

Harrington Nursery School

Harrington Street, Peartree, Derby, DE23 8PE

Inspection dates 16–17 January 2014

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.

- Harrington Nursery is a haven for children; it opens their eyes to the wider world and prepares them extremely well for starting primary school.
- Outstanding levels of care, nurture and high quality teaching give children a first-rate education.
- All children achieve exceptionally well from the time they join the nursery. From low attainment on entry, children reach, and some exceed, national expectations by the end of the nursery year. However, progress in reading is not as rapid as that in writing.
- Staff carefully plan and cater for the diverse needs and interests of all the children. They make learning fun and provide a rich, highly stimulating curriculum.
- Children's behaviour and safety are exemplary. They acquire extremely positive attitudes to learning.
- Staff love their work and are a highly effective team. They are always thinking about how to do their jobs even better, welcome new ideas and are keen to try them out.
- Underpinning the school's success are the dedication and expertise of the headteacher. She is ably assisted by senior staff and governors. Excellent leadership has resulted in improvements to all areas of provision since the previous inspection.
- The school has an excellent reputation within the local authority, and is the hub of the community.
- Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school. One summed up the views of others by saying, 'This is a big family. The staff give you a warm welcome, help parents as well as children and make everyone feel equal.'

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight sessions, including whole classes, groups, adult-led and child-initiated activities. Most of the sessions were observed jointly with the headteacher. Snack and lunch times were also observed.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher and other staff, 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, monitoring records and arrangements for safeguarding children. A sample of children's 'sparkle books' was scrutinised.
- Questionnaire responses from 18 staff were considered.
- There were only a very small number of responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector took account of the views of parents bringing their children to school.

Inspection team

Mary Hughes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is of average size for a nursery school. Children attend on a part-time basis.
- The majority of children are learning English as an additional language: 16 home languages are spoken.
- The proportions of disabled children and those with special educational needs are above average: 14% of children are supported at early action, with a further 10% supported at early action plus. Two children have a statement of special educational needs.
- A range of ethnic backgrounds is represented. The largest groups are from Pakistani and Eastern European backgrounds.
- The school has achieved the Investors in People and Healthy Schools awards. It is currently working towards the International School Award.
- There is currently an acting Chair of the Governing Body. The governing body is working towards the Governor Mark.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in reading so that it matches the outstanding progress made in writing.

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 their time in the nursery, most children achieve the expectations for their age with some exceeding this level. All groups of children make at least good, and often outstanding, progress.
- The achievement of boys and girls is similar. Substantial gains are made by all ethnic groups so that any gaps in achievement are narrowing rapidly. Once more-able children have been identified, they are given additional challenge and support to speed their progress.
- The majority of children enter the nursery with limited communication skills, with many in the early stages of learning English. All staff encourage good listening, model language well and encourage children to explain and talk through their ideas. The staff's promotion of language is a strength of the nursery, as they use every opportunity to get children talking and to introduce new vocabulary.
- The school's innovative personalised speech and language programmes where staff use signing, symbols and pictures to reinforce language, also contribute to children's outstanding progress in communication skills.
- Children make outstanding progress in personal, social and emotional development. This is because of the strong emphasis adults place on developing these skills, and the high quality relationships the school builds between adults and children. Children settle quickly due to the staff's sensitive approaches. They rapidly become independent learners; they ably choose their own resources, make decisions and explore for themselves.
- Children's physical development is well promoted, resulting in their rapid progress. They quickly develop skills as they work with small tools, climb on apparatus and use wheeled vehicles. They use cutting skills well, as seen when they created their own accessories for their 'superhero' costume.
- The promotion of writing skills is highly successful. An imaginative range of mark-making opportunities results in children's eagerness to develop their writing. Children were very keen to write letter shapes, including letters from their own name, on their 'superhero magic pants'.
- Children make particularly rapid gains in their mathematical skills because of the school's effective promotion of numeracy and problem solving. Incidental experiences are used well to reinforce children's knowledge of numbers; for example, counting and recording how many laps of the track they have cycled around. Other activities, such as 'digit dance', further reinforce skills when children make number shapes and patterns to music.
- Children who are disabled or who have special educational needs make outstanding progress. Children are often referred here because of the local reputation of the school in supporting those with additional needs. A number of children have very complex needs. The excellent, individualised support, which is adapted exactly to each child's requirements, enables all to be successful and achieve.
- A love of books is fostered well through the regular sharing of stories with children and adults. Good questioning during the reading of *My Mum Has X-Ray Vision* helped children to make

predictions about the story. The school recognises that although achievement in reading is good, it is not as rapid as that in writing. Staff realise that more opportunities are needed for children to link letters and sounds to read words (phonics). Plans are in place to introduce this.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because of highly effective teamwork and a consistent approach. Staff are totally committed to making sure that every child succeeds. As parents and staff commented, 'Children here always come first'.
- In discussions, staff talk about how well their teaching has gone each day. This enables them to prepare and adapt the next day's learning programme. Staff think very carefully about the steps children need to take to learn new skills. The new assessment system, which uses tablet technology to gather short observations, is contributing well to planning.
- Staff have an excellent understanding of how young children learn best. A wide range of resources and practical activities, together with a stimulating environment, provide children with exciting opportunities to learn. Both indoors and out, children's curiosity is promoted and a love of learning developed. Children excitedly developed critical thinking skills as they designed, named and evaluated their own 'superhero'.
- Staff are highly skilled in playing alongside children. They know just when to step back and give children the space and time to explore for themselves, and when to ask questions to move the learning forward. Excellent questioning is used to help children develop their own ideas further. For example, children used large boxes to make a rocket for their superhero. Through skilful support by the staff, this role play was adapted by the children to make beds and other furniture and to think about what clothes their superhero would need.
- Many memorable experiences capture children's imagination. A recent topic on 'space' was introduced by a staff member dressing as an astronaut and leaving behind a trail of blue sand. The excellent range of visits and visitors give children the chance to develop their understanding of the world. Through activities such as camping in the park, paddling in the sea and having a picnic in a cave, the world is opened up to the children.
- There is exemplary teaching for disabled children and those who have special educational needs, including those children with speech and communication difficulties. Staff have an excellent understanding of these children's barriers to learning and ensure that learning is presented in very small steps that are achievable. The school has an excellent record of helping children with behavioural problems settle quickly into school routines so they are able to learn.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The school is an outstandingly harmonious community that welcomes all children. The excellent community spirit is seen throughout the day as children eat snacks and lunch together, chat confidently to staff and ask for help when needed.
- Parents spoke about how quickly children settle into school and of how safe and well looked after they feel. Children race into school and keenly start activities as soon as they arrive. They are clear about everyday routines and understand about sharing equipment and taking turns. Children show high levels of enthusiasm and curiosity in all that they do.

- A strong culture of respect is in place. Children 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.
- The behaviour of children is outstanding. Children respond well to the high expectations of staff, who take every opportunity to remind them of the nursery rules.
- Attendance has risen since the previous inspection. Most children now attend regularly and parents are made aware of the importance of attendance. Absence is rigorously followed up and support put in place if necessary.
- Staff understand the need for children to learn to manage risks and how to keep themselves safe. They take risks in a controlled way. Children use real knives when cutting dough, learn to climb and balance on crates and use a plank to get to the top of the slide. They find safe ways of getting pedal cars and bikes down steps. The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They develop outstanding spiritual awareness from their activities, particularly those outdoors. A group of children were amazed when they found a spider hidden in their boxes. They then spent time watching and talking about the 'superhero spider'. Children learn about a range of festivals, such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. Social awareness is excellent, shown in the way snack time is a sociable occasion where children chat together and help in clearing away.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is an inspirational leader. She has a clear vision and is dedicated to breaking down barriers to success and giving children the best possible start to their education. She has ably led the school through improvements to provision since the previous inspection. The school is now providing high quality early years provision in all areas. It is an exemplar of what can be achieved for children whose family circumstances make them vulnerable.
- The headteacher is ably assisted by senior staff and a highly effective staff team. High quality teamwork is a major factor in the school's success. All staff say that they are proud to work here and feel that the school is well led and managed. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and it is evident that all children have equal opportunities to succeed. The pursuit of excellence for all is at the heart of the nursery's work.
- The headteacher has an excellent knowledge of the quality of teaching and learning across the school and is highly effective in checking and evaluating all aspects of the provision. Children's progress is carefully monitored. Adults have a clear picture of where each child is succeeding, and where they need help.
- All staff have leadership roles of some kind. They have regular opportunities to discuss and reflect on what is working well and what could be improved, develop professionally and gain additional qualifications. The setting of targets for staff to help them improve their performance is rigorous and well planned. New ideas are welcomed, trialled and evaluated; for example, the nursery is currently introducing aspects of the Reggio Emilio approach to education.
- The curriculum is rich, vibrant and interweaves many opportunities for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development with other skills. Children are regularly consulted about what they would like to learn.

- Excellent support is provided for families, particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The school runs regular workshops, a monthly music session, carries out home visits and lends books and toys to parents and carers. Many parents provided examples of how the school has intervened to give practical help and support, or just been a 'listening ear'. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's effectiveness.
- An excellent partnership is in place with the local authority and with other schools. The school is highly regarded within the authority, and leads and manages the Early Years Forum for the city. The headteacher and staff share their expertise with other schools and with university students.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the previous inspection, several new members of the governing body have been appointed. Governors are committed to continuous improvement and carry out their statutory duties fully. They hold the school to account, as well as being supportive. Individual governors make regular visits to see things for themselves and report back their findings to other governors. Governors undertake training and have good levels of expertise relevant to the work of the nursery. They understand what data is saying about how well the school is doing. They regularly review the work of the headteacher and staff, and link teachers' pay to children's performance. They are fully involved in development planning, ensure all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding children, and understand the implications of the financial decisions they make. They are keen to make sure that money is spent wisely to support children's development.

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	112474
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	430681

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	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Weatherall (Acting chair)
Headteacher	Wendy Colebourne
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2011
Telephone number	01332 769821
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