

# Netherton Park Nursery School and Children's Centre

Netherton Park, Netherton, Dudley, DY2 9QF

## Inspection dates

12–13 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
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's achievement is outstanding. They learn exceptionally well because adults use every opportunity to develop their skills.
- Highly effective daily planning and observations by all the adults ensure that all groups of children, including the most able and those who speak English as an additional language, do exceptionally well in their learning.
- Children are offered an enormous range of activities, which stimulate their curiosity and capture their imagination.
- Children are given a love of reading through the excellent story-time sessions, as well as through many other opportunities to use and share books.
- The teaching of early literacy and numeracy skills is exceptional. It is woven into imaginative play as well as when children are being taught in small groups. Computers and other technology are not used so widely to extend learning and develop children's skills.
- Children behave exceptionally well because they are so absorbed in what they are doing. They play remarkably well together. Parents and carers are delighted at how quickly their children settle and enjoy coming to Nursery.
- The school keeps the children completely safe, and successfully teaches them how to keep themselves safe.
- Underpinning the school's success are the dedication and expertise of the headteacher. She is 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 centre of the community.
- Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school. Many speak of how warm and welcoming the staff are, how they help parents as well as children and make everyone feel equal.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine sessions, including whole classes, groups, those led by adults and those children chose for themselves. One session was observed jointly with the headteacher, who was present during most.
- 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 work was scrutinised from their 'learning journals'.
- Questionnaire responses from 15 members of staff were considered.
- There were only a very small number of responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View, but the inspector talked with 12 parents and took the results of the school's own satisfaction survey into account.

## Inspection team

Geoffrey Dorrity, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Nursery is part of a children's centre which also offers care for children younger than three and education and care for children over three. The children's centre and day care services are subject to separate inspection.
- The Nursery has 55 places and up to 50 attend the kindergarten, consisting of a baby room and pre-Nursery.
- The Nursery hosts a service for eight children in the morning who have complex special educational needs and provision for six children in the afternoon who have moderate learning difficulties. These are directly managed by the local authority and were not part of this inspection.
- Almost a third of the children are disabled or have special educational needs. Three have a statement of special educational needs.
- The Nursery does not receive the pupil premium.
- The large majority of children attending the Nursery are of White British origin.
- A fifth of the children are learning English as an additional language. They are mostly of Pakistani origin with a small minority from a diverse range of Asian and African heritages.
- Recent changes include an increase in staff and indoor refurbishment.
- The headteacher is involved in supporting other nurseries.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more use of information and communication technology to support all areas of learning and develop children's technical understanding and skills.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Most children start Nursery with a range of skills that are considerably lower than levels expected for their age. Outstanding teaching ensures that children from all backgrounds and abilities are guided to make rapid progress. Consequently children leave school having made outstanding progress, and are well equipped for Reception. This is noted by the primary school to which children move and by the local authority that monitors and supports the Nursery.
- Staff work closely with parents and carers and each other, to gather and exchange information and share their experiences about individual children's learning and development. This ensures the children settle quickly and enables adults to plan activities that reflect the needs and interests of the children. This results in rapid gains across all areas of learning and most notably in children's personal, social and emotional development.
- An appropriate range of high-quality story and information books can be found in all areas of the school. The children are introduced to a wide range of books, which capture their imagination, and the adults use story-telling sessions particularly successfully to encourage children to join in with the rhythmic choruses of such well-loved books as *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*.
- Children recognise their own and others' names and can identify letters and sounds. Parents note how they recognise words and are beginning to read simple words. The borrowing library ensures that every child formally shares a story with an adult at least once a week, before taking it home to share with their parents and carers. This successfully supports all children in developing their communication, language and literacy skills.
- Children have widespread opportunities for writing and recording their achievements. For instance, after planning what to build in the large construction area, children used the cameras to record their build and write about it. They were able to write their names, holding pencils correctly, to identify their own work. However, they have fewer opportunities to use information and communication technology to support their learning and develop their technical skills.
- In small-group time children are able to develop their self-esteem in discussing with the rest of the group what they are good at. They show that they are aware of the needs of others, helping each other unwrapping straws at snack time or getting dressed to go outside. They are given responsibility such as handing out fruit and drinks to each other. They play extremely well together and are always polite.
- Children learn physical skills exceptionally well. They use the outdoor play areas, climbing slopes and trees in the 'forest school', where it is safe for them to do so. They have exciting opportunities to build pathways of wooden blocks and balance along them, or use the wide range of large climbing equipment in the outdoor area in their imaginative play.
- Children effectively develop their early skills in mathematics. For instance, when building a stage children were questioned about the size and area of the stage, developing their understanding and mathematical language.
- Children with a range of additional needs do exceptionally well in their learning. When they first join, the school quickly identifies the kind of help they require to make similar progress to all other children. Staff work closely with parents, the school's own specialists and outside agencies to plan and provide the support they need.

- Children who speak English as an additional language make extremely fast progress. The school quickly assesses their needs using the skills of the bilingual staff, ensuring that difficulties in speaking English do not mask any other difficulties they may have. Tailored work, based on the children's individual needs, is highly effective in promoting outstanding learning.
- Parents and carers are extremely happy with the progress their children make. They say that their children's needs and interests are met well because all children are treated as individuals and staff know them extremely well.

### **The quality of teaching** is outstanding

- The school's records of teaching over time and all the evidence gathered during the inspection show that it is consistently at least good and often outstanding. This is because all staff in a variety of roles have very high expectations of what the children can achieve. This enables those of all abilities to make rapid and sustained progress.
- The school places an emphasis on sharing and developing expertise. It has effectively developed a new way of knowing how well children progress. This is successfully used in all planning.
- Children's achievements are shared effectively with families through individual achievement records. These help parents and carers to identify how they may encourage contributions from their children, and the features of successful learning. Families appreciate that they are seen as important partners in their children's education.
- Teachers make detailed plans based on their observations of children's interests. As a result, work is very closely matched to children's needs and abilities. Teachers make excellent use of small-group work to target specific areas of learning, or to challenge and extend the most able, as seen when children were given the opportunity to design and build electrical circuits.
- Excellent use is made of different spaces so that children can take part in a very effective mix of activities inside. Meanwhile, the outdoor area, with its large construction area, climbing equipment and landscaped sand area, allows children opportunities to develop their physical skills.
- All children work in the 'forest school', learning about the natural environment. Here, they can make choices and experience the special magic of being in a woodland area. They listened for birdsong, and rushed to get binoculars to see whether they could identify which bird it was. Staff taught them how to whittle sticks, developing their skills to support handwriting. Children concentrated for lengthy periods of time in the 'mud kitchen' making 'hot chocolate', and then enjoyed a joke with staff pretending to drink.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- The behaviour of children is outstanding. Children develop excellent attitudes towards work and play because activities are captivating and engaging. They eagerly start each session and settle quickly and confidently in the friendly atmosphere. They are taught to plan which activities they are going to engage in and then review these at the end of the session, developing their ability to think about their learning.
- During story and group times children sit quietly and calmly, listening intently to the story or the

instructions. They are confident asking questions and happily and patiently take turns to answer questions or participate. They are quick to help and support each other, copying the high standards the staff set for them.

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding. They are encouraged to be adventurous when outdoors, such as when climbing and swinging. This means children have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe. For example, when sawing logs they are taught to stand securely and keep both hands on the saw away from the blade, and when cooking on an open fire in the forest school they know not to walk in or too near the fire pit.
- Unpleasant or unkind behaviour is uncommon, because children are taught to be caring, kind and thoughtful. This is confirmed by school records. Very well-understood routines help the Nursery to run smoothly. Children are very aware of exactly what is expected of them and are confident sharing any anxieties or fears they may have with staff.
- Discussions with parents reveal that they have complete trust and confidence in the staff to provide the highest quality of care and support. Children's attendance is high, reflecting their exceptional levels of enjoyment.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The headteacher gives the school clear direction through her inspirational leadership and is very well supported by other staff in leadership roles. The whole staff team are united in their enthusiasm to provide the best they can for the community, coupled with careful reflection of what works well and what can be improved further.
- All of the staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire are positive about the school's work. For example, one noted, 'The headteacher has a clear vision for the children and their families. Everyone is treated with respect and equality with their well-being at the forefront. I am proud to be a member of this team.'
- Parents are delighted with the provision for their children, and made many comments about how staff have gone out of their way to support them in times of difficulty. All of those interviewed strongly agree that leadership and management are highly effective.
- Leaders and governors make sure that there is no discrimination and that all children and their families are treated fairly. This ensures that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed. Parents comment on how the ethnic mix of the Nursery is a strength.
- Leaders' awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate because of regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning. The rigorous procedures for checking teachers' performance are matched by extensive opportunities for training, and as a result the staff are highly qualified and extremely knowledgeable.
- The progress of both individuals and groups of children is carefully checked to ensure that all make similarly rapid progress. These groups include disabled children and those who have special educational needs, girls and boys, more-able children, children from a range of different minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language.
- The rich and varied curriculum is constantly developing to provide even more interest and imaginative challenges for children. The recently refurbished indoors is adding to the opportunities for children to develop mathematical understanding. A wide range of visits and

visitors further adds to the high quality of their learning, such as visiting the local park and inviting Bhangra dancers to teach the children and develop their understanding of different cultures.

- The local authority recognises the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and uses her skills to support other local nurseries. It provides appropriate light-touch support for the school.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements, with much excellent practice supporting the outstanding quality of care and support provided for children.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are committed to giving the best possible education to the children. They are thorough in performing their legal duties, including meeting all the requirements for the vetting of staff. They know the school extremely well and have a keen sense of its strengths and what it needs to do to improve because they visit regularly and receive good information about the quality of teaching and children's progress and achievement. They ask searching questions and hold the senior leaders to account. Systems to manage the performance of staff, including the headteacher's appraisal, are clear and contribute to the excellence of the provision. Governors manage financial resources well, making sure that money is spent wisely to support children. For example, since the previous inspection, together with the headteacher, they have improved the use of the outdoor environment by releasing funds to develop the 'forest school'.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103766
<b>Local authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	426921

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	110
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mary Turner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Ruffles
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 September 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 818255
<b>Fax number</b>	N/A
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