

South Normanton Nursery School

Hamlet Lane, South Normanton, Alfreton, DE55 2JB

Inspection dates 6–7 February 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.

- Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, the nursery has maintained its extremely strong commitment to children and their families. Parents and carers appreciate this immensely.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are a highly successful team with a clear vision of excellence. They have high aspirations and continually improve practice by working together, being innovative and open to new possibilities.
- The nursery provides a wonderful, rich environment in which children learn very effectively. It is a joyful place where they have great opportunities to explore the natural world outside and a wealth of well-organised and inviting resources inside.
- The teaching of early literacy and numeracy skills is seamlessly woven through imaginative play, music and songs, and everyday activities such as baking. As a result, children have very firm foundations for later learning.
- Children learn to treat others with enormous respect, accept difference as something to be celebrated and behave exceptionally well. They show great maturity and confidence in organising themselves and they are very successful learners.
- Staff know the children very well and their capacity to adapt their approaches to meet the needs of all children, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, is exceptional. As a result children achieve particularly well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector spent almost five hours observing teaching and learning, including five discrete sessions taught by teachers or other adults. Four of these sessions were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with two representatives of the governing body, teachers and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took into account the 23 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the nursery's own survey and written comments from parents. Opportunities were also taken to speak with parents as they arrived with their children in the mornings.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation, including school improvement planning, records of children's progress and their 'Learning Journey' files, the nursery's own self-evaluation and the external evaluations done by the local authority, safeguarding documents, and other policies and records relating to behaviour and child protection.
- Nine responses to the staff questionnaire were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Christine Merrick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized nursery catering for 70 children, most of whom attend part time.
- Almost all children are of White British heritage and only a few speak English as an additional language.
- The school currently has a small minority of children supported at school action and just under a fifth of the children are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- There are no pupils for whom the nursery is receiving additional government funding (the pupil premium) as it serves children who are below statutory school age.
- The headteacher supports other schools and nurseries by working with the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen and extend staff and children's opportunities to reflect on their learning by ensuring that conversations with children always include comments about how well they are learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- All parents who responded to the online questionnaire were very positive about the progress that their children made, and with good reason. Attainment on entry to the nursery is below age-related expectations. Children make excellent progress and, by the time they leave, almost all are attaining in line with, or above age-related expectations.
- The very high quality environment provides a wide range of challenging activities so that all children, including the most able, are stretched and their learning extended. As a result, the proportion of children demonstrating skills above those expected for their age is much higher by the end of nursery than when the children arrived.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs achieve very well because staff take account of their interests and curiosities to motivate and enthuse them. Their needs are very closely monitored and catered for through one-to-one or small-group activities. They access learning extremely effectively during free play or self-chosen activities because all staff are able to adapt the support they give so that they are included alongside other children.
- Staff promote spoken language extremely effectively in their interactions with children. They include a wide range of vocabulary, listen and respond to children's ideas, ask questions that challenge their thinking and are respectful of their comments and opinions. This provides excellent support for those just beginning to learn English and all children become confident in expressing their thoughts, enjoy conversations immensely and can articulate their own needs very well.
- Children make excellent progress in early literacy and numeracy. This is because reading, writing and counting are given a purpose and meaning so that the children become active, independent learners. Whether trying Chinese writing, recording plans in the construction area, adding their names to the list of people waiting for bikes, or weighing and balancing the different sized pebbles outside, they are confident of their capabilities.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is particularly well catered for. Children are able to make decisions for themselves, play with others without conflict and show care and concern for the inclusion of others. They develop great respect for the world around them; for example, showing delight in finding minibeasts under the logs and wondering at the different plants in the garden.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The headteacher, staff and governors have created an inspiring environment extremely rich in possibilities for learning. Staff take into account all aspects of a child's development, providing flexible support, knowing instinctively when to intervene and when to stand back and allow children to find their own way. As a result, children are very confident to take initiative or ask for help if they feel they need it.
- The balance of adult-directed and child-initiated play works extremely well. Group time provides the children with high-quality, focused teaching, whether on topics as diverse as music, listening to stories and rhyming, or yoga. In free-flow time, adults challenge and extend thinking with open-ended questions and extended conversations. As a result, children make rapid progress in their learning.

- High-quality, play-based activities are exceptionally well resourced. Inside, the Chinese restaurant, the hairdressers and the hospital area allow children to explore identities, take on different roles and experience different cultures. Creative areas and computers offer children different ways of expressing themselves. Outside, large construction materials challenge problem-solving skills, climbing equipment and ball skills areas develop physical capacities, whilst the many different planting and wild areas offer a wealth of opportunities for learning about nature.
- Staff provide sensitive, nurturing and responsive support. Children who have only just started nursery begin the day in a separate room in a quiet, calm atmosphere. This allows them to integrate more successfully once the busiest time in the main room has past. Staff also spend time getting to know the two-year-olds and their families who join the 'Tiddlers' group each week, so that they develop confidence and familiarity with the people and place.
- Teachers find many different ways of working with the children so that they use all their senses when learning. For instance, in a music session, they were encouraged to close their eyes and listen, move in response to the sound going up and down and pay close attention to signs and gestures as well as words. This was particularly useful to those children just beginning to learn English and disabled children and those with special educational needs.
- Teachers are very enthusiastic about the developments on which they are taking the lead. These include working in the allotment area and poly tunnel in the garden and recycling with the children, one of whom developed the slogan 'Don't be sluggish, bin your rubbish'. The Forest School initiative has also been highly successful, and the enthusiasm is contagious. Parents enjoy their involvement as much as the children.
- Teachers assess children's learning continually but they do not always take the opportunity to talk with children about how they are learning. Dialogue with parents, starting with home visits, continues to support assessment throughout children's time in the nursery. Photographs, informal and formal observation and discussions amongst staff ensure that a good range of evidence is collected and that different perspectives are taken into account. This information is then used judiciously to target specific work for individuals or small groups and to accelerate learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children are competent, eager learners with exemplary attitudes that contribute to the exceptionally positive atmosphere in the nursery. They enjoy playing together and are keen to share learning with others; for instance, when two boys building rockets in the large construction area shared their expertise in joining the pieces together.
- Transition times are managed extremely well. Children are given five-minute warnings so that play is not disrupted unexpectedly and tidy-up music plays so that they know what to do without instructions from adults. The children respond willingly and everybody helps, conflicts are avoided and no time is wasted.
- Leaders and managers work hard to ensure that, whilst nursery is non-statutory, parents understand the importance of regular, punctual attendance. Any non-attendance is followed up and absences are tracked carefully. Certificates are given to children for good attendance.
- All parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that their child was happy, safe and secure in school and all were positive about behaviour. Staff have no concerns about behaviour because

they know that policies and procedures are implemented very consistently and they are confident in each other's ability to deal with anything that arises.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides exceptionally high quality leadership. She maintains a teaching commitment in the nursery, modelling excellent practice, supporting staff in their work and promoting discussion about the quality of learning in the nursery. She sees further development of this dialogue as a key aspect of future improvement.
 - The local authority representative described the headteacher as a 'leading professional' in the authority. She provides help and support to other schools in the area and delivers training alongside local authority staff. Staff from other settings visit to see excellent practice in the nursery.
 - Staff are encouraged to take leadership roles and everyone has aspects of leadership as part of their performance management. They relish this opportunity, enjoy working with other staff on their areas of expertise and appreciate each other's efforts. As a result, provision is enriched with interesting and exciting opportunities that motivate and enthuse adults and children alike.
 - Rigorous and robust systems for monitoring teaching are backed by professional development opportunities that are innovative and exciting. For instance, they are working with other nurseries in the area to bring in internationally recognised expertise to support their development.
 - Leaders and managers ensure that the daily routines, systems and structures meet the needs of both children and families exceptionally well. Access to learning for all children is paramount and parents appreciate the very high level of involvement, extremely efficient communication and welcome they receive. As one parent commented, 'This nursery is the most friendly, happy, welcoming place ever.'
 - The range of activities is excellent. Broad and balanced, covering all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage, it is enriched with connections to other countries such as Sri Lanka, celebrations such as Chinese New Year, visits into the community and connections with the library. Initiatives such as Philosophy for Children have brought new dimensions to the work and children benefit hugely from this rich mixture.
 - The local authority provides appropriate support through scheduled meetings to discuss the quality of work in the nursery. It endorses the view that the nursery is outstanding.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body understands the work of the school extremely well because it works closely with the headteacher to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. Governors bring a range of experience and expertise to their roles and balance very well development opportunities to maintain the outstanding provision and the demands of a sustainable budget. Performance management is well organised and monitored effectively, and governors are fully aware of how this is linked to pay. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met, including those relating to safeguarding.

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	112484
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	401271

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Comins
Headteacher	Angela Colmar
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2010
Telephone number	01773 810876
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