

# Newtown Nursery School

Hockley Close, Newtown, Birmingham, B19 2NS

**Inspection dates** 29–30 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
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.

- Outstanding leadership and management have ensured the school has maintained high-quality teaching and outstanding progress for all children.
- The headteacher leads by example. She is totally focused on securing further improvement. Together with the governing body, she inspires all staff to improve their performance and to provide the very best for all children.
- All groups, including disabled children and those who have special educational needs, achieve exceptionally well. They are highly motivated and confident learners.
- Adults are highly skilled. They constantly support and challenge children to achieve as well as they can. They provide exciting activities for the children, including learning through practical investigations.
- Parents and carers very much appreciate all the school offers. The school regularly checks what more it can do to help them support their children's learning.
- Children from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds work and play in harmony. Their behaviour is excellent. They feel very safe in school because of the high-quality care provided by all adults.
- Both the indoor and outdoor classrooms are used very well to promote childrens' learning. However, there are not enough technological resources such as computers to support teaching and learning further.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine sessions, in classrooms and outdoors. Four were joint observations with the headteacher. She saw sessions led by adults, as well as others where children selected activities themselves.
- The inspector had discussions with the headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, staff, the Chair and Vice-chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority. The inspector spoke informally to children as they were learning.
- The inspector took account of eight responses on Parent View. The results of one of the school's parental surveys were examined. The inspector held informal discussions with a number of parents, and analysed questionnaires from 12 members of staff.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and looked at documentation covering teachers' planning, the school development plan, tracking of children's progress in all the areas of learning, performance management, and meetings held by the governing body.
- The inspector looked at records of children's learning, observed children's behaviour and looked carefully at the school's safeguarding procedures.

## Inspection team

Mary Hinds, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized nursery school.
- The school community is diverse and many ethnic groups are represented. Well over two thirds of children are of Black African or Asian origin, and a fifth are of White British heritage. Other ethnic groups are smaller.
- A high proportion of children speak English as an additional language. Over 20 different languages are represented. The main ones are Somalian and Arabic.
- Almost all of the children attend five full-time sessions each week.
- Children are taught in three classrooms arranged in five family groups. They have daily access to all the classrooms and the outdoor learning space where they can sometimes choose their own activities.
- The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average. There is no pupil premium funding for these children because they are not old enough to qualify.
- The proportion of children who need extra help (at early years action, early years action plus, or while undergoing assessment for a statement of special educational needs) is above that found in primary schools nationally. There are no comparative figures for nursery schools.
- No children are taught in alternative provision away from the school site.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2012. The acting deputy headteacher took up her post in September 2012. Both have had either leadership or teaching posts in the school prior to their new appointments.
- A playgroup is located on the same site, but is subject to separate inspection arrangements.

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

- When suitable funds are available, invest in more technological resources to make children's learning even more exciting and make the most of their curiosity and ability to learn by exploring.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding which are much lower than expected nationally for their age. This particularly applies to their speaking skills, as many children are at an early stage of learning English. All groups of children make rapid progress in all areas of learning, making at least two years of nationally expected progress in one year. The large majority of children are working at age-related levels by the time they leave the nursery.
- Staff carefully assess each child's stage of development when they join the school, and plan together to ensure that the children's skills are built upon step by step. They use their thorough knowledge of each child to make sure that activities are based on the children's level of understanding, interests and experiences. As a result children explore their classroom and outside areas and learn at much faster rates than usual.
- Early identification and carefully planned extra support for disabled children and those who have special educational needs ensures that these pupils also make outstanding progress. Their achievements are carefully and regularly monitored to inform their next steps in learning.
- There is no difference in the rates of progress between children known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups, because the way teaching and activities are planned benefits them all equally.
- Children who are at the early stages of learning English also make rapid progress during their time at the school. Staff use many ways to develop their communication and language skills, from intense additional support to signing and using gestures.
- Boys achieve as well as girls in their basic physical, language, social, literacy and mathematical skills. This is because adults match activities closely to the level of children's understanding. The school's analysis of progress shows that literacy skills are the weakest area and has introduced several strategies to boost them, including a more thorough approach to the teaching of the sounds that letters make.
- Children were seen developing their confidence in recognising individual letters, and many could already recognise their own names. They regularly enjoy hearing stories and acting out well-known tales, and delight in choosing books to take home to share with their parents.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- All adults place great emphasis on developing the children's self-confidence and ability to work on their own and together. They encourage the children to celebrate and praise each other's achievements at every opportunity. There are daily sessions where children choose their own activities and help to tidy away their own play equipment. They are confident in sharing their ideas with their friends and adults.
- In the best lessons, adults use the children's interests to develop their problem-solving skills, extending their learning and enjoyment. For example, the children excitedly rescued their toy animals which had become trapped in ice. They became completely absorbed in their work, investigating how ice melts. One child was fascinated when the ice turned to water as it trickled through his fingers. The teacher extended his learning by encouraging him to use key words such as freezing and melting to develop his language and understanding of scientific ideas.

- All adults are highly skilled in encouraging the children to speak clearly and extend their language. They speak clearly and carefully, repeating words and sentences several times. Then they encourage the children to repeat the sentences and to practise and apply their language in group situations. Parents appreciate this focus on language skills. As one explained, 'My son was unable to talk in sentences when he came to school. Now he never stops asking me questions!'
- Staff are skilled in asking questions that make children think and explain their ideas. They carefully use the children's responses to alter activities so that the exact level of support or extension is provided to ensure rapid learning. In a quick-fire session on number recognition, some children were asked to find numerals of 10 and above. The teaching assistant asked, 'What does 1 and a zero make? Can you find 12?' Then she asked a less confident child to find the numeral 2 and encouraged her to check if this was correct by counting on her fingers.
- Children's progress is checked regularly and recorded in their learning journals. Written records and photographs are used to build up a picture of what each child can do over time in all areas of learning. This results show that activities are closely matched to different abilities, and that current progress is outstanding.
- Resources in the classroom and the outdoor areas are used well to develop all areas of learning. However, the school does not currently have enough information and communication technology resources such as interactive whiteboards and computers to make all teaching come alive and make the most of children's curiosity and enthusiasm.

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

- Children behave exceptionally well. They are able to work on their own for long periods of time. They are very cooperative and keen, and this contributes strongly to their learning. For example, in a games session children waited patiently for their friends to throw their object through the hoop before taking their turn.
- Adults create a calm and nurturing atmosphere. Relationships are very strong, with high levels of respect and trust between everyone. All staff aim high in everything, including how they expect the children to behave. They insist on good manners and always expect the children to listen to one another, which they do very well.
- Parents and children are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Parents have every confidence that the school keeps their child safe, and the children are very clear about what makes them happy or sad. They trust all adults to keep them safe. There are no recorded instances of bullying.
- Children from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds get on remarkably well with each other. All children receive a great deal of attention from staff, which helps them to understand they are all valued. Staff give careful consideration to promoting festivals such as Eid and Divali and celebrations such as Black History Month. Children also raise money for a charity to support those who are less fortunate in other countries. This prepares them very well for life in a culturally diverse society and supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents usually bring their children on time. Attendance is not compulsory, but the school has identified that some children do not attend as regularly as they should to fully benefit from all it has to offer. It has suitable plans to promote regular attendance for all children, and is rightly determined that all parents see this as an important preparation for future life.

**The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The headteacher has ensured that the school's overall effectiveness continues to be outstanding. Her ambitious drive to secure success for all children's learning and personal development, no matter what their starting points, is shared by the governors and all the staff.
- Teamwork is central to the effectiveness of the school. Staff work closely with one another. They plan together and learn from one another. All staff are very analytical about their own practice because they are continually seeking ways to improve further. The best practitioners provide individual coaching for their colleagues. Teaching is monitored closely and all staff have demanding targets to improve their work.
- The headteacher reviews each member of staff's strengths and areas for development, and provides the right training and support. This has been particularly important in light of the new Early Years requirements and in supporting the acting deputy headteacher, who is also the new special needs coordinator.
- Leaders keep a very close eye on the school's performance at all levels, and use the resulting accurate information to identify the right priorities for improvement. They regularly check on the progress children are making, to make sure that no-one is falling behind in their work.
- Sessions are planned carefully to make sure of a good balance between activities directed by adults and those chosen by children. They promote high achievement, independence and resilience. However, children do not get enough chance to explore and use the most up-to-date technology to develop these skills even further.
- The local authority has previously given 'light touch' support to this outstanding school. However, since the headteacher joined it has monitored the school's progress through regular visits, and linked the school with another nursery school to provide leadership support.
- Children's safety and welfare are paramount. The school has very good procedures to care for and protect those children and families whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable. Parents and carers speak very highly about how the school looks after their children. They talk about the welcoming atmosphere and how staff make them feel part of the school community. They particularly appreciate the workshops run by staff and the Family Learning initiatives which help them to support their child's learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is well informed and actively involved in checking how well the school is doing. It asks probing questions about the work of the school and makes suggestions for how it could improve further. The governors have a good understanding of the strengths in teaching and the progress children make compared to all children nationally. Together with the headteacher, they match staffing levels to available finances efficiently and make sure that staff performance is linked to pay. They set challenging targets for the headteacher in consultation with an external adviser. They have a clear plan for the future of the school, including the appointment of a business manager who will be responsible for securing additional funding. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements. Some governors have had training, for example in safeguarding, and they are planning further training for new 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103141
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	400589

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>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	57
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Helen Watson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Harford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 359 2476
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