

Henry Allen Nursery School

Mitchell Walk, Amersham, Buckinghamshire, HP6 6NW

Inspection dates 24–25 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Children’s achievement in communication and language and in personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. In all other areas of learning, it is good.
- Children’s behaviour is exemplary. They enjoy every single minute that they are in school. Children are safe, secure and very happy.
- Teaching is good, with outstanding teaching of letters and sounds and early key reading skills.
- Staff have done a brilliant job in setting up high-quality provision, bearing in mind children are in temporary accommodation in Woodside Junior School while waiting for their school to be rebuilt.
- Children benefit from excellent resources, including a secure outdoor learning area which they love using, especially in the snow!
- The executive headteacher, ably supported by the early years leader, has brought about swift and rapid improvement, especially in relation to safeguarding of children, statutory duties and the quality of teaching.
- The interim executive board has been very successful in working with the local authority and school staff in managing successfully a period of significant change for the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Over time, there is insufficient outstanding teaching to ensure that children make outstanding progress in all areas of learning, including mathematics.
- Children do not spend enough time learning about each other’s backgrounds, especially those from other cultures in their school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed children learning on their own both indoors and outdoors, and observed them in a range of adult-led sessions when they were with their key worker.
- He held discussions with the executive headteacher and early years leader, the chair and other members of the interim executive board, two representatives from the local authority and parents.
- The inspector took account of the 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- He looked at documentation, including policies and procedures for safeguarding children, the school's self-evaluation document, the 'Raising Achievement Plan' and minutes of meetings held by the interim executive board.

Inspection team

David Curtis, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-size nursery.
- Most children are White British, with a few from a range of minority ethnic heritages.
- Ten per cent of children are at early years action plus on the school's register of special educational needs.
- The nursery is temporarily housed within secure accommodation in Woodside Junior School while the existing building is demolished and replaced with a new purpose-built building that is due to be ready by 1 September 2013.
- The headteacher of Woodside Junior School is acting as executive headteacher of the nursery.
- The early years leader joined the school on 1 September 2012.
- The school was placed into special measures in September 2011. It received monitoring inspections in January, July and October 2012.
- The local authority made the decision that the interim executive board would remain in place until the school came out of special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide more opportunities, especially in mathematics, for children to learn about shape, space and measures, including through the use of interactive displays.
- Provide more opportunities for children to learn about cultures other than their own, including those represented in the nursery.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children make outstanding progress in communication and language based on starting points that are below expectations. They are very confident in using letters and sounds, particularly in finding words, for example, those that start with 'p', such as 'piano', 'penguin' and 'paper'. More-able children show very good skills in linking sounds together to read words such as 'leg' and 'head'. One child used this knowledge to read the word 'hungry'. Children love listening to stories and talking about characters in them. During the inspection 'Spot the Dog' was very popular, with children excitedly making their own pages where 'they hid Spot'.
- Children make outstanding progress in early writing skills. Older children are confident in writing their own names and they make excellent progress in short sessions where they learn how to write letters correctly.
- In mathematics, children are confident in counting to 10, with the more able confident to 20. Many are confident in finding, for example, 15 on a number line. However, they do not spend as much time looking at shapes, space and measures and this is why achievement is good rather than outstanding.
- Children make good progress with their physical development. They are confident in cutting, sticking and pasting and use scissors safely. They enjoy exploring the outdoors and are very enthusiastic when riding the large-wheeled toys. Bearing in mind they are in temporary accommodation, children benefit from regular opportunities to use the junior school hall in developing successfully their key skills in music and movement.
- In understanding the world, children make outstanding progress in using computers and the electronic smart board. In one session, one young lady used the smart board to 'teach her class' how to use the program 'Five Little Ducks'. During the inspection, children really enjoyed the snow and made good progress in making 'snow castles', painting snow to see the effects and using the large-wheeled toys as 'gritters'.
- Children make outstanding progress in expressive arts and design. They show really good skills in painting, collage work and modelling. They love music, either through listening or making their own music. In one session, a group of girls made up their own dance which they practised, performed and refined.
- The progress of children with special educational needs is good. Children enjoy working with their key workers, who skilfully adapt learning to meet their specific needs.

The quality of teaching is good

- Staff have done an excellent job in creating an exciting learning environment both indoors and outdoors in which children can thrive and learn. Teaching of communication and language is outstanding. Staff are skilled at teaching letters and sounds in the daily ten-minute session where children are taught in small ability groups. In each session, children either learn a new sound or have time to practise and apply sounds previously taught, for example in linking sounds together to read words.
- Teachers' planning has improved significantly since the last monitoring inspection and there is now a much stronger focus on what children are expected to learn. Planning is matched very closely to the individual needs of children, including the more able.
- As key workers, staff know their children extremely well. They make detailed records of children's learning and progress linked to the requirements of the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'. Children's progress is recorded in high-quality 'Learning Journals' which are readily accessible to the children and to their parents and carers. The way in which staff check up on children's progress is used by the local authority as a 'model of excellent practice'.

- Staff provide children with many opportunities to enrich their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including using the snow to encourage children to think about the wonders of the natural world.
- Those parents who completed Parent View and those who spoke to the inspector had nothing but praise for the nursery staff and their contribution to their children's love of school and learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children's behaviour is exemplary because they never have time to be bored. From the moment they enter at the start of the morning or afternoon, they self-register and then choose immediately one of the exciting activities on offer. Their attendance is good.
- Children sustain interest in activities they choose for themselves for remarkably long periods and show great concentration and determination to finish a task. They do this independently, for example in making 'Spot the Dog' pictures or when working in groups, such as when planning, practising and refining their own 'Indian' dance.
- Children relate well to each other and play together harmoniously, including boys and girls. They are very polite and welcoming, with many introducing themselves and their friends to the inspector. Children get on exceptionally well with their key workers.
- Parents who completed Parent View all agreed that the school keeps their children safe, and inspection findings show that children are totally secure, safe and happy at school.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and the early years leader have ensured that the school now complies fully with all requirements for safeguarding children and all of the statutory requirements for children of this age.
- Since September 2012, they have brought about significant improvements to the quality of teaching, especially in improving planning that focuses on what children will learn rather than things they will do.
- The checking up on pupils' learning is much improved and staff now have a better understanding of children's knowledge, skills and understanding when they start school. As a result, they can measure children's progress more accurately from their starting points.
- The executive headteacher and early years leader monitor the quality of teaching on a regular basis and this is a key reason why teaching has improved. All staff now have their performance checked on an annual basis and this is linked closely to teachers' salary progression and children's much better progress.
- Staff have managed most successfully the challenges of locating the nursery within Woodside Junior School for the academic year 2012 to 2013.
- The curriculum is very effective in meeting children's needs and links closely to the requirements of the 'Statutory Framework for the early years Foundation Stage' in relation to the learning and development requirements. At the moment, staff do not give children enough time to learn about other cultures, including those represented in the nursery.
- The local authority has supported the school effectively since it was placed in special measures, especially through its early years advisor. It will continue to provide proportionate support for at least another year as part of its 'exit strategy' for the school coming out of special measures.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The interim executive board has provided very effective support and challenge to the school

during the time it was in special measures. It has contributed significantly to the rapid improvements made, especially in safeguarding young children. Members have ensured that the management of staff performance is fully in place and they have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. They have a good understanding of the children's progress from the data supplied. Members take good advantage of training to develop their roles. They ensure that resources are used effectively to support and improve children's learning. A shadow governing body is in place and three experienced members, including nursery education, of the interim executive board will take on the roles of chair and chairs of committees.

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	110195
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	408624

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	51
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Thomas-Pounce
Headteacher	Sue Harratt
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 September 2011
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