

# Woodcroft Nursery School

Dorset Avenue, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, CM2 9UB

**Inspection dates** 30 April–1 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 get a good start to their education in the nursery because teaching is good, and practical activities are used well to interest them in finding out about a wide range of things.
- Children make good progress because staff enable them to be successful every day and develop their basic skills.
- The children concentrate extremely well, their behaviour is outstanding and they are thoughtful in caring for others.
- Children say they feel safe in school as a result of the watchful eye that staff keep on them.
- All parents would recommend the nursery school to others, and all the staff are proud to work there.
- Children learn to be imaginative and so their creative development is above that expected when they leave. This is because staff inspire children and encourage them to be independent.
- The good leadership of the headteacher means that teachers and support staff make sure that children develop well all the time.
- Leaders, governors and staff work successfully as a team. They are continuously looking for ways to improve the school and the quality of teaching, and to raise children's achievement.
- Since the last inspection, the use of questioning by staff has improved and this ensures that children think deeply for themselves.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Staff do not always give children detailed feedback and so they are not clear about what they have done successfully.
- Some staff are not encouraged to collect evidence that they have met their personal targets and so they are not fully aware of whether they have improved their teaching.
- Occasionally, children's records of achievement are not used as effectively as they could be to show what stage of development they are working at and whether their individual targets have been met, particularly in writing.
- The school does not create or share regularly enough a simple summary of the progress which each group of children makes.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons or part lessons and saw eight different members of staff teaching. Five were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, nursery staff, parents, children and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector observed children's behaviour and scrutinised the nursery's safeguarding procedures. Children's records of achievement were scrutinised and a group of children looked at some books with the inspector.
- The inspector took account of the 27 responses to the nursery's parental questionnaire, which was completed in June 2012, and 19 responses to the online 'Parent View' survey. The questionnaires from 23 staff were also taken in account.
- The inspector observed the work of the nursery and looked at documentation including teachers' planning, the development plan, tracking documentation about children's progress in all the areas of learning, performance management arrangements and minutes from meetings held by the governing body.

## Inspection team

Jackie Cousins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is larger than most nursery schools.
- Children are taught in one open-plan area with a separate classroom used for some activities. There is one outside area.
- Most children attend five part-time sessions each week.
- The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average.
- No children are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding because schools only receive this funding for older pupils.
- 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 slightly above average.
- Most children are from White British backgrounds and a small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A few children are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The childcare provision on site offers early education for two-year-olds for 12.5 hours a week and childcare for 38 weeks a year. These provisions are subject to separate inspection arrangements.

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

- Develop the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding by making sure that:
  - feedback from staff always explains in detail what children have done well
  - staff help to gather evidence more than once a term for how they have successfully met their personal targets for improving their teaching skills.
- Improve pupils' progress so that it is outstanding by ensuring that:
  - all staff use children's targets more effectively, especially to develop writing skills, and note when these targets have been met
  - the record of children's achievement notes consistently which stage of development they are working at
  - every three months, a simple report is created and shared with leaders of key areas of learning which shows how much progress each group of children is making.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The children join the nursery with various levels of knowledge, but some are behind in their socialising, speaking and writing skills. They make good progress and by the time they leave the nursery, they reach levels that are similar to those expected for their age. Their attainment is above that expected in personal and creative development. A few children make slightly slower progress in learning to write and make marks. This is because children's individual targets, especially in writing, are not always used methodically and so staff do not consistently gather evidence for how well the children are meeting them.
- Boys and girls achieve equally well in all areas of learning because the teaching is adapted thoughtfully to each individual. For instance, more-able children learned to recognise the letter 's' because the member of staff used a real snail to interest children and demonstrated how to make the letter accurately.
- Teachers and support staff speak clearly and are skilful in the way they check on children's language skills. This means that the children make good progress in learning to talk to other people. Some children whose speech was not as developed as expected when they started at the nursery catch up and leave with speaking skills that are the same as other children of their age.
- The children learn to read effectively because every day they gather together in small groups and take part in adult-led activities. They learn about the sounds that letters make. This was seen when they found objects which begin with the letter 'b' and shared them enthusiastically with the group.
- The children, including those from minority ethnic groups, learn to calculate and count thoughtfully because they are encouraged to use numbers in the inside and outside areas. For instance, they learned to recognise the numbers up to ten successfully because staff challenged the children to look for numbers on many objects including the bikes.
- The children who do not speak English as their first language make good progress. This is because staff work together successfully to make sure that these children learn to use English, and they have meetings three times a week to think about the most effective ways to support different groups of children. The children known to be eligible for free school meals make similar progress to the others, because the nursery works equally well in meeting the needs of all children.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are given good support which is tailored very closely to their individual needs. As a result, they made the same good progress as other children do.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The best teaching contains many strengths, including the especially imaginative approaches which staff use with children. Staff think very carefully about the questions they use which allow children to become creative in the ways they think. For example, the children learned to make up an amazing tale about a naughty bus because the teacher challenged them to add their own ideas to a story.

- All the teachers and support staff work well as a team to offer an exciting range of experiences for children that enhance their understanding of this country and the world. For instance, children learnt about British buses and a trip to London because staff created wonderful practical activities about going on a journey.
- Staff understand well how young children learn. Consequently, children develop their basic skills well. For instance, they learn to balance on planks of wood safely and grip handles while they pedal bikes because staff support children when they try new activities.
- The staff expect a lot from each child and so children learn by doing things for themselves. For example, children learnt about the meaning of the word 'more' when they pumped up a tyre and estimated how many more pumps would inflate it.
- Occasionally, staff miss opportunities to discuss in detail with children what they have done effectively and so the children are not totally clear about whether they have been successful.
- All staff check the children's progress and make notes about what they are able to do. They regularly update children's 'Learning Journeys' which record their achievements. Occasionally, the folders do not record in detail which stage of development children are working at and so a few staff are not totally clear about whether children are working at the expected level part way through the year.

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

- Children learn to concentrate extremely well because staff encourage them to finish a task and persevere when it gets tough. This means that children spend considerable amounts of time in both inside and outside areas working on one task. For example, children learned very successfully about how to build a model skyscraper using a wide variety of shapes because they applied themselves so thoughtfully to the task and used the 'ideas house' as a place to think for themselves.
- The children learn to be independent in many ways because staff expect a great deal of them. This term's project, 'Are we nearly there yet?', was planned exceptionally well with the children and the planning sheets which are displayed in the school and on the school website explain clearly which ideas came from children.
- Staff are outstandingly skilled at enhancing children's self-confidence, including those who have additional needs. This means that the children follow their own interests and extend their learning while making use of a wide range of equipment.
- The children learn to take small risks, while also keeping themselves safe. For example, boys and girls learn how to climb apparatus carefully because staff are thoughtful in the way they guide them.
- Staff are exceptionally skilled at supervising children and take a very positive attitude to helping them make the most sensible choices. This means that once children have settled in, they behave exceptionally well and succeed with their learning.
- The children have great opportunities to make friends. For example, they learn to sing songs

and say rhymes together, and wait their turn and share equipment safely.

- The children come to the nursery on a regular basis and very eagerly start activities as soon as they arrive. They are extremely clear about everyday routines.

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

- The headteacher is very successful in valuing the staff's ideas and determining what works well and what is less valuable. All leaders and staff strive to make the nursery a better place. For instance, since the last inspection, the school has improved children's understanding of the world around them and exchanged ideas with nurseries in several parts of the world using the internet.
- Staff integrate ideas that they have learned from training courses. Training has allowed them to develop their use of positive approaches to the management of children's behaviour and their use of questioning with children. They work thoughtfully to improve the quality of teaching but they are not totally effective in seeking out evidence to show that they have met their individual targets for development.
- The headteacher and staff keep a close eye on how much progress each child is making. They ensure that children make good progress in all areas of learning. Nevertheless, a simple summary of children's progress is not created and so it is not easy for all leaders to identify which groups of children are making slightly slower progress.
- The nursery works in partnership with parents very successfully. At least once a term, the staff meet with parents to discuss their children's achievements. Staff are available at the beginning and end of sessions every day to discuss children's progress.
- Staff are very dedicated to the welfare of the children and their families in the nursery. The school works exceedingly efficiently with other professionals and places like the local children's centre, and the children regularly gain the benefit of working with specialist staff.
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children from different backgrounds learn to get on well together. Many topics help them to learn very successfully about different people's cultures in this country and abroad. For example, recently the children learnt how to make samosas and in the past they learnt about traditional stories from Ireland and France.
- Many activities and topics are planned which promote high levels of skill and knowledge for the children. For example, they learn to mix colours effectively and this helped them to create beautiful paintings of butterflies.
- The local authority has not had much contact with the nursery in recent years, but it has provided support when requested. For example, governors have received training through the local authority in safeguarding.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body performs its duties well. It meets all the requirements about making the nursery a safe place and makes sure that staff are appropriately checked and trained in child protection. Governors complete training courses which enable them to hold leaders to account effectively. They check the quality of teaching by asking questions about data which shows how much progress children have made and how effective the nursery is. They make sure that

decisions about how money is used are made wisely so that they achieve good value for money. The governors have good systems to decide whether teachers and staff should be rewarded with salary increases and they review targets effectively for the headteacher.

## 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>	114699
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	401457

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>	148
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Roberts
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Roberts
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 July 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01245 473222
<b>Fax number</b>	01245 475528
<b>Email address</b>	admin@woodcroft-nur.essex.sch.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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

