

# Helen Gibson Nursery School

North Lane, East Boldon, Tyne and Wear, NE36 0DL

**Inspection dates** 26–27 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 and often rapid progress achieving well in all parts of their learning. They display confidence and independence and are keen to learn.
- The very small number of children with special educational needs make the same good progress as their friends, because teaching methods are very closely matched to their needs.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Staff plan carefully to meet the individual needs of all children.
- The school provides a happy, safe school environment. All parents agree. Consequently the children settle happily when they arrive for each session.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding. They love coming to school and enjoy excellent relationships with their friends and staff.
- The inspirational headteacher has made considerable progress since her appointment. She is determined to ensure that all children get the very best out of what the school offers. This ambition is shared by all the staff and the governing body.
- There are many good aspects to the curriculum; it provides rich experiences that support children's excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural education really well.
- The partnership with parents and carers is extremely strong and the school engages them very productively in their children's learning and development.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Older children have not always made as much progress as they could in the past.
- Despite improvements, there are limits for children to explore and investigate when in the outdoor learning area.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed for children to practise their early reading and writing and to use role-play to enhance their communication skills.
- Teaching is not always thought-provoking enough and staff do not always ask questions that inspire children to think more deeply.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across morning and afternoon sessions on both days. He also observed a Forest School session at a nearby conservation centre. Two sessions were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke with children and had discussions with the headteacher, staff, parents, four governors including two parent governors and the local authority school improvement adviser.
- The inspector examined a range of documents including those related to safeguarding, attendance, self-review, the monitoring of staff performance, the school's development plan and records relating to behaviour.
- The inspector took account of 38 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and seven staff questionnaire responses.

## Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Helen Gibson is a larger than average-sized nursery. It offers flexible provision for 39 full-time equivalent places.
- Almost all children are White British with none at the early stages of learning English.
- There are two children with special educational needs at early years action plus with none at early years action and none with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school offers breakfast and after-school clubs, part of the Helen Gibson Kids Club managed by the governing body, which extend its provision for children aged three to eleven.
- The school has close links with the neighbouring infant and junior school and children's centre.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2012, after a period of unsettled leadership. A new Chair of the Governing Body was appointed in November 2012.

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

- Make certain all aspects of teaching and provision are consistently good and more are outstanding so that children's achievement is even higher by:
  - increasing the opportunities for learning outdoors and for children to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world around by exploration and investigation
  - offering even more challenges to develop children's thinking and problem solving skills
  - ensuring that, when children choose their own activities, opportunities to move learning on by good quality questioning are not missed
  - extend the opportunities for children to read, write and use role-play creatively and purposefully to boost their communication skills.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the nursery with skills that are broadly typical for their age, although speaking, listening, social and emotional skills are sometimes lower than this. By the time they leave nursery, their skills are typical for their age with an increasing proportion exceeding what is expected of them. Children's progress is accelerating quickly and achievement rising because of the decisive action taken by the headteacher to enrich the quality of learning.
- Children settle quickly into the happy, friendly school atmosphere. They make rapid progress in their personal development acquiring excellent self-control and developing considerate and helpful attitudes. This includes those children who are potentially vulnerable and those with special educational needs.
- Children are happy to take responsibility choosing what to do and stick with the task they have chosen. For example, one boy was observed totally absorbed in the construction area carefully building a Storm Trooper space ship before 'flying off into space'.
- An interesting range of activities, including an ever-increasing range of first-hand experiences, engages children of all abilities well. Despite this, there are limits to the opportunities for them to extend their knowledge and understanding of the environment around them when they choose to work and play outdoors.
- The Forest School method of learning is providing increasing opportunities for building children's independence and experience of the natural world, such as at the nearby West Boldon Lodge, a natural woodland with open water and wet meadows.
- Children with special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates, because activities and tasks are closely matched to meet their needs and interests from day-to-day. Girls and boys achieve equally well, because positive and decisive action is taken to make certain boys' interests are very well catered for.
- Children make good and often rapid progress developing their speaking, listening and early reading skills. They thoroughly enjoy listening to well-known stories, when staff model language highly effectively. Children are quick to recall events when questioned. They learn how to link letters and sounds together to form words through playing fun games. However, they do not always make as rapid progress as they could because opportunities are sometimes missed for them to use reading, writing, speaking and listening through good quality role-play activities.
- Writing skills are well-developed, such as when writing an Easter card to their mum and dad. Yet, opportunities are overlooked to recognise their writing achievements in classroom displays. Mathematical skills are systematically developed with staff constantly encouraging children to count, measure and identify different simple shapes.

### The quality of teaching is good

- All staff enjoy warm, trusting relationships with children. Each child is greeted at the start of each session with a smile and friendly welcome. Staff have high expectations of children and have speedily adapted their teaching skills, through well-focused training and team working, to ensure that all children can achieve their full potential.
- The indoor environment is attractive, interesting and inviting. Careful planning ensures that each space has a clear purpose and provides children with choice to try new experiences. A rich variety of visits and visitors add to the range of first-hand experiences, such as handling exotic reptiles and insects during the visit of Zoolab. Outdoor space is less well-developed, but is increasingly used in thoughtful ways to develop curiosity.
- Children's progress is fastest when:
  - routines are clear and opportunities are offered for children to make their own choices
  - interesting opportunities are provided for children to find things out for themselves

- routines encourage counting skills, good listening, speaking and early writing
- adults work alongside children in problem solving activities, constantly probing their thinking.
- When progress is less rapid and a little more variable:
  - routines for practising skills are less well developed
  - opportunities are missed for children to make decisions and give reasons when solving problems
  - questioning does not relentlessly reinforce learning in the activities initiated by children
  - equipment and resources are not always used to ensure that children are actively engaged to the highest level.
- Observations of children’s achievements by staff are effective and help to move on children’s learning well. Accurate assessment ensures that planning and support for learning takes good account of each child’s particular ability, needs and interests. Excellent use is made of the productive relationships with parents to support their children’s learning, such as sharing the experience of a theatre visit or a trip to Disneyland, Paris.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- The exceptional quality of care and the highly effective staff teamwork, including in the breakfast and after-school clubs, enable all children to feel safe and develop self-confidence and independence. Each child has a special member of staff who knows them and their parents best. Parents report that they feel perfectly at ease approaching staff with any information or a worry or a concern. Consequently new arrivals, including those who are a little anxious, settle straight away and happily.
- The excellent early staff focus on personal, social and emotional development and clear boundaries, encourages positive attitudes and excellent self-control. Interesting and sometimes exciting activities, such as hunting for Easter eggs outside after the visit of the ‘Easter bunny’ ensure that children are never bored or unwilling to join in.
- Adults thoughtfully support children to understand how to recognise danger and risk. For example, when sitting in a circle around the fire pit or using a pond platform in the Forest School. They are aware that they must be careful when using equipment, pedalling a trike or bike and climbing the steps to their slide. At breakfast and lunchtime, they learn how to wash their hands thoroughly and use cutlery safely.
- Behaviour in all areas is consistently excellent and almost all parents agree. As one grandparent remarked, ‘behaviour is so good because children are such good friends’. The happy, calm atmosphere in the breakfast club in which older pupils are particularly considerate towards young children, sets an extremely positive and purposeful tone to the day.
- Those children who are potentially vulnerable or those who are anxious are extremely well-supported and managed. This includes those who occasionally find behaving well a challenge. Any minor disputes are resolved speedily and skilfully by staff. Children arrive promptly for each session and quickly register themselves. Almost all children have high levels of attendance for young children, because they look forward and enjoy each session so much.

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

- The dynamic leadership of the headteacher has breathed new life into the school in a short space of time. Staff share her high ambitions and are a strong, cohesive and talented team. They have been many improvements, including to the building, resources and quality of teaching. Her resolute approach has transformed management with a clear vision, well-defined roles and robust checking of the quality of teaching.
- Performance management targets are firmly focused on children’s achievement and rewards to staff are only given on merit. Careful checking of each child’s progress and development ensures accurate judgements of the school’s performance. Priorities for improvement are correctly

identified. This includes developments in the quality of outdoor learning. Consequently, the school is improving rapidly in all areas.

- Well planned training has invigorated staff, who speak enthusiastically about the value of their professional development. Ensuring more rapid development of children's social and emotional skills and extending partnerships with parents has been a priority. Consequently, behaviour is excellent and children are considerate and kind. Parents are highly appreciative of the opportunities they have to support their children's learning, such as contributing to children's learning journeys.
- The good and continuously developing curriculum helps children to make at least good progress in all areas including speaking, listening, early reading and writing and numeracy. Nevertheless, opportunities are missed to reinforce skills, especially through good quality role-play and routines that support learning. In addition, problem solving challenges, especially in the outdoor area are not numerous enough.
- Effective use of partnership working, such as with the Forest School initiative adds to the richness of the curriculum. The use of specialist support services enhances children's speech through one-to-one intensive work and school staff training. The school's highly inclusive ethos and commitment to make certain each child can achieve success, ensure that all groups of children make at least good progress. This includes those with special educational needs.
- The local authority provides effective support and the school makes good use of the available specialist training and support. Staff are making a significant difference to the quality of education provided for children, although this has yet to be sustained over time.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, with much best practice underpinning the high quality of care and support provided for children. For example, child-protection practice is of a high quality.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Under the leadership of a new chairperson, the governing body is actively involved helping to drive school improvement. Governors are totally committed to sustaining school improvement. They carefully check the quality of teaching and children's progress and development, using the skills gained through training and briefings. They administer the headteacher's performance management well. Governors are increasingly confident at gathering first-hand evidence and questioning and challenging the headteacher. They manage resources well and are well aware of the priorities for further improvement, such as developing Forest School teaching methods on the school site.

## 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>	108663
<b>Local authority</b>	South Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	405187

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>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	77
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Eileen Thompson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jennifer Parker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 519 6846
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