

Haven Nursery School and Children's Centre

Harris Road, Gosport, PO13 0UY

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2013

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

- Inspirational leadership by the headteacher means there is a continuous drive to get all children off to the very best start. All staff share an ambitious vision for the school. They provide an exciting and nurturing environment in which all children flourish.
- Children of all abilities do exceptionally well, often from low starting points. This includes those who are disabled and those with special educational needs, as well as those who receive additional funding. Their excellent progress is particularly evident in how rapidly they learn to communicate and get along with other children and adults.
- The teaching staff work together as an extremely effective team. They provide a wealth of rich experiences for children.
- Children behave extremely well and soon develop a love of learning. They burst with enthusiasm, and delight in following their own interests both indoors and outside.
- Very strong links within the children's centre and with outside professionals, such as speech therapists, means that individual needs are very well met.
- The school lives up to its name. Parents and carers are entirely confident that their children are safe and secure. They hold the school in high regard and are successfully encouraged to work in close partnership with the staff.
- Governors keep a sharp eye on how children are doing and the quality of teaching. They work closely with school leaders, providing insightful support.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 12 lessons where children were being taught in small groups, for example at the beginning of the day or in informal groups such as when they were working in the nursery garden. In addition, the inspector made a number of visits to different sessions, observing children working individually or in small groups with the support of an adult. Some of these observations were with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, and members of the governing body. The inspector also had a telephone conversation with a local authority representative.
- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of documents, including the school's own information on children's progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding arrangements and children's profiles.
- The inspector took account of the 10 responses to the online survey (Parent View), the 90 responses to the school's own recent satisfaction survey and spoke to parents and carers during the inspection. Questionnaires were received from 23 staff members.

Inspection team

Rob Crompton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Haven is part of a Sure Start children's centre, sharing the same site, staff and leaders. A range of children's services is provided by the centre, which is inspected separately.
- The school is an average sized nursery school. Children are taught in eight 'family groups'. Each has two adults and up to 15 children. Most attend mornings or afternoons, although some stay for the whole day.
- There is specially resourced provision (equivalent to 10 full-time places) for disabled children or who have special educational needs. Currently, there are 14 children attending part time for whom there is additional funding. They include children with physical disabilities and autistic spectrum disorders.
- Children of Nursery age are not eligible for the pupil premium. The pupil premium is extra money given to primary and secondary schools by the government to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children with a parent serving in the armed forces. In total, around 70% of children have disabilities or special educational needs. Around half of these children have communication, speech and language difficulties. Others have anxieties about leaving their parent or carer, or have emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision off site.
- Most children are White British. A few children, from European or Asian backgrounds, are at a very early stage of learning English.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine assessment procedures so that they are more manageable and accessible by:
 - continuing to adapt the current effective system of assessing children's progress to take account of the new Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum
 - modifying the way children's progress is recorded so that staff do not spend too long on this task.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- All groups of children, including those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, achieve exceptionally well. The vast majority make outstanding progress, often from low starting points, as they play happily and learn quickly in the stimulating environment.
- There is a surge of enthusiasm as children enter in the morning, eager to tell the adults their news. They lose no time in choosing an activity, mostly finding the resources themselves. Halfway through their first year of school, many children show a remarkable degree of independence and concentration. This is because staff allow them time to focus on one activity, rather than having to flit from one thing to another.
- The strong focus on improving children's speech and language skills is evident in the wide range of resources that quickly engage their interests. Children took great pleasure, for example, playing in the 'hairdressers' salon'. Skilfully encouraged by the teacher, they asked what their 'clients' would like, offered and served 'coffee', and even asked, 'Are you going on holiday?'
- Children's rapid gains in structuring sentences and using appropriate vocabulary are also evident during activities that they set up themselves. After building a 'superhero den', one cautioned, 'If you step there, the trap goes down'. 'Yes, it's poison,' said his playmate.
- Children thoroughly enjoy the daily 'over and over' reading sessions. Adults read the same books each day to their family group and children increasingly join in as they become familiar with words and repetitive phrases. Children were proud to recite the nursery rhymes they had learned, and were often seen choosing books and sustaining their concentration as they turned pages in order and followed the sequence of events.
- Through a wide range of practical activities, children gain an understanding of early mathematical ideas. Building structures from wooden blocks and crates, for example, helps them to find out how different shapes fit together and, with the help of adults, begin to use accurately words like 'above', 'below', 'back' and 'front'. Number rhymes and activities, such as 'helping' the teacher to count, successfully provide a basis for subsequent number work.
- The 'forest school' based in a copse within the school grounds, offers excellent opportunities for children to develop a strong interest in the natural world. Here they observe small creatures, build shelters and develop resilience and teamwork. On a 'listening walk' children were fascinated by the sound of the strong wind gusting through the trees and had great fun trying to imitate it with cries of 'Wooh' echoing across the area.
- Parents and carers are very pleased with their children's progress. 'I can't believe how well he is doing', commented one parent. Another said, 'All I can say is that this is a magic place.'

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Inspirational teaching is evident in all areas of the nursery. Staff have a high level of expertise, underpinned by an excellent understanding of how young children learn. They are particularly skilled in judging when to step in with questions and encouragement and when to keep a low profile to allow children to explore things for themselves and develop their independence.
- An excellent balance is struck between activities planned and led by adults and those chosen by the children. For example, during one session, some children worked with adults sorting shapes, playing drums, playing speaking games with speech therapists and planting seed potatoes outside. At the same time, adults were playing alongside other children engaged in a wide range of activities.
- Staff are highly skilled in engaging children. Responding to the staff survey, one practitioner neatly summed up the general approach, 'Staff are the best playmates they can be for children.' Adults take every opportunity to join in children's play. For example, there were squeals of delight as children and adults donned waterproof clothing and played in a pond created by heavy rain. As they jumped, splashed, scooped, poured and even sat in the water, it was evident that,

besides having a great time, children were learning much about the properties of water and how it moves and flows.

- Disabled children and those with special educational needs make rapid progress because staff work closely with specialists and are highly skilled in pitching activities at the right level. For example, children with communication, speech and language problems grew in confidence as they played a game with their teacher. The very good use of signs and symbols helped the children to understand what was expected and succeed on the task.
- Planned activities, together with those that occur spontaneously, promote children's self-confidence, self-esteem and their understanding of right and wrong. They learn about the wider world and begin to gain understanding of cultural diversity through, for example, learning the different birthday traditions of their classmates.
- All of the parents and carers who responded to the on-line questionnaire and the school's own survey rightly agree that their children are very well taught.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children have high levels of engagement from the moment they arrive. They play alongside one another with the minimum of fuss and readily help to put things away and tidy up. Behaviour is excellent due, not least, to the skill with which staff encourage children to get along with one another and to learn social conventions.
- Children with particular emotional and behavioural problems benefit from sensitive support. All staff know all the children well, as they come into daily contact with many of them. They share a common approach to managing behaviour and are aware of the particular strategies being used to support individuals.
- Parents and carers are safe in the knowledge that their children are extremely well cared for. Great thought is given to helping children staying for the whole day to cope. Taking account of the fact that some children start at 8.00am and leave at 6.00pm, breakfast is provided and alternative activities are organised for them during the afternoons.
- Examples of children assessing risks for themselves are evident in many activities, when climbing and balancing, for example. No evidence of any bullying was seen during the inspection and there is none in the school's records. Children are kind and considerate. For example, when using a real hair-dryer (under close supervision), one said, 'I'll hold it here, so it's not too hot for her.'

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leaders and staff have maintained the outstanding provision evident during the previous inspection. However, there is no complacency; on the contrary, there is a relentless determination to ensure the school's effectiveness is sustained and improved. For example, although an effective system for assessing and recording children's progress is well established, leaders are exploring ways in which this can be adapted in the light of recent changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. They recognise that the current system takes up rather too much of teachers' time.
- Leaders have consolidated the strong capacity for further improvement. They support staff extremely well by providing feedback on their teaching and arranging further training. This is much appreciated by the staff. One wrote, 'Haven isn't just a great place for children to learn and develop, it's also a great place for staff to strengthen their knowledge. It's a joy to come to work.' Another said, 'Haven is a fantastic place for me to grow. I love knowing that the work I do makes a difference.'
- The school has a well-deserved and ever-growing reputation for meeting the needs of disabled children and those who have special educational needs. One parent commented, 'They bend

over backwards to help all children.' This reflects the school's success in promoting equality, tackling discrimination and fostering good relationships.

- There is a strong partnership with parents and carers, other schools and local support services. Exceptionally close working relationships within the children's centre have a very positive impact on all of the school's work.
- The school is regarded by the local authority as one that needs low-level support. Indeed, the school is often used as an exemplar and runs its own training programme for other Early Years' practitioners.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors gain information about the school's performance and the quality of teaching through asking searching questions about assessment information, by surveying parents and carers and first-hand visits. Recently, governors have visited to look at and report back on the use of Makaton (sign language for children) and the forest school. Governors also join staff training days, such as their introduction to the new Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. These activities mean that governors are well informed and can plan ahead. Governors are keen to make sure staff are paid appropriately in relation to their contribution and performance. For example, during a recent restructuring of the whole children's centre, governors ensured that the redefined roles and responsibilities were closely aligned with salaries.
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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	105830
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	401538

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Turle
Headteacher	June Smith
Date of previous school inspection	7–9 October 2009
Telephone number	01329 232095
Fax number	01329 823977
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