

# The Kingsdown Nursery School, Lincoln

Kingsdown Road, Doddington Park, Lincoln, LN6 0FB

**Inspection dates** 23–24 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Parents are extremely happy with the nursery. Children settle in quickly and thoroughly enjoy all the activities provided for them.
- Teaching is consistently good, so the children make good progress and achieve well in all the areas they experience.
- Children's behaviour is good and they have positive attitudes to learning. They are happy to be in school and they feel safe and secure.
- The school's work with the local community is a strength.
- The variety of exciting activities and visits helps develop children's confidence and love of learning.
- The headteacher leads the school well and has put in place a range of successful measures that have driven improvements since the previous inspection.
- The governors and staff fully share the headteacher's determination to ensure that all children achieve to the best of their ability.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching. Teachers have too little opportunity to see for themselves what outstanding teaching looks like. Sometimes, teachers' questions are not probing enough, and the learning possibilities from children's own questions are not fully explored.
- Subject leaders do not have a full enough grasp of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning in their subjects because they are not involved enough in the checks made.
- There is not enough focus on children's progress in the school's development plan nor in the feedback in leaders' checks on teaching quality

## Information about this inspection

- This is a smaller than average nursery school. Children may attend for up to five sessions per week. A lunch club is available on each school day.
- New enrolments are offered, if places are available, at the start of each term.
- The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs is higher than seen nationally. All of these children are supported on 'Early Years Action Plus'. There are no children on roll, currently, supported by a statement of special educational needs.
- Most children are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their home language. An increasing proportion, but fewer than average, represent other ethnicities, principally Polish, and most of these children start at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- The school does not receive any additional funding (the pupil premium) because there are no children of compulsory school-age on roll.
- The school does not use any alternative provision (lessons that take place regularly away from school).
- The school holds the local authority's enhanced 'Healthy Schools Award'. It has won first prize in a children's film-making competition for two of the past three years.
- The school opened a registered setting for two year olds this term. This was not part of this inspection.

## Inspection team

Ruth McFarlane, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The inspector observed a wide range of activities over the two inspection days, including observations of children in activities they had chosen themselves, in activities led by adults and in small-group sessions led by staff members. Five of the 14 focused sessions observed were joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspector spent time with individual children, looking at and discussing their work; she looked at the children's 'learning journals' (Red Books), which are records of their achievements during their time in the nursery.
- Meetings and on-going discussions were held with the headteacher and staff members. The inspector met with a group of governors and with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 11 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View). She also took account of the views of parents she spoke with informally, during the inspection, and the views expressed in the parent surveys carried out by the school.
- The inspector took into account the views that staff expressed in the questionnaires they returned.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, the school's self-evaluation, documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and safety, and data on children's current progress.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding and ensure that it has an even greater impact on children's learning and progress, by:
  - enabling staff to gain more experience as to what outstanding teaching looks like
  - making the most of every question, whether from teacher or child, as an opportunity to extend children's knowledge and understanding to the full.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that staff with responsibilities for subjects gain a clear picture of the quality of teaching and its impact on learning in the subject for which they are responsible
  - enhancing the focus on children's progress in the monitoring of teaching and when measuring the success of the school improvement plan.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Most of the children start in the nursery with skills and abilities that are lower than those expected for their age. They settle quickly due to the well established routines and soon begin to take full advantage of the exciting activities available for them to be guided towards or to choose for themselves.
- The children make good progress in all of the areas of learning. They do especially well in building their personal and social skills largely because of the excellent relationships between adults, children and parents which also successfully nurture their good emotional development.
- Children are interested in mark-making and writing activities. They are starting to recognise the sounds at the start of words and the letters that represent them. They enjoy 'reading' books either on their own or with the teacher. Children are encouraged to understand how numbers are written down and what they represent. 'How many more?' is a frequently-heard question. A game of dominoes, combining pictures of animals with numbers, observed by the inspector, provided children with good opportunity to count and match numbers up to six accurately.
- Children who are supported at 'Early Action Plus' make good progress in relation to their starting points and abilities. This is due to good individual support plans with targets for each child that are understood and promoted effectively by all the adults; these children are included in all activities and are helped to participate in everything on offer.
- Children who speak English as an additional language make good progress in learning to speak English and gain confidence and improved communication skills. Staff support children's language development with the help of signs, and training is planned to enable them to offer increased expertise in this field as more children from different ethnic heritages join the school.
- Staff encourage children to be independent and do things for themselves. They are learning to fasten up coats and put on wellingtons. They worked together sensibly and safely, despite their excitement, when staff took them sledging in the school grounds on a snowy day during the inspection.
- Children enjoy using their imaginations. They made rapid progress in their learning about language, such as what 'buried treasure' means, when the teacher 'set sail' with them in the pirate ship, and as they learned about the impact of heat, when they made a real campfire and toasted marshmallows.
- By the time they transfer to Reception classes, the majority of the children reach the levels expected for their age. A few children who start in the nursery with weak literacy and numeracy skills, do not reach the level expected for their age in communication, language and calculation despite making good progress. Leaders know that this presents a special challenge and are already working effectively to find ways to accelerate the learning of this group still further.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Staff have a wide range of experience and expertise. They know the children and their families very well. Parents think very highly of them and appreciate both the quality of teaching and the caring approach they bring to their roles.

- Parents said how happy they were with the progress their children were making. They spoke of how staff in the nursery, and ten-week family learning courses, help them to support their child's development, and the positive difference this had made.
- Teachers plan sessions well. They review activities regularly to ensure that they are interesting for the children and that they support their good learning. The focus on helping children to be confident learners, behave well, persevere with their learning and to get along with each other, promotes their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Adults spend time talking to the children, helping them to achieve increasingly well in building confident speaking and well-tuned listening skills. However, staff sometimes miss opportunities to deepen children's understanding because their questioning is not always probing enough, and they sometimes miss the opportunity to explore the further learning possibilities in the children's own questions.
- Regular checks on each child's progress are used well to plan their future learning. The children's Red Books give a lively account of their progress across the areas they experience. They include photographs, for example of counting, number work and early writing. Records of comments children have made about their learning are also included and show their developing language skills.
- All of the children receive small-group teaching, including sessions with their key person each day. This is helping to move their progress forward and to build their confidence as learners.
- Teachers ensure that all the children have an equal opportunity to learn, whatever their needs, and that there is no discrimination. Children who are at an early stage of speaking English are helped to learn because staff are trained in using signs to help explain learning. Further training is planned to extend expertise, to help these children overcome any remaining barriers to learning.
- Staff work well with a wide range of other professionals to ensure good relationships are fostered and effective help given to children who are supported at 'Early Action Plus. This is a key factor in enabling these children to make the same good progress as everyone else. Very detailed assessments are carried out, and increasingly demanding learning targets set in their individual learning plans, confirm the good progress they make.

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

- Children behave very well and enjoy their activities. They are busy and happy and there are few squabbles. They play together well and are beginning to chat to each other about what they are doing. They sit at the computer with a friend and enjoy using a software programme together, taking turns to move the mouse and complete the learning games.
  - Everyone knows and understands the school's routines. Most children respond well to instructions at the end of sessions and know when it is time to tidy up or to go and sit on the carpet. They have trusting relationships with the staff and know that they will be well looked after if they are unwell or upset.
  - Children are kind to each other, welcoming and friendly with visitors; they develop a good
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understanding, appropriate to their age, of what are the right and the wrong things to do.

- Staff are very positive role-models and as a result children quickly learn to treat others with the respect with which they themselves are treated.
- Most children attend regularly; this reflects a strong partnership between home and school.
- Induction arrangements for children at the start of the term of entry are supportive. They are planned carefully and include home visits. The school has close links with nearby schools and all work together to ensure a smooth transition for children when they leave to go to their new school.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher brings a wealth of experience and expertise. She has led the school improvements skilfully, supported by the united staff team.
- The arrangements for checking how well staff are performing are robust. Staff training ensures that staff skills are continually being up-dated and improved. However, in this small school there are too few opportunities for staff to see what outstanding teaching looks like in order to help them raise their own practice to the highest level.
- Regular checks on children's progress are made and careful records are kept. Although the checks on teaching quality result in astute points for improvement, they do not give high-enough importance to the impact of the teaching on children's progress. Subject leaders have only a limited view of where particular strengths and weaknesses in their subject lie across the school because they are not involved in the checks on teaching quality.
- The development plan identifies well-chosen actions to help children to learn successfully. However, there is a lack of precision in the targets set in relation to progress and this limits leaders ability to measure what impact the actions being taken are having.
- The school's partnership with parents and the community is a considerable strength. Local groups use the school's facilities. The school encourages children to take part in community projects, such as the 'LAFTAs' (a local film-making competition) in which the school has won first prize twice in the past three years. The school links with six other schools in the local area from which it benefits in terms of sharing training.
- The range of activities provided is wide and often exciting. Visits, for instance to a farm, help develop children's confidence and independence. A wide range of learning experiences promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness successfully.
- The local authority provides regular support and guidance that has helped drive the improvements made since the last inspection.
- The governance of the school:
  - Although both the chair and the vice-chair are new to their roles, they are developing a good understanding of children's achievement and of the quality of teaching and learning in the nursery. Governors attend regular training events and join in staff training activities. This, and their discussions with the headteacher about school data on children's progress, enables them

to evaluate the school's work in comparison with other similar schools. Governors ensure that everyone is held to account for children's progress, and that salaries reward good or better teaching. They keep track of the support and training provided to ensure that any weak teaching is quickly eradicated. Governors safeguard children's welfare effectively. They ensure that equal opportunities are promoted actively; that all of the children have every opportunity to enjoy all of the activities on offer and that there is no discrimination.

## 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>	126562
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	406370

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	102
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nova Read
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kate Marnoch
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 January 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01522 684335
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