

Rosemary Lane Nursery School

Rosemary Lane, Easington Village, Peterlee, County Durham, SR8 3BQ

Inspection dates 10–11 December 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.

- Achievement is outstanding because children, including those who have special educational needs, are exceptionally well supported to make excellent progress in all areas of their learning.
- Teaching is outstanding. All staff have exceptional understanding of how young children learn. They use this highly effectively to support children to develop as confident learners.
- Teachers are highly skilled in finding imaginative approaches to stimulate and build on children's interests and extend their experiences of the world around them. They value children's own ideas and harness them very effectively to develop children's creative and critical thinking skills.
- Children's behaviour is excellent. This is because teachers provide so many interesting and exciting activities and resources that children very much want to join in and learn as much as they can. They treat one another and the adults in the school exceptionally well.
- The school's outstanding performance is further strengthened by its success in involving parents in their children's learning and maintaining high levels of home-to-school communications.
- Relationships within the school are very strong. Small group sessions with a key person at the beginning and end of each session mean that the nursery feels like an extended family. In this warm and nurturing environment children feel very safe and move into the whole-class activities eager to play and explore together.
- Leaders and managers, including members of the governing body, provide outstanding leadership resulting in children's exceptional achievement. The school's procedures for checking on how well children are doing are very rigorous and no stone is ever left unturned which might improve things even further.
- The curriculum is exceptionally rich and varied and supports children in developing their creative and critical thinking skills across all areas of learning.
- The school has yet to fully exploit teachers' excellent skills and the available resources in place to support children's development of number skills.
- Children moving on from Rosemary Lane are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education because they receive the very best of starts on their learning journeys.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight sessions or parts of sessions, two of which were joint observations with the acting headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to small group sessions.
- Discussions were held with five members of the governing body, one local authority representative and school staff. The inspector took into account 11 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and eight responses to the staff survey. Additionally, the inspector spoke informally to some parents at the beginning of the school day.
- A range of documents were looked at, including the school's data on children's progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Janette Corlett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized nursery school. Most children are of White British heritage and no children are at an early stage of acquiring English.
- An above average proportion of children have special educational needs and are supported at Early Years Action or Early Years Action Plus. The proportion of children with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Children attend the school for up to five terms following their third birthday and prior to beginning the Reception class in different schools. The school operates a flexible offer for 15 hours weekly provision including single morning and afternoon sessions and a combination of both. Some children attend for additional, paid sessions.
- Because of the long-term absence of the headteacher, the school is currently led by the assistant headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- The school has already identified areas for improvement and is currently addressing these very effectively. It would benefit from considering how teachers' excellent skills in extending children's learning through play and exploration could be built on even further so as to provide even more opportunities for children to develop their number skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children join the nursery with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their age and sometimes well below, particularly in relation to their language and communication skills. Rapid progress leads to almost all children leaving the nursery with skills expected for their age and a significant minority exceed these expectations.
- Children are all very well prepared for entry to their next school because they have gained high levels of confidence and independence as learners and have already developed good communication, early literacy and numeracy skills. All groups of children make exceptional progress because staff provide a stimulating range of activities and are highly skilled at building on children's interests and previous learning. One parent typically commented that 'there is a little surprise in nursery every day – there is always something new'.
- Children with special educational needs make excellent progress. They receive exactly the right level of support that they need to thrive and learn as much as they can in the nursery's warm and caring environment.
- The learning of the most able children is extended because teachers take every opportunity to help them develop their thinking through using skilled questioning and providing increased levels of challenge in the tasks and activities they organise each day.
- Children's personal and social development is exceptional because of the high quality, sensitive support that they receive. They develop the social skills to work well together, to understand their own feelings and to deepen their understanding of how other people might be feeling. Children are constantly encouraged to persevere with tasks and to make decisions for themselves.
- Children's language and communication skills develop rapidly because teachers listen to their chatter and grasp every opportunity to build on this and extend their speaking skills. Teachers join in with role play exceptionally well and share stories, rhymes and songs frequently in each session. This further supports children in beginning to understand the relationship between letters and sounds as they begin to recognise simple words and take the first steps to becoming good readers.
- Children's physical development is excellent because of all the opportunities they have to play outdoors where they can run about and practise balancing on the climbing equipment. A structure for rolling balls down a series of slopes helps them develop their moving and handling skills. Short structured games which adults organise and participation in music and dancing sessions provide a further stimulus towards being physically active and healthy.
- Children begin their journey as writers through the many stimulating opportunities for mark making both indoors and outdoors. There is always an exciting range of materials including the usual paints, pens, pencils and paper but extending to writing with, for example, mud, sticks and crushed berries in the outdoor area.
- Children's mathematical skills develop rapidly because teachers skilfully identify opportunities for counting and identifying shapes in children's explorative play. For example, wrapping up presents to post in the Christmas Post Office area engaged children in exploring the shape of the parcels, weighing them and discussing the cost of stamps. The school is currently working hard to extend these opportunities even further.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers use their observations of children's learning exceptionally well to support individual children. They have very high expectations of what each child can achieve and constantly encourage children to develop their own ideas.
- All teachers understand how children of this age learn and develop. They provide very stimulating activities carefully matched to children's different needs. At the same time they use

the children's own interests to plan for activities which are appealing and build on children's own experiences at home as well as in nursery.

- Teachers promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. As a result, children develop a sense of wonder in the world around them. For instance, they showed huge care and respect for small creatures by building a shelter for a hibernating hedgehog that had woken up too early and could not find his way back home. Children whispered to one another whilst selecting the materials to use so as not to startle the hedgehog.
- Teachers have excellent questioning skills and use these to extend conversations and help children develop their ideas. They value contributions from children and this builds trust, respect and self-confidence.
- Throughout the day, teachers actively encourage children to solve problems for themselves. Teachers are experts in knowing when to intervene to help and when there is more to gain by letting children have a go and learn from their experience. Teachers are very skilled when joining in children's play and extending learning. This was evident when a group of children wanted to write letters to Santa. The teacher modelled writing a letter along with the children and then used a world map to help them find the North Pole and describe what it might be like to live there.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children's behaviour is outstanding because they are always fully involved in actively playing and exploring together. They really enjoy coming to nursery and they attend regularly. Parents typically comment that there is never any difficulty in persuading children to come to school – rather it is sometimes difficult to take them home because they really want to stay and play with their friends.
- Arrangements for children to settle in to nursery are excellent. Parents are encouraged to stay with children at the start of each session and this makes children feel very safe and secure.
- During the course of the inspection there was no evidence of any bullying or racist incidents and the school's records confirm that there are none. Children are too busy playing and learning to do anything other than fall out occasionally and teachers always swiftly sort this out in a calm and friendly manner so that there is never any disruption to learning.
- The school gives exceptional support for children to learn how to keep themselves safe without being unduly fearful. For example, children have recently been involved in a Beach School project. While having lots of fun exploring the beach, they learned about how to keep themselves safe from the dangers of fire when helping to build a small fire and then enjoying roasting marshmallows over it.
- There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere at all times in the nursery and this is because of the excellent relationships and the vibrant learning environment. Children are confident there is always someone to help them if they need it. Their parents really appreciate this and the outstanding level of care for each and every child.
- Children know the nursery routines very well. For example, they put on their coats and boots to go into the outside area in wet weather.
- Children treat one another with great kindness and are very well mannered because teachers model good manners and constantly praise thoughtful behaviour. This was seen particularly at snack time when children gathered in small groups with their teacher to share a drink and something healthy to eat. They passed food around very sensibly after carefully washing their hands and 'please' and 'thank you' needed only a very little prompting from the teacher.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school has been outstanding in all previous inspections and continues to go from strength to strength under the inspirational direction of the headteacher and other school leaders. This is a

school where no-one is ever satisfied that everything is perfect and all staff constantly strive to be even better.

- The headteacher shares her expertise extremely well and has an excellent impact on staff training and development. She has built a highly effective and cohesive team.
- The leadership of teaching is outstanding. Senior leaders keep a very close check on the effectiveness of the nursery each and every day and continually challenge themselves to do better. Other staff are equally motivated to build on and improve their skills and benefit from appropriate professional development and training linked to the school's thorough procedures to manage their performance.
- The curriculum is also outstanding because it is rich and varied, exceptionally well planned to meet the needs of all children in all the areas of learning and flexible enough to respond to children's individual interests and experiences.
- The headteacher uses information from checks on teaching to ensure that teachers' pay is linked to the quality of teaching and contributes to improvements in children's achievement.
- Partnerships are very strong and enable parents to be very successfully engaged in their children's development. Teachers share children's work through their 'learning journeys' that provide an exceptionally detailed and personalised record for parents to see how children are doing. Parents are also encouraged to contribute their own examples of children's learning at home.
- Given the school's long track record of success, the local authority provides a 'light-touch' level of support to the school. The educational development partner effectively supports the school in continuing to gain an accurate view of its performance. Staff benefit from training and development sessions that are organised through the local authority.
- At the heart of the school's success is the staff's ability to ensure that every child has an equal chance to shine and succeed. The backgrounds and different abilities of the children are always respected and valued.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body are actively engaged in the school. Governors bring a broad range of expertise and provide strong support and challenge. They regularly check on the progress of individual children, particularly those who have special educational needs, fully understanding the needs of young learners for a safe and nurturing environment where teaching is of the highest quality. Governors ensure that the nursery provides excellent value for money, for example, by providing two free sessions per week for children in the term before they enter the nursery so that they become familiar with the routines and swiftly settle. Governors are involved in deciding whether teachers and staff should be awarded pay increases. They ensure that all safeguarding requirements are fully met and that safeguarding has a very high profile throughout the nursery.

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	113989
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	425727

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	Kevin Thornhill
Headteacher	Gillian Parker
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2010
Telephone number	0191 527 1168
Fax number	0191 527 1168
Email address	rosemary.lane@durhamlearning.net

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