

The Arnold Centre

Goldsmith Road, Herringthorpe, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S65 2LY

Inspection dates 23–24 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The school is exceptionally well led. The acting headteacher and her senior leaders provide a very clear vision and a commitment to high standards in all their work which has seen the school maintain its outstanding effectiveness since the previous inspection.
- They are supported by a highly skilled and well-trained staff and an extremely well-informed governing body who share their drive and ambition.
- All groups of children make outstanding progress in all areas of learning from their individual starting points. They are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their learning.
- Children's communication skills such as speaking, reading and writing are very strongly developed. Children of all abilities acquire a particularly good knowledge of letters and their sounds (phonics), especially the most able children.
- The school provides high quality support and teaching for disabled children and those with special educational needs. Skilled specialist staff ensure these children are extremely well placed to move rapidly forward with their learning when they leave.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Imaginative planning and highly creative resources and activities indoors and out inspire and motivate children of all abilities.
- The procedures to measure children's progress are exceptionally rigorous and thoroughly analysed. These ensure that teachers, leaders and the governing body are extremely well informed in their planning for addressing any concerns and raising standards.
- The children's behaviour is excellent and they feel very safe and secure. They settle in to school life remarkably quickly and rapidly gain in self-confidence and awareness.
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They successfully learn to share, take turns and participate in festivals and celebrations of many different faiths. Relationships with parents are excellent and the school is at the heart of the community.
- The school provides very good information to parents about their child's achievements. Leaders recognise, however, that they could take more opportunities to demonstrate to all stakeholders what good learning looks like in the Early Years Foundation Stage through, for example further use of displays and the school website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching sessions in all classes during the morning and afternoon sessions over two days, including joint observations with the acting headteacher. The inspector also conducted several learning walks throughout the school.
- Discussions were held with children throughout the sessions, the vice-chair of the Governing Body and other members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and members of staff, including senior leaders and other leaders with particular responsibilities.
- The inspector took account of the 11 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), the results from the school's own consultations with parents and spoke to many parents during the inspection. The responses from staff to the inspection questionnaires were also considered.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including: information on current and previous children's progress, the school's plans for improvement, the management of teachers' performance, and documentation and records relating to children's behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Andrew Clark, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is of an average size for a nursery school. It offers either morning or afternoon provision between 8.30am and 11.30am and 12.30pm and 3.30pm for 78 full-time equivalent places.
- The proportion of disabled children or those with special educational needs is above average.
- The large majority of children are from White British families. A small but increasing proportion are from families of minority ethnic heritage.
- A small proportion of children speak English as an additional language.
- There is a day-care unit and a children's centre on site. These are managed by the governing body and also led by the acting headteacher. They are subject to separate inspections.
- The acting headteacher, formerly the deputy headteacher, took up her post at the start of the academic year, three weeks before the inspection. This followed the retirement of the previous headteacher. The new acting deputy headteacher was also a member of the senior leadership team.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take every opportunity to inform parents and other stakeholders what good learning looks like in the Early Years Foundation Stage including by:
 - extending the use of displays and other records of children's work
 - further developing of the new school website.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The acting headteacher's excellent vision and planning for school improvement is fully shared by all staff, the governing body and parents. There is an imaginative and continuous pursuit of high standards in every aspect of the school's work that has been sustained since the previous inspection. Consequently, the transition to the new leadership has been seamless. This is very evident in the excellent environment for learning and high-quality assessment procedures which underpin improvement.
- The acting headteacher and other senior staff are excellent role models for all staff and are skilled in improving the quality of teaching and setting targets for others to aspire to. They are well supported by effective subject leaders. As a result, all staff speedily and consistently establish high expectations for all children.
- The school's use of rigorous procedures to check and measure children's progress in all areas of learning is exceptional. Staff's knowledge of the development of young children in all aspects of their learning is excellent and very well informed through high levels of training and frequent meetings to ensure accuracy and precision in assessments. These measures are very effectively used in ensuring the learning of all groups of children and different abilities is of the highest quality. It is used extremely well in ensuring the 'Developing Excellence' plan focuses very effectively on raising standards, for example in phonic skills.
- Children make outstanding progress in a range of subjects because teaching is well informed through continuous high quality training delivered both through the school and partnership with other schools and the local authority. Senior staff provide training and expertise to others, for example through the work of the special educational needs coordinator.
- Staff are held fully accountable for the progress their children make and are subject to fulfilling stringent criteria linked to children's achievement to reach the next salary level.
- The school receives appropriate 'light-touch' support from the local authority which makes regular visits to discuss many aspects of the school's performance and provides many training opportunities for staff and the governing body.
- A key factor in the quality of learning is the school's commitment to providing varied and exciting learning opportunities. The resources are very attractive and matched well to children's needs. The use of the excellent outdoor area has improved significantly since the previous inspection through curriculum planning and improved resources. As a result, children's communication, mathematical and physical development have all further improved in the short time since then.
- The school promotes all aspects of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. The warm, caring relationships quickly established with children and their parents provide the bedrock for their personal and social development. Many activities encourage British values of tolerance and understanding. The excellent use of traditional stories and rhymes of British and ethnic heritage gives the children a shared cultural framework from which to develop their knowledge and understanding.
- The school works extremely closely with parents and keeps them very well informed of their child's progress through regular discussions and reports. The parents hold the school in very high regard, as a result.
- The leaders do, however, recognise that there are more opportunities that could be taken to develop parents' and other stakeholders' understanding of what good learning looks like in order to raise expectations further and support their children's learning, for example by extending the use of children's work on display linked to assessment information and through the new school website.
- The school tackles any issues of discrimination well. It promotes equality of opportunity very successfully and this contributes very effectively to the well-being of children and their families.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is extremely well led and managed. Governors are kept fully informed through detailed reports from the headteacher linked to the Developing Excellence Plan and their own frequent and systematic checks on the school's work. They regularly receive up-to-date and precise information on children's achievement and the quality of teaching. They make very good use of this information to hold leaders to account. For example, through detailed questioning they contributed to further improve the tracking of the progress of the most able children. Governors ensure that the school's aims for the quality of learning are at the core of its work and the drive for the highest standards. They review their own performance against national standards through local authority reviews and skills audit. These are revisited at every governing body meeting.
 - Statutory requirements are met. A rolling programme ensures all the school's policies are updated at least annually and the governing body is informed by presentations from staff and local authority

specialists. They ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met in full and supported by excellent record keeping. Governors are fully involved and well informed in making decisions as to whether teachers and staff should be rewarded with salary increases and review targets for the headteacher. The governing body manages finances very well by ensuring the budget is used to promote high achievement, evident in the effective use of staffing, for example by the employment of a speech and language therapist.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of children is outstanding. Many children enter the school with personal, social and emotional skills which are well below those typically expected. Staff very quickly establish excellent relationships with children and their parents. They do this by, for example, flexible and supportive induction meetings when children start school and the warm greeting the acting headteacher and her staff offer to everyone at the start of each session. As a result, children make rapid progress in their emotional and social development and are friendly, polite and considerate towards each other.
- Children's attendance is very good. They are keen to come to school and they are punctual and prepared well for the day's learning. The school works closely with families, sometimes in liaison with the Children's Centre Family Support Worker, to encourage the best levels of attendance in readiness for their later education.
- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding. Children feel very safe and well looked after. Parents are very confident that their children receive the highest levels of care. Staff make excellent use of a wide range of stories, songs and rhymes to enable children to explore their attitudes, emotions and relationships with others. As a result, there is very little or no bullying.
- Children very successfully learn to play and work safely in a range of contexts. For example, in cooking and baking activities, preparing snacks and many cutting and sticking activities they learn to handle sharp tools. They play exciting games on bikes and other wheeled vehicles very safely because of the well-deployed staff and thorough training and reinforcement children receive.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The children's speaking, listening, reading and writing skills develop rapidly and securely. The development is central to all the school's work. The school has extended its rigorous programme of teaching phonic skills for all abilities and providing many more opportunities for children to practise these skills indoors and out. For example, children investigated the bird life in their spacious grounds keeping records, producing notes and making labels. There is an excellent range of highly attractive books and computer programmes to engage, inform and interest the children.
- Children's mathematical skills are extremely well taught. Teachers' expectations are very high. Children learn to count and order numbers to values well beyond those normally expected, and add one or more to numbers. Skilful questioning develops children's mathematical vocabulary and the use of exciting resources inside and outdoors enriches their ability to order objects by shape, colour and size.
- The procedures to assess children's progress and plan for the next steps in their learning are excellent and enhanced by outstanding teamwork. Highly evaluative records are kept on a daily basis of children's achievement in all areas of learning and matched to challenging targets. Many aspects of children's learning, such as their ability to recognise initial letters, count and order numbers, are checked very systematically and repeatedly through the week in imaginative activities. All staff contribute to fortnightly children's progress meetings with senior staff to ensure all groups of learners are making excellent progress and address any underachievement.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs receive excellent support for all aspects of their learning. The rigorous assessment is used effectively to set precise targets for children's achievement and to ensure that they receive any specialist teaching they need, such as speech therapy or for hearing impairment in a very timely fashion.
- Children's vocabulary and their deeper understanding of new ideas are developed well in response to teachers' excellent, thoughtful and incisive questioning. Teachers give children time to reflect and express their own ideas. For example, a group of children utterly engaged in the large sandpit with making a seaside scene with large buckets of water responded excitedly to questions about the depth, direction and texture of the resulting mix which greatly enhanced their vocabulary.
- Children's physical, independent and decision-making skills are developed extremely well through imaginative problem-solving activities and investigations. The use of the tracks and trails outdoors,

scientific equipment such as magnifiers, and information and communication technology resources and some very well-planned role-play opportunities develops children's knowledge and understanding through problem-solving activities. For example, children of all abilities, but particularly the most able, produced excellent models of playground equipment, drew plans and wrote labels in a real-life project to develop the outdoors.

- The calm, colourful and very well-arranged classrooms contribute to the children's rapid progress in personal and communication skills. For example, they know exactly where everything goes when they tidy up and waste no time in doing so.
- Staff are very vigilant and act quickly to ensure children are engaged and happy. They all know which children may be in vulnerable circumstances and need additional support. They act very quickly to praise or distract children on the rare occasion they are unhappy or upset.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children of all abilities make excellent progress. From starting points which are generally well below those usually found for their age, particularly in aspects on communication, language and number skills, children make rapid and sustained progress to leave nursery with skills that are largely typical for their age. Almost a quarter of children leave school with levels above those expected. Standards continue to rise in many areas of learning and, in particular, rapidly narrowing the gap between the achievement of the least able children and the rest, particularly in speaking and reading.
- Children make particularly good progress in early reading skills. Both boys and girls have rapidly growing confidence in identifying initial letter sounds and the sounds that two letters make when blended together. Increasingly, some children are recognising common words and producing short sentences.
- Children have a keen interest in books and stories. They learn that print has meaning, for example as they act out the *Three Billy Goats* following the story together. They make especially good progress in following repeated phrases in traditional stories and songs.
- The most able children develop their reading skills exceptionally well and some are learning to read simple books and apply their knowledge of letter sounds. They learn to write many of their initial letters and use this skill in writing labels for their work and on displays. These children are also challenged to extend their mathematical learning, for example as they are encouraged to think how many more objects they will need to find to make a total of six or more, or identify and order numbers to 20.
- Children's listening and speaking skills are developed especially well, often from a very low starting point. The staff's calm and quiet manner and frequent questions encourage children to listen well and make rapid progress in developing speaking skills. Children are encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas; for example, to express preferences about loud and quiet sounds in a small group playing drums outdoors.
- Children for whom English is an additional language are very well supported by staff who speak their home language. They help children to understand instructions clearly and to learn to speak English fluently.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs also make exceptional progress in their learning. Their needs are swiftly identified so that the right level of support can be put in place. Staff carefully check the progress children make towards their targets and adjust the support accordingly to secure rapid progress.
- Children show confidence in using their mathematical knowledge and make rapid progress from frequently low levels; for example, as they count the movements of a swing or the 'trip-traps' of the Billy Goats across the bridge. Children make extremely good progress in recognising and matching shapes and colour and using this knowledge to solve problems in their construction and sand play.
- Children's physical skills are extremely well developed as children make enthusiastic use of the broad range of outdoor equipment. They are very active in their learning outdoors and confidently climb, balance, run, jump and use wheeled toys to negotiate a path. □ Many opportunities for children to trace lines and draw pictures contribute to their control of different writing media. There are exquisite examples of intricately observed, drawn and painted birds and plans for playground toys which show high achievement in aspects of physical and creative 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	106826
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	448092

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	121
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Denise Venn
Headteacher	Anne Anderson
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2012
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