

West Exe Children's Centre Nursery School

Cowick Street, Exeter, EX4 1HL

Inspection dates

13–14 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- The head of centre, senior teacher, governors and staff have been extremely successful in building on and improving the good practice seen in 2009. They work with total determination to make a real difference to children's and families' lives.
- Leaders and staff have considerable expertise in early year's education and continually seek to refine, adapt and improve the way the nursery works to ensure children's needs are met exceptionally well. Consequently, children receive an excellent start to their education.
- Regardless of their background, home language or ability, children make excellent progress especially in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Teachers and support staff provide many inspirational and exciting learning opportunities to capture the enthusiasm and interest of the children.
- Both indoor and outside learning environments are highly stimulating with creative and celebratory displays of children's work.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. They become absorbed in activities that they have chosen for themselves, as well as those led by adults. They take responsibility for practical tasks such as tidying up, look after each other and play happily and cooperatively together.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are meticulous. Children feel very safe in school. They move around the nursery and the outdoor area sensibly and use resources carefully.
- The exciting and imaginative curriculum meets the interests and needs of all the children and successfully promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents are very happy with all that the nursery provides. Responses to various school questionnaires, as well as from parents during the inspection, express total confidence in the nursery and its work.
- Children have excellent opportunities to use cameras and programmable and remote-controlled toys. Plans to extend the use of modern technology to include tablets and smart boards to support children's learning are underway, but have not yet been fully implemented.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector spent five hours observing children, including sessions where children were led by a key worker or teacher and where they were learning independently, both indoors and outdoors.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior teacher, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Some of the nursery's documentation was scrutinised, including teachers' planning, safeguarding procedures, children's work and data on children's progress.
- The inspector took account of the nursery's most recent parent questionnaire and she held informal conversations with several parents bringing their children to school. Six parents completed the online questionnaire.
- Responses from 12 staff questionnaires were analysed

Inspection team

Joyce Cox, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This larger than average size nursery school caters for 100 children. Most children attend part time but a few attend full time. The nursery also takes a small number of rising three year olds on the '2gether' scheme.
- The nursery is an integral part of West Exe Children's Centre. The senior teacher in the nursery is accountable to the head of the children's centre, who holds ultimate responsibility for the school and its operational management.
- The proportion of children who need extra help (either at early years action, early years action plus or who are undergoing assessment for a statement of special educational needs) is above average. The main areas of need are social, emotional and communication difficulties.
- Just under a third of the children have speech and language difficulties.
- Just over a quarter of the children come from minority ethnic families and a few children are learning to speak English as an additional language.
- No children are known to be eligible for the pupil premium because they are not of the statutory age to receive it.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Put into practice all of the current plans to use additional information and communication technology to enhance and support children's learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- High quality data show that children's progress is outstanding from their individual starting points. The school has been extremely successful in increasing the number of children making rapid progress and achieving highly for their age. Children are very well prepared for entry to their Reception classes because the majority of children have high levels of independence, the ability to communicate their needs and strong foundations on which to build new literacy and numeracy skills.
- Children make accelerated progress in their personal, social and emotional development because staff, through their own very positive relationships and kindness, model ways to show respect for others. Small group work where children learn to manage their feelings and control their behaviour, take turns, listen to each other and collaborate together develops their social skills quickly.
- All children, including those who speak English as an additional language or have speech and language difficulties, learn to communicate very effectively. Staff skilfully use signing and pictures and objects as prompts for talking to the children. Multilingual Polish staff successfully promote children's speaking skills in their home language.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are quickly identified. Early assessments ensure that staff know which children need extra support so that work can begin immediately on helping them to become successful learners. All adults are aware of children's specific needs and high quality, sensitive support enables the children to make excellent progress and to be as independent as they can possibly be.
- Boys and girls do equally well in developing their early literacy skills because staff know them all so well as individuals. For instance, more able children can write their names and other words such as 'mummy' unaided with correct letter formation. Children at an earlier stage of literacy development love selecting and naming objects beginning with 's' when they play one of their favourite games called: 'What's in the box?'
- Children learn to count very effectively because they regularly gather together in small groups to enjoy mathematical activities such as counting the number of children in their group or counting how many times they go forwards and backwards on the large swing. Most children are already confident to count to five or ten in sequence.
- Children make great strides in their physical development, riding bikes and cars with confidence and challenging themselves to climb rope structures and use monkey bars in their large, unique and exciting outdoor area. They love being outside, even in very heavy rain and many happily change into their wellington boots and wet weather clothing as soon as they arrive, eager to explore and investigate.
- They make outstanding progress in developing their knowledge of the world through links with the local museum and through many visits to two local farms. Children also enjoy watching chicks hatch from eggs in an incubator. Art and craft activities, such as creating stunning murals for the front of the nursery and a nearby city subway, drama and dance add considerably to children's excellent achievement in the expressive arts and design.
- Children have excellent chances to use cameras to record their learning and staff have produced an outstanding transition book depicting pictures of the children's visits to their new Reception classes. That said children do not yet have enough chances to use computer technology to support their learning.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Parents correctly consider that teaching is of a high quality. All staff are extremely knowledgeable about the most effective ways that children of this age learn and develop and so

they provide imaginative activities. Excellent relationships between the adults and children enable staff to make the most of every minute of the day to engage children in learning something new, such as mixing fat, seeds and cheese to make bird food.

- A perfect balance of adult-led and child-selected activities is carefully planned to make sure that staff offer the right level of challenge. Adults skilfully adjust the methods they use to capture children's interest and to ensure they make rapid progress.
- All adults are skilled at turning every activity into a learning opportunity from the moment children arrive. Registration, early greetings and first activities are all used as opportunities to develop basic speaking and numeracy skills.
- Nursery staff have excellent relationships with the children and this is a key reason why they settle so quickly and happily and so are ready to learn. Strong emphasis is placed on developing children's self-esteem and confidence.
- Adults enable children to explore, investigate and find things out for themselves. Throughout the day, adults are interacting, talking, questioning, developing language and guiding children's learning. Assessment of progress and planning for the next steps for each individual child takes place in regular planning meetings.
- Exceptionally clear communications between all staff allow them to manage children's behaviour in similarly positive ways, ensuring that the nursery has a very happy and calm atmosphere in which to learn. Adults praise the children for 'good listening' and 'good sitting' and give a 'high five' when children have been very successful.
- High quality daily small group sessions for children who speak English as an additional language or have speech and language difficulties help them to acquire new skills through songs, rhymes, stories and games. These also help children to gain confidence in their ability to communicate and they rapidly learn new vocabulary as they are never 'put on the spot' to answer.
- Individual and group sessions for disabled children and those with special educational needs are also of an exceptional quality. Staff are highly skilled at using a particular approach with children whose behaviour interrupts their own learning, or that of others. Parents comment that staff have been brilliant at suggesting ways for them to use the same strategies at home when managing challenging behaviour.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children's behaviour is outstanding because they are fully occupied, interested, playing and learning from the moment they arrive.
- Children show excellent levels of concentration and perseverance. For example, a group of children respectfully and sensitively massaged each other's backs as part of an adult-led peer massage session.
- Children are happy to play together in pairs and groups. Relationships are friendly and children support each other in a caring way. They take turns, share nicely and listen to each other carefully.
- Relationships between adults and children are excellent so that children thrive in the safe, secure and stimulating atmosphere. Parents spoke warmly of their complete faith and trust in the nursery.
- Adults give sensitive support so that children are willing to have a go at unfamiliar activities. As a result, children choose activities confidently and, particularly when outdoors, are aware of the importance of keeping themselves and others safe. For example, they take great care when hammering nails into pieces of wood.
- There are excellent settling-in arrangements for the children and their families. This, along with opportunities for parents to spend time with their children at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions, ensures children feel safe and secure. These procedures also help staff build the excellent links they establish with the parents.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The combined leadership of the head of the children's centre and the senior teacher is outstandingly effective and the school has exceptionally good systems for deciding what works well and what is less useful in its drive for improvement.
- Staff say that they feel 'well supported, encouraged and challenged'. The senior teacher's passionate desire to search out the best aspects of recent early years' research to maximise children's achievements underpins the outstanding progress children make in all areas of learning.
- The use of training to improve teaching and the quality of education provided is a considerable strength; for instance, staff share and discuss best practice after filming each other working with children. Many support staff have successfully gained extra qualifications as a result of encouragement from senior leaders.
- Staff have a great enthusiasm and commitment to the education and welfare of the children in the nursery. The school works very productively with other professionals and so children often benefit from specialists' knowledge such as speech and language therapists.
- The school's development plan is well written and it contains valuable ideas about ways to improve the school. Senior leaders and governors keep a very close eye on the effectiveness of the nursery and are continually challenging themselves to do even better.
- The school works in partnership with parents exceptionally well and supports them to be very successfully involved in their children's development. The staff use children's records and work in their 'Blue Books' as a tool to discuss with parents and carers how well each child is doing at least once a term. They are highly successful in achieving their mission statement: 'Cherish Children by Empowering Parents'.
- The nursery through its children's centre offers parents access to many services they may not otherwise reach. These help parents to share in the school's efforts to overcome barriers in their child's learning. For example, an excellent weekly 'Face2Face' team of trained volunteer befrienders provides emotional support to parents who have children with additional needs.
- Central to the school's success is the staff's strong focus on ensuring that every child has an equal chance to shine and succeed. The backgrounds and different abilities of the children and their families are respected, celebrated and valued and discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- Children from different backgrounds have plenty of opportunities to play productively together. Many projects such as inviting parents from different backgrounds to read stories in their mother tongue enable children to learn very successfully about different people's cultures.
- In recent years the local authority has had limited involvement with the school because of its high-level effectiveness.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body fulfils its duties exceedingly well. The Chair of the Governing Body provides invaluable support and is able to access many support services very quickly. Governors make sure that the school is a safe place and that staff are suitably checked and trained in child protection matters. Governors complete training courses which enable them to hold the school to account outstandingly well. They check the quality of teaching by asking questions about data which show how much progress is made by different children. They make sure that decisions about how money is used are intelligent ones that give best value. The governors decide whether teachers and staff should be rewarded with salary increases and review targets for the head of the children's centre.

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	134674
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	402621

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	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vanessa Newcombe
Headteacher	Sarah Baker
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 September 2009
Telephone number	01392 279361
Fax number	01392 269555
Email address	Sarah.Baker@devon.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

