

Grange Nursery School

Harrowby Road, Meir, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST3 7AN

Inspection dates 3–4 December 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.

- Children become excellent learners. From low baselines, they leave the school having attained the expectations for their age in nearly all areas of learning and about one fifth exceed the expectations, especially in speaking, listening and physical development.
- All groups of children make at least good, and often excellent progress, including girls, boys, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Teaching is outstanding because there is a whole-school approach to establishing clear routines and ensuring that each child takes part in all activities. Staff make exceptionally good use of information from observations to move children on rapidly in their learning.
- Children’s behaviour is excellent because they relish the many exciting learning opportunities both indoors and out. They soon learn to concentrate and persevere with tasks. Relationships between staff and children are very positive and children feel safe and happy.
- When planning learning, teachers consider what children enjoy and tailor many learning activities to match children’s interests. The impressive curriculum stimulates all children to want to learn.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The school has continued to improve under the leadership of the headteacher and governing body. Highly effective organisation of staff means that senior leaders are able to check the quality of teaching and learning constantly and provide extra help and support for children who need it. All staff teach to a high standard so that children’s achievement is outstanding.
- The school goes out of its way to involve parents in their children’s education. Parents are consulted about the curriculum, invited to attend courses and welcomed into school for many activities. However, as yet, not many parents are regularly contributing comments to the children’s learning journals.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 sessions, including whole classes, special groups, adult-led and child-initiated activities. These sessions were taught by three teachers and nine Early Years practitioners. Two of the sessions were joint observations with the headteacher and the co-ordinator for creative learning.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher and other staff, the home-link worker, parents and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation including school improvement planning and self-evaluation, school data from checking on children's progress and arrangements for safeguarding children. A sample of children's 'learning journey' records was scrutinised.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents from the 19 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), the 23 responses to the school's recent questionnaire and the views of parents bringing their children to school each morning.
- Questionnaire responses from 10 staff were considered.

Inspection team

Judith Straw, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is of average size for a nursery school and offers 60 full-time places to children aged three to four years.
- A children's centre is located on the same site and shares the forest school area on the same site. The children's centre was not part of this inspection.
- The very large majority of children is of White British heritage and very few are learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of children known to be eligible to receive free school meals is high and includes over half of all children.
- The proportions of disabled children and those with special educational needs supported through school action or Early Years action are above average.
- Since the previous inspection a new Chair of Governors has been appointed.
- The school is currently subject to local authority reorganisation which will result in a different leadership structure next year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further enhance parental involvement in their children's learning so that many more parents contribute to their child's learning journal by recording comments.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children enter the nursery with skills, knowledge and understanding much lower than for most three-year-olds. They learn rapidly and, by the end of the Nursery year, almost all children achieve the expectations for their age and about one fifth exceeds this level. Staff have successfully built on the good achievement seen at the last inspection so that achievement has been good or outstanding over at least the last five years.
- Children currently in the nursery are making excellent progress and have already developed important skills to make them effective learners. They are beginning to direct their own learning, make decisions and explore for themselves.
- All staff encourage good listening and ensure that children respond in full sentences and explain and develop their ideas. For example, all classes were using photographs of their trip on a steam train the day before the inspection to talk about what they had seen and done.
- Children make excellent progress in linking letters to sounds and many of them can already identify isolated letter sounds in their names and other words. Children enjoy stories and books and readily choose to go into book corners to share books with one another. They enjoy repetitive rhymes and singing.
- All children learn some early French. There is always a French 'word of the week' and the role-play area in one classroom is currently set up as a French bakery.
- In problem-solving and numeracy children can describe shapes and have plenty of opportunities to use numbers and count.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs learn as well as other children do because they are given well-targeted support and not excluded from any activity. Teaching assistants support their learning but do not take over, so that children grow in confidence and self-esteem.
- Analysis of the progress data of children shows that the gap in the achievement between boys and girls is narrowing rapidly and is closer than the national picture. Children known to be eligible to receive free school meals make the same excellent progress as that of other children. Once higher-ability children have been identified, they are given additional challenge and support to speed their progress.
- Analysis of the progress of the very few children who speak English as an additional language shows that they make excellent strides in their learning and achieve well.
- Children enjoy celebrating their achievements. On the 'wow' board a record is kept of children who have mastered skills such as using scissors properly, holding pens correctly and fastening coats and buttons.
- Children thrive in this school as their confidence increases so that they are very well-prepared for the next stage of their education.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because staff are relentless in ensuring that every child succeeds.
- All practitioners have an excellent understanding of how young children learn and ensure that sessions are planned based on a daily evaluation of children's learning.
- There is a very good balance of activities led by adults and those chosen by children themselves. Children are encouraged to make choices but they are also taught that when they start an activity they should persevere to finish it and evaluate their learning. Every afternoon ends with a review of each child's learning that day.
- Teachers' questioning is consistently strong because they encourage children to talk through their thinking and develop their ideas. For example, after a focused session on creating stories about animals, children worked together to develop an entirely new story for themselves.

Creative ideas flowed as children prepared to weave a tale around crocodiles and turtles.

- What makes teaching so effective is that all teachers follow the same routines so that children feel safe and know what to expect. However, teachers also plan unusual and exciting sessions which really capture the children's interest. For example, in a session learning how to produce different colours by mixing paint, children were delighted to see that they were going to mix the colours with their bare feet.
- The teaching of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is exemplary. Staff have an excellent understanding of these children's barriers to learning and ensure that learning is presented in small steps that are achievable. The school has an excellent record of helping children with behaviour problems settle quickly into school routines so that they are fully able to learn.
- The outdoor area is well-equipped and enhanced by the forest school area. Children love working and playing outdoors and have ready access at any time to learn indoors or out. All the same activities are available outdoors, for example, music, reading, writing and crafts.
- Teachers' recording of children's learning is accurate, timely and concise. It is shared with parents who are asked to contribute comments for each child's learning journal. Parents contribute 'wow' moments when they have observed their children tackling something new and being successful. However, not all parents do this regularly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children's enjoyment of learning is evident in many sessions. They show high levels of enthusiasm in all activities. They know what is expected of them and feel safe, knowing that they will be supported to succeed. Children learn how to deal with any bullying through the 'walk tall' programme.
- Those children who find difficulty in settling in, forming relationships or playing co-operatively are quickly identified. These children are invited to attend a nurture club each morning, where they have breakfast together and benefit from plenty of individual attention. As a result these children make excellent progress in their personal development and confidence.
- The home-school link worker provides excellent support for example, by running the 'Let's get started' group, in collaboration with the children's centre, for identified vulnerable children in the term before they start at the school. She also manages family workshops with courses on fitness and communication skills.
- Children are taught values such as respect and honesty. They show excellent respect towards each other and all adults and visitors. They learn right from wrong, care for one another and accept each other's differences.
- Children attend regularly and parents are made aware of the importance of attendance. All absence is followed up and support put in place if necessary.
- Children are safe in the Nursery and learn through safe play whether inside or out. They exercise vigorously on the cycle tracks or climbing frames but respect rules for safety and take care of each other. Daily checks by staff ensure everyone is aware of any potential hazards. Parents have full confidence that the Nursery will keep their children safe.
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They develop excellent spiritual awareness from assemblies, visiting the forest school and learning in the garden. They learn about the festivals of other cultures such as Chinese New Year and there is an annual cultural café where children and parents sample food from around the world. Social awareness is excellent, shown in the way lunch is a sociable occasion where children take turns to help in setting the tables and serving food.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leadership is inspiring. All staff are dedicated to breaking down barriers to success and giving children the best possible start to their education. They are proud to work here and teamwork is excellent. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and all children have equal opportunities to succeed.
- The headteacher has an excellent knowledge of the quality of teaching and learning across the school and is highly effective in checking and ensuring that high quality provision is sustained over time. Self-evaluation of all aspects of the school is excellent, based on first-hand observation of all learning activities.
- Children's progress is monitored meticulously. Adults have a clear picture of where each child is achieving success and where they need help.
- All staff have leadership roles of some kind. All have the opportunity to observe others and to model good practice. Planning is coherent and ambitious and includes everyone. Parents are invited to contribute ideas for topic work and children are regularly consulted about what they would like to learn.
- The setting of targets for teachers and practitioners to help them improve their performance is rigorous. All staff are part of this process and are held accountable for the progress their children make and for the impact their work has across the school.
- Specific support for all groups of children whose circumstances make them vulnerable is exceptional. The school does all it can to extend learning opportunities by, for example, providing clubs that lend toys, books and CDs. There are mathematical and science packs for children identified as more able or talented who are ready for the next steps in learning.
- The curriculum is lively, vibrant and enhanced by excellent opportunities to welcome visitors such as poets and artists as well as numerous small trips to places of interest. Children enjoy their forest school activities and love learning outdoors. The curriculum very successfully promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority regards the school as one which never stands still but seeks continual improvement. It is seen as highly effective and is used as a model of good practice. The headteacher is part of the improving schools group where leaders share their expertise with less successful schools.
- Safeguarding is rigorous and effective and exceeds statutory requirements. All requirements for ensuring children's health and well-being are of high quality.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school very well. They talk knowledgeably about its work and understand clearly the reasons why it is successful over time. They hold the school to account, while being supportive. All governors are linked to a curriculum area and make regular visits to see things for themselves. They understand the qualities of effective teaching and have an accurate view of how well children are taught and how well they achieve. They are able to contribute to setting targets for each member of staff. Governors undertake training and have excellent levels of expertise relevant to the work of the nursery. They are fully involved in development planning, ensure all statutory requirements are met and know the implications of the financial decisions they make.

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	123956
Local authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	426924

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	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Len Gibbs
Headteacher	Jacqueline Brown
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2010
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