

Borough Road Nursery School

Borough Road, Darlington, County Durham, DL1 1SG

Inspection dates 26–27 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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 achieve well from their individual starting points. The majority have a good level of development by the end of the Nursery Year.
- Children who have special educational needs make outstanding progress.
- Children make exceptionally good progress in their personal, social, emotional and physical development. Outdoor learning is a strength.
- Teaching is good. Staff are very good at developing children's language and communication skills.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Children are polite, well-organised, independent young people who are kind to each other.
- Children feel very safe and know that staff will help them if they are troubled.
- The leadership of teaching is good. As a result, the nursery's performance has continued to improve since the last inspection.
- Governors are well placed to support and challenge the school. They visit regularly and know what is going on because they talk to staff, children and parents often.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. The adult-led activities do not link particularly closely with those that the children do on their own. In their weekly evaluations of children's progress, staff do not specify what they should learn next.
- The few most-able children do not have opportunities to start learning to read as soon as they are ready.
- Leaders and managers do not always tell staff how to improve their teaching and so they do not know how to make it outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 13 lessons or parts of lessons taught by five staff.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, staff, both Chairs of the Governing Body, the vice-chair and one other governor and spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- Insufficient responses were available to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for the lead inspector to be able to access them. The inspector talked to 25 nursery parents informally at the start of morning and afternoon sessions.

Inspection team

Lesley Clark Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This nursery is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most children are White British.
- The proportion of children supported through early action is above average.
- The proportion of children supported through early action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Most children have one year in nursery before transferring to a Reception class in other schools.
- Nursery provision is organised flexibly to accommodate parental requirements between 8.30am and 3.45pm.
- On 31 August 2013, the partnership with the childcare provider Kids & Co terminated.
- From 1 September 2013, the nursery provides wraparound care, and 16 places for two-year-olds. This provision was not inspected as it is registered separately from the nursery. Once it has been inspected a copy of its report will be available on our website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move all teaching from good to outstanding by making sure that:
 - adult-led activities link more closely with those that children do on their own so that children practise new words and skills through using and applying them
 - the weekly evaluations of children’s learning specify what children need to learn next
 - the most-able children learn systematically, when they are ready, how letters and sounds link together to form words (phonics).
- Leaders and managers should ensure that checks on teaching indicate to staff how to improve their practice.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children achieve well from starting points that are below expected levels for their age. Their communication, language, literacy and mathematical skills are particularly low on entry.
- By the end of the Nursery Year, the majority reach a good level of development. The proportion reaching this level has increased steadily by 10% each year over the past three years. Almost all children reach a good level in their physical development.
- Children make good progress in communication and language. They absorb new words quickly because staff talk to them all the time, telling them the names of things such as 'bath', 'bed' or 'butter', for example. Children learn to sing nursery rhymes and join in with well-known stories, copying the actions and anticipating what comes next. Their language and communication skills improve rapidly as a result.
- Achievement is good in literacy. By the end of the year, the majority of children can write their names and use mark-making to convey information. Interesting resources, such as the post office, clipboards and different writing materials, encourage children to write.
- Programs on the interactive whiteboard help children to recognise letters and sounds, but not in a systematic way. This accelerates the progress of the large majority of children but not the very small proportion of most-able children who are ready to learn phonics methodically.
- Children make good progress in their mathematical development. The majority count confidently beyond 10 after eight weeks in nursery and a few most-able children add or subtract numbers accurately. The most-able children explore patterns with different shapes. In the sandpit, for example, they counted and matched stacks of flowerpots to different numbers.
- Children make good progress in understanding the world and in expressive arts and design. The large drums encourage them to beat rhythmically, for instance, and access to a wealth of creative materials, especially outdoors, encourages children to experiment.
- Overall, children make the best progress in their personal, social, emotional and physical development. Their achievement is outstanding in these areas of learning. Excellent learning resources outdoors entice them to play together, balance, climb or collect different materials. They turn into independent, sociable young people, well-prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Children who are supported through early action, early action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs make outstanding progress. This is because they are taught language skills in a small group but have the same independent choices as others.
- The nursery clearly promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination successfully.

The quality of teaching

is good

- All staff involve children in purposeful play which extends their thinking. As a result, children turn into confident explorers. For example, children moved from 'painting' a playhouse with water to transporting water in wheelbarrows so they had enough to 'paint' all the tyres and water the leaves.
- The teaching of children with special educational needs is exceptionally good. Staff match activities to children's different learning styles and ways of communication. As a result, children become increasingly independent.
- The flexible indoor and outdoor learning spaces encourage all children to move around and access resources freely. Staff are very good at fitting in with children's play ideas and developing them further. For example, children wanted to have a party and so staff provided candles and play dough which children turned into birthday cakes. Staff used this well to develop children's mathematical understanding of number, size and shape.
- Staff use questions and repetition particularly well to gauge how much children have

understood. They skilfully interpret children's unclear speech, speaking clearly themselves and helping children to put words together so they learn to talk in phrases and sentences.

- Outstanding features of the teaching are the ways in which staff involve children in giving explanations or recalling all the details of a story so that, in effect, they retell it.
- The balance between adult-led and child-led activities is just right. Taught sessions are well-paced and varied so that children are interested and concentrate for an increasingly long time.
- However, the adult-led activities do not link particularly closely with those that children do on their own. This means that children miss out on practising new skills. For example, children learnt about different animals, including features such as spots and stripes, but there were no activities which required them to use this knowledge independently in different contexts.
- Staff check children's learning each week and note how they will change the provision. However, they do not link this to what children need to learn next. As a result, although staff are very responsive to children's learning needs, they occasionally miss opportunities to push children's learning on a bit further.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Within a very short time, children learn the nursery routines and become independent. They hang up their coats, use the toilet rather than nappies and take responsibility for clearing away resources without being prompted. Staff expect the most of them and children want to please.
- At snack time, children line up in an orderly way, making sure that they do not get too close to the person in front. They sit down sensibly and say 'please' and 'thank you'. They take turns to give out the milk and choose, without fussing, which piece of fruit they would prefer.
- Children quickly acquire extremely good learning behaviour. They listen intently to stories. They join in discussion times without shouting and wait for those who are less articulate to contribute too.
- Children concentrate for a long time. They rarely flit from one activity to another. They play for sustained periods and persevere because they thirst to learn.
- Children are very considerate of each other's needs. They treat those with complex special educational needs gently and make sure that they do not startle nervous children.
- Few children play in isolation because they enjoy each other's company. The most-able children often develop imaginative games that involve others. Children clearly have fun as when five children decided to sing and beat drums together or a different group set up pipes to catch different balls.
- Parents say that their children love coming to nursery. Children's high attendance levels confirm this is so.
- There is rarely any unkind or bullying behaviour because children know that it is wrong to hurt someone else. They have confidence in the nursery staff and readily go to them if they have any worries. They clearly feel safe. Arguments are quickly resolved because children have a strong sense of fair play.

The leadership and management are good

- The nursery's good provision over time has been achieved by consistently good leadership and management.
- Staff work as a team. They see children as individuals and strive to match provision to children's needs. This is most successful with children who have special educational needs and the reason why they make exceptionally good progress.
- The leadership of teaching is good. It has achieved a remarkable consistency of approach and teaching methods over time. The headteacher and deputy headteacher set high standards in their own practice, and practitioners have individual strengths that relate to their middle leadership areas.

- Regular checks on teaching and children’s progress ensure that this good level of teaching is sustained. However, teaching is not yet outstanding because leaders and managers do not tell staff how they might improve their practice further.
- Performance management and appraisal are used well to set suitable targets to ensure that provision and teaching are good. Weekly checks on children’s progress ensure that staff are accountable.
- The nursery welcomes parents and keeps them closely informed about their children’s progress. In addition, it offers family learning opportunities including counselling and access to well-being activities. These help parents to contribute to their children’s learning.
- The curriculum is well thought out to give children varied spiritual, social, moral and cultural experiences. These range from working on a local allotment to celebrating different religious festivals. A major strength is the provision for outdoor learning. Its impact is seen in the outstanding progress that children make in their physical development.
- Safeguarding meets current government requirements and ensures that staff and children are safe.
- The local authority gives light-touch support to the nursery as and when the nursery requests it.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved considerably since the last inspection. Governors’ minutes of meetings confirm that they ask challenging questions, especially about children’s achievement. They are well informed because they come into the nursery regularly. Governors know what teaching is like and have taken steps to improve it further by employing an external assessor because staff have worked together for a long time. Financial management is a strength. The governing body is not afraid to take difficult decisions. It has set up provision for two-year-olds to raise children’s attainment on entry to nursery. It checks to see that funding is spent wisely to benefit children’s education.

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	113982
Local authority	Darlington
Inspection number	425908

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	49
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paula Devine / Mr Michael Watson
Headteacher	Lynn Millar
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2011
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