

# Hillside Nursery School

Cedar Avenue, Haslingden, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 5NH

**Inspection dates** 13–14 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of children		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of children		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and children

### This is a good school.

- Parents are extremely happy with the nursery. Children settle in quickly and thoroughly enjoy all the activities provided for them. Parents comment on how their children talk excitedly at home about the things they have done and on how happy they are to come to nursery.
- Teaching is consistently good with some outstanding practice, so the children make good progress and achieve well.
- From generally low starting points, most children leave the nursery with the knowledge and skills expected for their age, ready and eager to carry on learning in their next school.
- Children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are supported well and make good progress.
- Children behave very well and develop extremely positive attitudes to learning. They know that all their ideas are valued and they feel very safe and secure.
- The headteacher leads the school well. The governors and all of the staff share her determination to ensure that every child achieves to the best of their ability.
- Leaders make sure that improvements are on-going, through regular checks on the quality of teaching and its impact on the children's progress.
- The governing body supports the nursery well, checks on how well children are doing and questions leaders and managers about the school's work.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is more to do to develop the teaching of letters and sounds and to plan more problem-solving activities, to enable children to make even better progress in establishing early literacy and numeracy skills.
- Although every child's progress is carefully tracked all through the year, the nursery does not yet produce a whole-school progress summary each term to give a sharply-defined overview of how well the nursery is doing.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a wide range of activities in the nursery over the two inspection days, including observations of children in activities they had chosen for themselves, in activities led by adults and in small-group sessions led by staff members.
- She spent time with individual children, looking at and discussing their 'learning journey' folders, which are records of their achievements during their time in the nursery.
- Meetings and on-going discussions were held with the headteacher, the senior teacher and staff members. The inspector met with three members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed information from 12 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View). She also reviewed responses to a very recent questionnaire sent to parents by the school and had several conversations with individual parents who expressed their views about the nursery.
- The inspector took into account the views that staff expressed in the questionnaires they returned.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and safety, and data on children's current progress.

## Inspection team

Diane Auton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The nursery provides part-time places for children in morning and afternoon sessions.
- Parents can choose from a range of options within this core offer and can also buy in extra sessions. This means that children's attendance is organised on a flexible basis, in response to families' individual requirements.
- Extended care is provided at the start and end of the day and at lunchtime by an independent organisation on-site. This provision is inspected separately by Ofsted and reports are available on the Ofsted website.
- The proportion of children supported at Early Years Action and at Early Years Action Plus is broadly average. There are currently no children on roll with a statement of special educational needs.
- Most children are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their home language. A small proportion of children are from a variety of other ethnic backgrounds; some speak English at home and a small number are learning English as an additional language.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2010.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has gained its local authority's Step Into Quality Award and the governing body has successfully completed the local authority's Full Governing Body Accountability training course.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding and ensure that it has an even greater impact on children's learning and progress by
  - continuing to develop ways to teach children about letters and the sounds they make, in order to support their emerging skills in reading and writing even more effectively
  - providing even more opportunities for children to use and develop their emerging numeracy skills through solving simple problems in their play activities.
- Give leaders, including governors, a more sharply-defined overview of how well the nursery is doing by producing clear summary reports of the outcomes of the reviews of children's progress that take place each term.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of children is good

- Children start in the nursery with a range of developing skills, although many are at an earlier stage of development than would be expected for their age. Some children, including those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, are at very early stages of learning.
- Children make good progress in all of the areas of learning. They do particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development and this is largely because of the excellent relationships between adults, children and parents.
- By the time they leave, most children reach the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning and some do even better than this. However, they do not do quite as well in some aspects of early literacy and numeracy as in the other areas. This is because their starting points in literacy and numeracy are often particularly low and, as a result, some children are still catching up by the time they leave. Leaders know that this presents a special challenge and are working hard to close the gap.
- Children who are disabled or who have special educational needs make good progress in relation to their starting points and abilities. They are fully included in all activities and they participate in everything on offer.
- Children who are learning English as an additional language make good progress in learning to speak English and gain confidence and improved communication skills, as a result of the good support provided for them.
- Children do very well in developing their personal and social skills because they are encouraged to be independent and to try to do things for themselves, such as fastening up coats and putting on wellingtons to go outside.
- Children are learning to sustain their concentration and interest and will often stick with an activity for extended periods of time.
- Children are interested in mark-making and writing activities. They are learning to recognise writing in the labels and displays around the nursery. They identify their own names when they register at the start of sessions and they are keen to write their names on their paintings and drawings. They enjoy opportunities to practise writing and mark-making during role play activities, for example, when taking telephone orders in the Chinese takeaway shop.
- Children enjoy singing together; they are starting to be able to recognise rhyme and now know a number of rhymes and songs.
- As a result of effective and well-structured small-group teaching, children are starting to recognise the sounds at the start of words and the letters that represent them. This is a new development in the nursery, however, and there has not yet been time for it to show a full impact on children's learning and progress.
- Children are interested in numbers and enjoy counting activities and songs. They are learning to record their counting by making marks on paper or pictures or by writing numerals. They are starting to recognise and name shapes accurately.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Staff have a good range of experience and expertise. They know the children and their families well; parents think highly of them and appreciate the care they bring to their roles.
- Teachers plan sessions and activities well. They review their work regularly and carefully to ensure the activities are interesting for the children and that they support their learning and progress well.
- Adults spend time talking with the children, helping them to achieve increasingly well in their speaking and listening. Staff help children to develop their play and extend their thinking through questions and prompts. They are careful not to over-direct, but are watchful and

supportive and always there to lend a hand.

- A regular check on each child's progress is used well to plan future learning. The children's 'learning journey' folders give a lively account of their progress across the areas of learning. They include photographs and examples of number work and early writing. Records of comments children have made about their learning are also included and show their developing language skills.
- All of the children receive small-group teaching, including sessions with their key carer each day. This is helping to build their confidence as learners. Small group sessions to teach the children about letters and sounds have been introduced this year. This is a very positive development, although still at an early stage; staff make sure that the sessions are fun and so the children are interested and keen to learn more.
- Learning activities support children's developing skills in numeracy well, but staff know that there is more to do to enable children to use and apply their skills more confidently, for example, in solving simple problems, so that they can make even better progress in their mathematical development.
- Staff work well with a range of other professionals to ensure good support for children who have additional learning and language needs and this is a key factor in helping those children to make the same good progress as everyone else.

### **The behaviour and safety of children** are good

- Children are often fully absorbed in their play. There are very few squabbles because they enjoy their activities and are busy and happy.
- They play together cooperatively and chat to each other about what they are doing. They sit at the computer with a friend and enjoy using a software programme together. They are learning to take turns and to wait patiently for their turn to come around. In circle time they are learning to talk about how they feel today and to listen to each other and start to understand how other people are feeling.
- Children have trusting relationships with the adults in the nursery and know they will be well looked after if they are unwell or upset.
- Children are kind to each other, welcoming and friendly with visitors; they have a good understanding, appropriate to their age, of what are the right and the wrong things to do.
- Staff are positive role-models and everyone is treated with care and respect in the nursery.
- Most children attend regularly. The school is working very hard to help establish good attendance habits at this first and very important stage in the children's education. The nursery makes considerable efforts to support and work with a minority of families for whom regular attendance is a problem.
- Induction arrangements at the start of the year are planned very carefully and parents say how helpful the nursery staff are in enabling their children to settle in quickly and happily. The nursery school has good links with the nearby primary school and other local schools. It works with them to ensure a smooth transition for children as they move up into the Reception classes.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher is a very effective leader, well supported by the senior teacher and all of the other practitioners in the nursery. There is a vigorous drive for continuous improvement and the school has successfully addressed the areas for action that were identified at its last inspection.
- The arrangements for checking how well staff are performing are robust and performance is measured against the progress children make. An extensive programme of staff training and professional development ensures that staff skills are continually being up-dated and improved.
- Leaders have a detailed picture of every child's progress; regular checks are made across the year and progress records are kept carefully. The information is not summarised in a progress

report each term and this means that leaders' overview is not quite as sharply defined as it might otherwise be.

- The school development plan is well-crafted and identifies carefully chosen actions to help children to learn and progress well.
- The nursery's vibrant curriculum is kept under constant review so that it is always fresh and interesting for the children. Topics and themes, such as the current celebration of the Chinese New Year, contribute well to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Enrichment is often added by visiting specialists. For example, children greatly enjoyed working with a visiting dance company and taking part in lion dance routines to celebrate the New Year.
- A comprehensive programme of premises refurbishment over the last two years has brought about significant improvements to teaching areas, both indoors and outside, making rooms and play areas that are bright and attractive and well-fitted for their purpose.
- The local authority provides regular advisory support for this good school and this has helped to drive forward the improvements achieved since the school's last inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are frequent visitors to school and have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in the nursery. They are able to ask searching questions of leaders and staff from an increasingly well-informed standpoint. Governors attend regular training events, including joining in some of the staff training activities. They contribute to managing staff performance, ensuring everyone is held to account for children's progress. Governors carry out their statutory duties effectively, ensuring that procedures to safeguard children's welfare are managed well and reviewed regularly. They ensure that equal opportunities are promoted actively, that all of the children have every opportunity to enjoy all of the activities on offer and that there is no discrimination.

## 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>	119093
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401809

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>	80
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ann Kenyon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elaine Black
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 July 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01706 214162
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