

# Whitehills Nursery School

Acre Lane, Northampton, NN2 8DF

**Inspection dates** 15–16 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Friendly and caring relationships help children to enjoy their first experience of school, make good progress and achieve well.
- Teaching is good and learning activities are typically well-planned and build on children's interests. Adults have a good understanding of the individual needs and abilities of each child.
- Behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding. Children quickly learn what is expected of them. They develop good attitudes to learning because they feel safe and secure in the nursery.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the staff. Many spoke of how quickly their children settle into nursery life and how excited they are to attend. As a result, attendance is very good.
- The headteacher and her team, including the governors, are fully involved in the leadership and management of the nursery. The way the governor's work has improved since the nursery was last inspected. They are much more involved with all aspects of the nursery's work. They ensure that the children play and learn in a safe and secure environment, particularly well.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, the planning for group work lacks sharp focus, and activities are not well enough resourced to promote good learning.
- Sometimes, adults miss opportunities to interact with individuals and develop learning, especially during activities which children choose themselves.
- Adults are not always given useful improvement points to improve their teaching.
- The way data is analysed does not clearly show how well individuals and groups of children are achieving.

## Information about this inspection

- This two day inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- The inspector observed 11 parts of lessons taught by two teachers, two nursery nurses and three early year's assistants.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, children, many parents, a few members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- While observing the work of the nursery, the inspector took account of 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) along with other information staff had collected from parent questionnaires.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation including school improvement planning, teachers' planning, minutes from governors' meetings, self-evaluation information, safeguarding and curriculum materials and information relating to the progress and achievement of the children.
- The views of staff were considered through the scrutiny of eight completed staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Nina Bee, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Whitehills Nursery is a smaller than average school catering for 73 children. Most children attend part time but, on some days, a few attend full time.
- Almost all children are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs, including those supported by early year's action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- There are no children for whom the school receives the pupil premium.
- The headteacher and governors manage a breakfast club and a lunch club.
- No alternative provision is used by the nursery.
- The nursery has been awarded the Inclusion Quality Mark.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so that learning is never less than good and more is outstanding by ensuring that:
  - planning identifies precisely how staff are adapting activities for the different abilities and needs of the children
  - staff do not miss opportunities to reinforce and develop learning particularly when they interact with individuals or small groups during activities selected by the children
  - all activities are well planned and resourced to interest and excite the children and enable them to maximise their achievement.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - teaching is monitored rigorously and staff are given clear points on what they need to do to improve their practice
  - senior staff analyse children's performance data more effectively so that they gain an accurate picture of the progress being made and achievement of individuals and different groups of children across all areas of learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the nursery with skills and knowledge that are typically below the levels expected for their age. Information collected by the nursery shows that this varies year-on-year. The most recent data shows that children exceed the expected levels by the time they move on to reception classes in other schools.
- In relation to their starting points, children are helped to catch up quickly and make at least good progress particularly in their personal, social and emotional development, communication and language, literacy skills and mathematical development.
- Individual needs are usually well catered for and so disabled children and those with special educational needs make good progress because they are sensitively supported and additional help is given when necessary.
- Children are keen to start learning as soon as they walk through the door. They really enjoy working and playing alongside adults and other children, discovering new things and learning through first hand experiences. Children were observed by the inspector being well supported, by an adult, as they made biscuits. They listened carefully to questions regarding the ingredients they were using. They correctly identified the butter, sugar and flour and very excitedly named the 'red jam'.
- Another group of children decided they wanted to play a game so they took themselves off to a quiet area and successfully organised themselves showing how well they work with good independence in small groups. During both of these activities learning was clearly good as children reinforced and developed personal and social skills, language skills and their understanding of the world.
- Children have good opportunities to build their understanding of letters and the sounds they make when reading. They take part in activities accurately matched to their needs which focus on sharing books, mark-making and attempting to write their names.
- On the few occasions where there are minor weaknesses in teaching relating to planning or where opportunities are missed to interact with individuals, children's progress is not as rapid as it should be.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is mainly good or better and results in children's good learning and development. Children are generally interested in all the experiences they are offered. They thoroughly enjoy listening to stories and adults are particularly good at telling them and asking questions that stimulate the children's good responses. Children's good learning was observed as they listened attentively to a story about a magic purple crayon. They were then absolutely amazed when the teacher started using her own magic purple crayon to write on a piece of paper pinned to the wall. They later used crayons to make their own marks on paper.
- Children have good opportunities to develop their literacy and language skills well. Approaches promote a love of reading, good quality books including some where children learn about different cultures, are readily available for them to look at. Many children were seen choosing books themselves and then sitting quietly and looking at the sequence of the pictures and

words.

- Teachers focus well on all areas of learning both in the classroom areas and outside. Children were seen enjoying learning as they developed their understanding of numbers and counting while playing a game of dominoes. Children made good progress in building both their numeracy and social skills because no opportunities were missed to reinforce and develop their understanding of basic numbers and the need to take turns.
- Outside, on a snowy and frosty day, children used their imaginations as they excitedly mixed colours and created exciting artwork in the snow. They worked with total absorption, taking pride in their work and having fun. Snack time was very exciting, that day, as they snuggled with covered hot water bottles and drank hot chocolate outside.
- Children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because adults take full opportunity to build children’s respect for and understanding about the beliefs and celebrations of different groups in the community.
- Very occasionally, when teaching is less than good it is because planning does not clearly inform adults of the different abilities and needs within the groups and so opportunities are missed to challenge some who are ready for more whilst supporting those who need extra help.
- At times, a few children were seen having difficulty staying on task, during activities led by adults because the task was too difficult and resources failed to stimulate their interest. Adults are generally good at interacting with groups and individuals but there are sometimes opportunities missed to reinforce and develop learning.
- Each child has a folder to show the progress they are making across the areas of learning they experience. These folders enable the children to look at photographs of themselves and their friends and be reminded of things they have achieved. However, they do not always accurately show the good progress children make or include comments to demonstrate the gains made. The senior staff are in the process of reviewing this.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- There are well structured settling-in arrangements for the children and their families. This along with opportunities for parents and carers to spend time with their children at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions ensures children feel safe and secure. These procedures also help staff build the very strong links they establish with the parents and carers.
- Behaviour is good and at times outstanding. Staff have high expectations of what they expect and the children quickly learn how to behave in the classroom areas and outside. They develop good self-confidence, socialise well and build respectful relationships with one another. Very few incidents of anti-social behaviour were seen but were managed sensitively and fairly by the staff.
- There are systems to record poor behaviour or racist incidents, but no incidents have been recorded for a number of years.
- Staff, with the help of the governors, work hard to make sure that the site is safe and secure for children to play as they learn.
- Attendance in the nursery is very good. Records show that there are no unauthorised absences.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher and her team have worked effectively to maintain the good provision identified in the previous inspection while developing the role of the governing body.
  - Self-evaluation is generally accurate and systems are in place to allow staff and governors to be involved in identifying and working on the right priorities to sustain improvement.
  - Children’s spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is promoted well in the well-balanced curriculum which fully addresses the new guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff and governors focus successfully on ensuring that all children are treated as equals; any form of discrimination is not tolerated endorsed by the award of the Inclusion Quality Mark.
  - Light touch support is provided by the local authority due to the school’s recognised good overall effectiveness.
  - The leadership of teaching is strong. Lessons are monitored regularly but areas for improvement are not always clearly identified and so there continues to be minor weaknesses in teaching which, at times, affects children’s learning and achievement.
  - Staff professional development is closely linked to the management of their performance. All staff have appropriate opportunities to attend courses and seminars to help develop their practice.
  - Staff collect a wealth of data to inform them about the learning and development of the children. Senior staff collate and analyse this information and have a clear understanding of the levels children reach. However, their analysis of data does not clearly inform them how well individuals and groups of children are achieving.
  - Children have daily opportunities to reinforce and develop personal and social skills when they take part in the Breakfast and Lunch Club. Children were observed enjoying the company of others while eating and playing with their friends during these times.
  - During the inspection, many parents wanted to voice their very positive comments about the good provision their children experience. Questionnaires the school had previously sent to parents and carers along with the on-line responses (Parents’ View) were equally as positive.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body contributes positively to the success of the nursery and has built a good level of effectiveness since the last inspection. They have a good awareness of the strengths and areas for development. Systems for their monitoring responsibilities are well established, for example policies and procedures are regularly reviewed. Governors are well informed, particularly about issues related to achievement and teaching, through regular visits and reports and so are able to support and ask the nursery searching questions when necessary. They are involved in performance management, particular that of the headteacher. Governors ensure that the effectiveness of the teaching staff is monitored and that performance is linked to salary progression. Statutory requirements are fully met, finances are managed effectively and safeguarding arrangements are secure.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121787
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	402051

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	73
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Terry Wright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jan Waller
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 842957
<b>Fax number</b>	01604 842957
<b>Email address</b>	head@whills-nur.northants-ecl.gov.uk



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

