about how they felt when hiding from someone, one child said, 'I feel spikey.' This reflects the imaginative use of language and vocabulary that is a strength throughout the nursery.
- Planning is based on in-depth and frequent assessments and observations of children's learning. This enables staff to target specific activities very effectively. Parents are kept very well informed about children's work at the start and end of every session and through the 'Celebration' books. These contain a lot of photographic evidence of children's work in all areas of learning and occasional annotations by staff to explain the focus or purpose. However, they do not contain enough examples of children's work to illustrate the progress especially in writing, number and drawing. There are also an informative website and very detailed newsletters which contain excellent information about the activities planned for the children and about work they have carried out.
- Staff plan work well to address any barriers to learning. Children needing extra support, for example with their concentration and focus on a specific task, had some outstanding support from an adult on a one-to-one basis. The staff clearly enjoy being part of the nursery team and working with the children. All staff strongly agree that they are proud to be a member of staff at this school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour is outstanding because the relationships among children, and between children and adults, are so strong. This is evident at the start of sessions when children enter with real enjoyment and pleasure, self-register by writing their names and settle very quickly into activities alongside their parents and carers. Many of the children greet each other with pleasure and are clearly learning to share and work together exceptionally well.
- The Nursery provides a very safe learning environment. The staff have created exciting learning opportunities inside and outside which children visit and explore with delight. For example, they love walking through and playing hide and seek in 'the jungle', part of the garden. Parents agree that their children are very well cared for and are safe at the nursery. All those spoken to, or who completed questionnaires, were very positive about how much their children enjoyed school.
- The work to build children's self-esteem and well-being is plainly evident in all of the nursery's work. This includes the way adults talk to children and foster their independence and

responsibility. Children respond to this by showing high levels of care for each other and for the staff. On one occasion, for example, a girl offered to help a member of staff move a heavy box of books unprompted.

- Snack time is exemplary. It is run by an adult appointed for the purpose and provides excellent opportunities for children to learn to keep themselves healthy. Even more important, however, is the opportunity for children to talk to each other or the staff member. Often they will tell her things that they would not share with other teaching staff as she has built a particularly effective relationship with them.
- Attendance is promoted very effectively and any persistent absence is followed up well by the school. This is effective in supporting parents and carers build good habits of attendance and punctuality for their children's future education.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has worked hard to provide effective leadership that is strongly focused on raising children's attainment and helping create the best possible conditions for their learning. She has ensured the school has a lack of complacency and is willing to look outside for new ideas and to adopt and share good practice. An example of this is the project on 'place' being carried out with other nursery settings in this country and in Sweden.
- Although judged outstanding at the last inspection in 2010, the leadership was less well developed as the headteacher had only recently been appointed. Other changes to senior leaders have followed. However, the school has worked very hard to maintain its strengths and continue improving and developing in many ways. Leadership is very effectively distributed among staff and this is clear in the ways different adults take the lead at team meetings and for different aspects of the provision.
- The continual search for improvement is evident in the latest round of performance management of staff which is firmly based on the priorities in the school development plans and also on individual professional development needs. The nursery staff are often used as an exemplar for other settings and at conferences and training events. In addition, the local authority is trialling the school's self-devised system for tracking children's progress against the new areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school provides a very well-planned and excellent range of interesting and exciting learning opportunities. In addition to the school's day-to-day work, visitors include parents talking about their religious festivals and local woodland trust workers building a willow shelter. Children regularly go to local outdoor parks and environmental areas. These are very effective in supporting children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their environmental awareness. The idea of a revisit to one of these chosen by the leavers makes an excellent conclusion to the work on their self-esteem and independence before they move to primary school. All have equal opportunities to take part in any of these special events as well as in the normal daily life of the school.
- There is excellent cooperation with a range of outside agencies. This benefits all children, but especially those who are more vulnerable.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the last inspection, the governing body has developed an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and of the data that show how well children are learning.

The governing body has a good balance of governors with expertise in early years education and parents who are very committed to the school and keen to ensure it continues to improve. They hold the school to account through a range of monitoring activities, including regular visits to observe the nursery in action. Financial expertise is used appropriately to ensure available money is used effectively. Governors have an excellent understanding of the performance of the headteacher and the arrangements for continually improving the performance of all staff. They are fully aware of how this is linked to staff pay and ensure rigorous procedures are used to evaluate the quality of teaching. The Chair of the Governing Body joins in the weekly meetings staff hold to discuss their methods and new ideas, and governors regularly attend staff professional development to enhance their own understanding and expertise as well. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding, are met.

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	123347
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	402151

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paula Clifford
Headteacher	Louise Lowings
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2010
Telephone number	01952 388210
Fax number	01952 388210
Email address	madeleynursery@taw.org.uk

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