

McMillan Nursery School

Eleventh Avenue, Hull, HU6 8HT,

Inspection dates 5–6 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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 make good progress. They have a lot of fun because there are so many things to do.
- Teaching is good. The staff are skilled at developing children's language, communication and social skills.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs make excellent progress.
- Outdoor learning is a strength. The staff use natural materials exceptionally well to encourage children to learn through investigation and discovery.
- Children concentrate for long stretches at a time because they are absorbed in interesting activities.
- Staff are vigilant. They make sure that children are safe at all times.
- Children feel very safe. They know that nursery staff are there to help them.
- Behaviour is outstanding; children like playing with their friends and are very kind to them.
- The leadership of teaching ensures that staff develop their skills through research and gaining high-level professional qualifications.
- Leaders, managers and governors encourage and facilitate innovative practice which help to make this nursery effective.
- The governing body gives good support to the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders and managers do not have sharply focused improvement plans to ensure that achievement and teaching are outstanding.
- The school is at the early stages of finding practical ways to involve parents more closely in their children's learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed children in 15 different learning sessions both indoors and outside. These included times when children learnt specific skills in a small group and times when children led their own learning.
- The inspector observed two teachers and four teaching assistants teach different groups of children at different times of the day. These included times when children learnt how letters and sounds link together (phonics) to form words.
- She talked to the children about what they were learning. She observed children sharing books with each other and with adults.
- The inspector looked at children's 'learning journeys' (detailed records of children's learning and progress) to check the progress they had made since starting in nursery.
- She held meetings with the headteacher, staff, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation supplied by the school. This included information relating to safeguarding, attendance, children's progress and the school's future plans.
- The inspection took account of 12 parents' views in the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Lesley Clark, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This nursery is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The nursery offers flexible provision for up to 210 children. Most children access nursery provision for three to five terms before starting school in the September of the year in which they are five years old.
- Most children are of White British heritage. A few come from other ethnic backgrounds and are at an early stage of learning English.
- A few children are supported through early years action.
- An above average proportion of children are supported through early years action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The day care provision for two-year olds was not inspected. It is inspected separately.
- There have been several staffing changes since the previous inspection due to re-organisation of nursery and children's centre provision in the locality.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that staff give children wider opportunities to read and write in different areas of learning and keep teaching sessions short and focused to match children's levels of concentration.
- In order to raise children's achievement and teaching to outstanding, sharpen school development planning so that:
 - priorities are clearly linked to improving children's progress and developing teaching methods
 - indoor learning resources are updated regularly
 - all actions are checked in terms of their impact on children's achievement.
- Find more practical ways of involving parents in their children's learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children achieve well from their different starting points. They spend the greater part of their time in nursery leading their own learning. They make good progress because the activities interest them and excite their curiosity.
- The majority of children start with skills that are below or well below those typically expected for their age. They do well. By the time they leave the nursery, most have skills close to the level typically expected of their age.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs do extremely well. This is because staff have had a lot of training and so they quickly identify children's learning difficulties and make sure they have the extra help they need.
- Staff also make sure that disabled children and those with special educational needs have the same opportunities as everyone else to make choices and to follow their own interests. This helps them to learn at the right rate for their stage of development.
- Children who are learning English as an additional language make good progress. They learn new words quickly alongside children who have limited language and communication skills when they first start. Staff are adept at introducing and repeating new words and children are keen to try them out for themselves.
- Children achieve well in all areas of learning. Their physical, personal, social and emotional development comes on at an especially good rate. This is because most activities are designed to develop these skills. For example, a taught session in which children massaged cream into their partner's hands helped them to treat each other with respect and make tiny, gentle movements with their fingers and hands.
- Children make the best progress outdoors. This is partly because 'forest school' activities are used to encourage children to build dens and explore and investigate the natural environment.
- Outdoor activities really stretch children's imaginations and encourage them to think for themselves. For example, children worked together shovelling sand out of a large container before wheeling it elsewhere. Meanwhile, others solved the problem of how to transport water, saying, 'I know, I'll get some from over there with this jug!'
- Indoors and outside, children make good progress in communication, language and literacy. They love being read to and comment readily on the pictures. Although the selection of books is fairly limited, children clearly have well-loved favourites. They enjoy 'writing' shopping lists and labels using different pens, crayons and paper but do not always have a real purpose for writing.
- More-able children make good progress in sounding out different letters and counting different objects. They thoroughly enjoyed making 'silly soup' and thought of different words for 'shoe' beginning with 's' such as 'sandal' or 'slipper.'
- The nursery clearly shows that it promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Staff are extremely knowledgeable about how young children learn. Their teaching is well-informed and effective.
- An area of excellence is staff's meticulous support for disabled children and those with special educational needs. As well as helping them, adults make sure that the children do as much for themselves as possible. This steady, step-by-step approach, which includes children's interests, helps children to build on what they know and understand. As a result, they become confident and self-reliant learners.
- Good features of teaching include helping children to communicate through asking questions and encouraging them to respond. The children quickly begin to learn because staff are really good

at explaining simply and clearly, helping them to repeat words and phrases accurately.

- Adults listen well and so children develop the confidence to talk, ask questions and express themselves clearly.
- Staff make learning fun. They are good at joining in and extending children's play. As a result, children learn to concentrate for longer stretches of time and to suggest their own ideas too.
- Boys' interest in superheroes and warfare is used constructively to encourage all children to develop imaginative play. For example, one such game developed from flying toys through the air on imaginary rockets to making beds for aliens!
- Special teaching sessions are well-planned to develop specific skills for different groups of children. Occasionally, these are a bit too long for children's attention span.
- Opportunities are missed to provide a wide variety of contexts for reading and writing linked to different areas of learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children clearly feel extremely safe. This is because they have warm, trusting relationships with their 'key person' who is their 'special adult' in the nursery.
- Adults are extremely vigilant with regard to children's safety. They take notice of what children say and do and are alert to anything that occurs that is out of the ordinary.
- Children treat each other kindly, imitating the good relationships that they see around them in nursery. They begin to understand that some types of behaviour are better than others. For example, they know that shouting is 'not good' and they pointed out that you need to 'use small voices' so as 'not to wake up baby'.
- They make friends and share and play together very well indeed. They talk to each other nicely, saying things like, 'Let's pretend we're...' or 'Would you like to play with me?'
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are fully included. Children accept without question that some children have different support to help them to walk and play like everyone else.
- Children know that it is good to say please and thank you. They quickly point out if someone forgets to do so. They like being rewarded with stickers when they have done something well. When playing schools, they praise each other for good sitting or 'good looking.'
- Children are proud of their progress. They happily look through their 'learning journeys', pointing out pictures of what they do. Children who are learning English as an additional language use these to demonstrate what they know, using the pictures to provide the words they do not yet have.
- Behaviour is excellent. There is no unkind or hurtful play because staff reinforce good behaviour all the time. The staff records confirm children's excellent attitudes and behaviour.
- Children have excellent health and safety awareness for their years. For example, they pointed out, 'Don't eat pretend sausage,' and, 'It's not very good putting soap in soup!' They climb, run and jump sensibly. They are sure-footed because they spend a lot of time outdoors. They handle paints and scissors carefully.
- The children know the nursery routines. They stop and tidy up quickly and efficiently when it is time to do so. They are very helpful, putting prams tidily away and making sure that different shaped building blocks go in the right places. They comment that the tiger in the story leaves the kitchen in a mess, 'He should have tidied up,' they say.
- Attendance is broadly average for nursery-aged children. However, the attendance of children with special educational needs is very good indeed.

The leadership and management are good

- The staff work well as a team, taking the lead on different aspects of child development. They are committed to providing the best for the children in their care.
- A major strength of leadership and management is the extent to which staff are encouraged to undertake high-level on-going professional development, including research at degree level. This means that staff are highly qualified and extremely knowledgeable about nursery-aged children and their development. This in turn helps some parts of their practice to be innovative and creative such as outdoor play which draws on the 'forest school' initiative, for example.
- Leadership and management are committed to developing the nursery as a centre of research, development and training, recognised in their successful national bid two years ago as an Early Years Teaching Centre in conjunction with two other local nursery schools.
- The school runs successful courses and some aspects of its work have achieved national recognition with regard to developing boys' play, for instance.
- When planning for future improvements, the school development plan often takes a wide view, seeing research as the main means to achieve high quality teaching and learning.
- Development planning is not always sufficiently sharp to ensure that priorities are clearly focused on ways to raise achievement, including updating the indoor learning resources and fine-tuning teaching methods or how the impact of these actions will be measured.
- The school has good relationships with parents and parents are happy with the education that their children receive. The school provides detailed information on notice boards to help parents to understand the curriculum. However, it does not help parents to understand how they can help their children to learn. It has recently introduced fortnightly 'stay and play' sessions. It has yet to explore ways of involving parents in sharing books, for example, with their children.
- Performance management is linked to the school's future plans as well developing staff's individual areas of expertise. There are clear lines of accountability that include teaching assistants too. Its use as a tool to reward good teaching is limited because of the experience and part-time contracts of the teaching staff.
- The local authority gives minimal support to the school and the school rarely asks for help.
- Additional money, allocated by the local authority to the school in recognition of the complex needs of some children, is used extremely well to support disabled children and those with special educational needs. They make excellent progress as a result.
- **The governance of the school:**

Governors visit the school often and spend times in classes observing how well children are learning. The headteacher gives them regular and very detailed reports. Although a fairly new governing body, governors are beginning to deploy their individual expertise effectively, particularly with regard to finance. Governors support and challenge the school through asking questions. They have a good understanding of teaching quality, recognising that staff question and interact with the children skilfully. They have a less incisive knowledge of performance management. Governors contribute to the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance. They ensure that the additional money allocated to the school by the local authority is used to good effect to support those children who need the most help. The support is tailored closely to pupils' individual needs. Governors are rigorous in checking and approving policies and ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are highly effective. As a result, staff and pupils are safe and fully supported.

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	117692
Local authority	Kingston upon Hull City of
Inspection number	401682

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	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	A Hallows
Headteacher	A Shimmin
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2010
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