

Inspection dates 10– 11 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Highly skilled and well-qualified leaders, managers and staff are uncompromising in their drive to pursue excellence in all of the school’s activities. They have been extremely successful in raising children’s achievements and personal development to a high level for their age.
- All who work in the school have an in-depth understanding of the ways that children of this age learn effectively. They continually review and adapt the way they work and meet each child’s individual needs extremely well. Consequently, children make an excellent start to their school life and are prepared very well for their entry to the Reception Year.
- Regardless of their ability, background or if they speak English as an additional language, children make excellent progress, especially in their ability to communicate with adults and one another.
- All teaching is consistently outstanding. High-quality questioning enables children to think through their ideas. Teachers use creative and innovative methods to capture children’s interests so they sustain their thirst for learning for long periods of time.
- Children’s behaviour is exemplary. Those new to the nursery settle in quickly, often supported by others who attended last year. Children become absorbed in activities led by adults and those they choose for themselves.
- Excellent resources and a superbly designed garden area support a vibrant curriculum indoors and outdoors that promotes strongly children’s imagination and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The tree house where children can observe the expanse of the river, the boats and docks, and visits out to the seaside, National Gallery and places of local interest, add much to children’s awe and wonder, and their understanding of the wider world.
- The partnership with parents and carers is particularly strong. There are many opportunities for them to take part in practical workshops to learn alongside their children and also to help them at home.
- Staff are meticulous in ensuring that children are kept safe while in the nursery and out on trips. Children know how to use craft tools safely and play with outdoor resources sensibly.
- Inspirational leaders, staff and governors work closely together determined to make children’s learning even better. Their work with other schools, sharing of expertise, frequent evaluation of children’s learning, staff appraisal and training has brought about sustained high-quality teaching and learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight hours of teaching and learning, sometimes accompanied by the headteacher.
- Activities in the morning and afternoon were observed. Lunch club and after-school activities were due to open shortly after the inspection.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher; members of staff with specific responsibilities for English, disabled children and those with special educational needs, English as an additional language, the outside area, the lunch club and after-school activities; and representatives of the governing body. The inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone.
- The inspector spoke to parents and carers whose older children had attended the nursery in previous years, and to some parents and carers whose children returned in September this year. Parents and carers who stayed to see their children settle into the nursery on their first and second days also contributed their views. Letters and cards from parents and carers who explained how the nursery had helped their child to develop were taken into account. Five parents and carers completed the online survey Parent View. This was not sufficient to see the results of the survey on the website.
- Some of the school's documentation was reviewed. The review included the school's self-evaluation summary, improvement plan, reports from governors of their visits to the school, notes on the checks made on the quality of teaching, arrangements for safeguarding and the promotion of high levels of attendance, records of children's progress and some of their 'memory books'.

Inspection team

Kath Beck, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The nursery is smaller than other nurseries nationally. Most children join the school in term 1. Any spaces that become available are filled by three-year-olds who are on the waiting list. Children join the school at different times over the year. They attend either in the morning or the afternoon, and have the opportunity to attend the optional lunch club or after-school activities approximately two fifths of the children speak English as an additional language. A few are at an early stage of English language acquisition.
- The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs who are supported through Early Years Action is below that found in most schools. The proportion supported at Early Years Action Plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is also below that found in schools nationally.
- One third of the children start with speech and language difficulties.
- The nursery is an accredited 'High Scope Centre'. It is used by the local authority as an exemplar of exceptional practice.
- The headteacher is a Local Leader of Education and two members of staff are Specialist Leaders in Education. They provide support to schools, private nurseries and pre-school groups.
- Since the previous inspection, the admission arrangements for children entering primary schools have changed. This means very few children stay at the nursery for more than a year. Most start when they are just three years of age, and leave at the age of four.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Put into practice the plans to use a wider range of information and communication technology as an additional resource to support children's learning, and to help them to understand its use in everyday life.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The school's high-quality data, records of progress over previous years, and 'memory books' show that children make rapid progress, from low starting points. Since the previous inspection, the school has been very successful in increasing year-on-year the number of children achieving extremely well for their age, especially in their personal development, speaking and early literacy skills. Children have high levels of independence. Their ability to think critically, make decisions and express their own ideas is developed very well.
- All children have excellent opportunities to succeed, and there is no discrimination of any kind. Most children transfer to the Reception Year with the skills expected for their age, and in many cases exceeding them. By the time they leave, the most-able children have already made a start with reading, can write simple words confidently, and count in sequence up to 20 and beyond.
- Children make swift progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Through their excellent relationships, staff show the children the ways to be courteous and respectful to one another. Large and small group work helps children to develop their social skills quickly. They learn to take turns, manage their feelings, listen to one another attentively and play happily together.
- Staff are exceptionally skilled in helping children from all backgrounds to develop their spoken language. They consistently model high-quality spoken English. Recall sessions, thought-provoking questions and engaging activities, such as making up their own stories to act out, motivate children to want to talk enthusiastically. Staff use pictures and one-to-one play sessions to help children who speak English as an additional language to communicate effectively.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs make progress that is similar to their classmates. Their learning difficulties are identified rapidly and action taken in partnership with parents and carers, speech and language therapists, and other professional agencies to overcome barriers to learning.
- Early mathematical skills are integrated fully into routines and activities. At snack time, children count out the number of cups and pieces of fruit for each child. They are fascinated by measuring the different number of millilitres they need to fill a half or a full cup of milk.
- Outdoors, children face challenges in climbing, sliding and riding their wheeled toys, with confidence. Observing the boats and natural world from their tree house, and growing fruit and vegetables in the garden, broadens their knowledge of the world.
- Art and craft activities, role play, and music allow children to use their imagination extensively and they achieve extremely well in expressive arts and design. While they use simple computer programs to help them to count and listen to stories, the range of modern technology to support children's learning and enhance their understanding of its use in everyday life is limited.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching over time is outstanding and enables pupils of all abilities to make rapid progress. This is shown in the governors' and headteacher's notes of the checks made on the quality of teaching, and the continued rise in children's achievements over the past three years. Parents and carers whose older children also attended the nursery are full of praise for the quality of teaching.
- Staff use their extensive knowledge to provide many rich opportunities for children to use their emerging reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills in their play indoors and outdoors. Through praise, direct teaching, and feedback, staff help children to make rapid gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- As a result of frequent checks on what children can do, and in discussions with them, staff adapt the way they work to help them make even better progress. Recently, staff were concerned that children were not taking up the opportunities provided for them to write. They carried out some

research and found that children preferred lined paper for writing and plain paper for drawing. By offering both kinds of paper the children are writing a lot more.

- As at the time of the previous inspection, children are hungry to learn, and are keen to explore and investigate all that is on offer. They are actively involved in planning, leading and reflecting on their learning each day, and this promotes their independence extremely well. Staff are exceptionally skilled at knowing when to leave children to pursue their own ideas, and when to intervene to take their learning forward.
- High expectations of what children can do promote children's engagement, determination to solve problems and their resilience. With great skill, an adult helped two children new to the nursery to focus for a long time on building a complex railway track. They also explored the properties of magnetism, when they found some of the engines and carriages that were magnetic would not 'stick' together, and they had to turn them around.
- All staff manage children's behaviour in very positive ways. This, together with excellent relationships between staff and children, means there is a calm and happy atmosphere. This enables adults to make the most of all the time children spend in the nursery to help them to learn something new.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Governors, staff, and parents and carers rightly consider that children's behaviour is exemplary for their age. Older children help those who are new to settle quickly into the nursery. They show them where to find resources and explain routines and expectations. This is reassuring to those who are less certain, especially when a classmate explains this in the language they speak additional to English.
- Children quickly acquire exceptional attitudes towards learning because adults engage them in fascinating activities and make clear what is expected of them.
- Often, children become absorbed in their self-chosen tasks, such as making an increasingly complicated 'marble run'. They respond quickly to invitations from adults to join them in a new game or to share a book, participating with enthusiasm.
- Children from all backgrounds play happily together. No child has been excluded on the grounds of poor behaviour. They are considerate towards one another, wait patiently for their turn and invite their friends to play with them.
- Snack and recall sessions are high-quality social occasions. Children sit with an adult and benefit from the time to learn good manners, and talk about what they have been doing.
- Attendance is higher than often found for children of this age group. Children are very keen to come to the nursery. One parent said that weekends are a problem because her son enjoys the things he can do at the nursery so much that he wants to go every day.
- Staff take considerable care to ensure that children are safe. Meticulous risk assessments that include the views of parents and carers keep children safe when they are out in the community. Children are taught to use all of the resources, including the climbing equipment, wheeled toys, and tools for woodwork, safely.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The pursuit of excellence is at the heart of the school's work, and is demonstrated by the manner in which outstanding practice has been maintained over a long period of time.
- The governing body and all staff share the ambition for the children to achieve as well as they can, and make a difference to their lives. All leaders and managers are inspirational and share their expertise. Published reports show that they are successful in raising the achievement of children in other schools, nurseries and play groups within the locality.
- Thorough self-evaluation takes into account the views of children, parents and carers, governors and staff. It also includes a robust analysis of data about children's achievements. As a result,

staff introduced new ways to promote children's speaking skills and imagination through making up stories and learning the sounds letters make. Consequently, children are making even faster progress in their communication and early literacy skills than at the time of the previous inspection.

- A well-defined school improvement plan is also informed by the views of all involved in the school. A priority this year, rightly, is to extend the range of modern technology available to support children's learning.
- Robust appraisal systems for all staff maintain high-quality teaching. Senior leaders check the quality of teaching often, and staff learn from each other. The strong commitment to improving their skills means most staff have acquired a range of high-level qualifications linked to High Scope and the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The programme of work is vibrant and contributes to children's enthusiasm for learning. It opens their eyes to the wider world, and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development strongly. Children's art work and sculptures made from wood and recycled materials, inspired by a resident artist and placed in a public exhibition, are of exceptional quality.
- Leaders and governors make sure that there is no discrimination and that all children are treated equally, whatever their backgrounds. The high-quality provision means that all children have equal opportunities to succeed.
- The school's partnership with parents and carers benefits children's learning, especially when they join in special events and accompany their children on trips out. Each year, parents and carers attend workshops to help their children to adopt healthy lifestyles and to keep safe on the internet.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for this outstanding nursery.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Through their visits to review aspects of the school, governors are exceptionally knowledgeable about it, the quality of teaching and children's achievements. They are aware of the rigorous appraisal systems for all staff, and reward high-quality leadership and teaching within the financial constraints. They ensure that when staff are out supporting other schools, high-quality teaching is sustained. Governors attend training to enhance their skills, and ensure that statutory requirements, especially those for safeguarding, are met. Finances are managed prudently.

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	118229
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	426414

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	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeremy Strike
Headteacher	Panna Nagar
Date of previous school inspection	21– 22 October 2010
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