

Pennywell Nursery School

Portsmouth Road, Pennywell, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR4 9AX

Inspection dates 26–27 November 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.

- This is a happy, welcoming nursery school in which children thrive. Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the safe, secure nursery environment. They learn to behave very well and make excellent progress in their learning.
- The headteacher and governing body have the highest expectations for children's care and achievement and a clear commitment to continuous improvement. As a result, the high quality of teaching and children's achievement has been sustained.
- Thoroughly embedded systems to evaluate and review continuously how well the school is performing mean that leaders have a very accurate view of the school and how it could improve even further.
- Leaders 'never sit still' in their aim to sustain and improve provision. Improvements since the last inspection in parental engagement, use of data and children's attendance have further enhanced the already high quality provision.
- Children's achievement is outstanding as a result of highly effective teaching from skilled staff who provide an extremely stimulating learning environment. Children leave nursery very well prepared for their time in Reception classes.
- The school provides a very broad and exciting curriculum which is related closely to children's needs and interests. As a result, children are highly engaged in their learning. The school recognises the importance of further developing children's cultural awareness.
- The school establishes very positive relationships with parents. Parents speak highly of the school and value the good work to ensure that they are involved as partners in their children's learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a range of sessions or part-sessions, some of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, two other governors, the headteacher, other staff and two representatives from the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the nursery's information on children's current progress, planning and checks on the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.
- There were insufficient responses to the online Parent View survey for them to be taken into account. However, the inspector spoke to several parents when they brought their children to nursery. The inspector took account of both the school's most recent questionnaire to parents and the responses to staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Elaine White, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized nursery school. Children attend part time, mainly for morning or afternoon sessions, although children can attend for a full day. The majority of children attending are of White British heritage.
- The school is part of Pennywell Early Years Centre, which provides day care for children in the early years age group. The headteacher of the school is also head of the early years centre. The school also provides a base for Sunderland West Children’s Centre services. The day nursery and children’s centre are subject to separate inspections and reports on their quality can be found on the website www.ofsted.gov.uk.
- The school provides breakfast, lunch and teatime care for children.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is below average. The proportions vary throughout the year, as new children enter nursery in September, January and April. There are no children on roll with a statement of educational needs.
- The nursery delivers training and shares good practice with local schools and nurseries. It has recently joined a partnership with the other nursery schools in the local area to share expertise and practice.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2014 following the retirement of the previous headteacher. The newly appointed headteacher previously worked as deputy headteacher of the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop children’s awareness of differences in culture and background.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The newly appointed headteacher is passionately committed to ensuring the highest possible outcomes for children. Leadership of the school is highly organised and ambitious to make sure that children receive the best quality start. The headteacher has already implemented measures to bring about improvements to the nursery's attendance rates. As a result, these rates have risen sharply in recent months.
- The quality of teaching is closely monitored and staff are set targets which are regularly reviewed. This rigorous system has sustained the high quality of teaching over time. Staff target link to improvement-planning and staff attend training to develop and enhance their skills further.
- Leaders pay a high level of attention to tracking children's progress. Systems for collecting information about children's learning have been refined since the last inspection. The school has a very accurate view of how well children are learning. Any gaps are swiftly identified and action taken to improve progress.
- The curriculum is very broad, exciting and related closely to children's interests. For example, children's interest in castles, and a popular children's film are used to plan interesting activities and to equip indoor and outdoor areas in an imaginative way. As a result, children are enthusiastic and highly engaged in their learning.
- The school pays a high level of attention to safeguarding children. The school recently arranged an external review of its safeguarding procedures to verify that its provision was of high quality. Safeguarding policies and procedures are rigorous. Staff are adept at identifying any risk of harm to children and follow clear systems for referral.
- The local authority provides light touch support to this outstanding school. The school is used as an example of high quality practice for other local schools, in particular for its work in meeting the needs of children with special educational needs, and for the quality of its learning environment.
- The school delivers training to other local schools to help improve their provision.
- Parents are very happy with school and their children's progress. A typical comment from parents is that their child has come on in 'leaps and bounds' since joining the nursery. They are very well informed about their children's progress through talks with staff, newsletters and sharing children's learning journeys.
- Parents' involvement in their children's learning is very well developed through regular family learning sessions. For example, parents recently attended a day which focused on reading stories to children at bedtime.
- This is a very welcoming school where children learn to value and respect others and all children have equal opportunity to succeed. Children learn harmoniously together and develop an understanding of their own and other cultures through learning about festivals, such as Christmas and the Chinese New Year. The school recognises the importance of developing this understanding further to help to prepare children for life in modern Britain.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is highly effective. The experienced governing body is highly knowledgeable about the school and how well it is doing. They share the headteacher's passion and commitment to excellence. Governors offer a high level of support and challenge to the headteacher. They are aware of the performance management process and how teaching is rewarded. Finance is managed well to ensure that money is spent wisely to promote children's achievement in the best possible way. Governors regularly visit to look at particular aspects of the school, such as how well boys are learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Children clearly enjoy coming to nursery and show a high level of interest and engagement in their learning. They thrive in the happy and welcoming environment provided.
- Children attending breakfast and lunchtime clubs are content and secure. They behave extremely well and get on well as they eat and play together.
- Children are very familiar with the well-established routines. They take part enthusiastically in tidy-up time, as they brush up sand and happily wipe down tables.
- Children show care and consideration for others and cooperate very well in their play. Children offer to share water they have collected in buckets with others in outdoor play, and contentedly share books.
- Children show pride in their work and they are keen to show adults what they have made, drawn, or

written.

- At small-group times, children show an increasing ability to manage their feelings, as they patiently wait for their turn to take part in a game.

Safety

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding.
- Children show a strong sense of security in nursery. They show an excellent awareness of safety as they confidently use tools, such as knives, to chop vegetables.
- Children enjoy coming to nursery and attend well. The school's recent encouragement to children and parents to improve the rate of attendance has had a positive impact. Attendance has risen and as a result, children benefit from having more time to learn at nursery.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching over time is outstanding and never less than good. Staff have an excellent understanding of how children learn and they are skilled at developing learning to the full.
- Staff establish highly positive relationships with children. As a result, children show a high level of confidence and self-esteem which contribute positively to their rapid progress in learning.
- Staff provide an excellent, stimulating and well-organised environment. The wealth of quality resources is organised thoughtfully and imaginatively to promote children's interest and engagement in their learning. Children enjoy chopping real vegetables in the home area, and exploring the indoor sand pit using many different utensils. They engage well in an area attractively equipped with a broad range of books, play figures, pictures and other resources relating to a film that the children are interested in.
- Children's thinking and reasoning skills are developed very well through the skilful way staff talk with the children and question them. Staff follow children's interests in conversation, for example talking with them about their likes and dislikes and sustaining the conversation to encourage children to think and discuss why they don't like spiders and where they might find them.
- Small group times are used well by staff to develop listening, speech, number, and thinking skills. Sessions are carefully to meet children's needs very closely to promote rapid progress. Children respond well to staff's calm manner and clear expectations, as they listen carefully to different recorded sounds and match them to the correct picture. They take turns well as they identify numbers to six on a dice and count out the correct number of objects to put on their mat.
- The most-able children are questioned very well to extend their learning. Staff make good use of children's answers to their questions to develop thinking and speaking skills. For example, when asked to think what is small, green and hops, answers were used very well to encourage children to think and explain why it could not be a bouncy ball or a lizard.
- Staff promote children's early reading skills very well. The wealth of quality books available is used as a basis for learning. Children learn initial letter sounds and this is reinforced well in daily activities.
- Staff are skilled at developing children's understanding of number. Children learn to count as part of their play, as they confidently count how many windows they have drawn and how many playdough cakes they have made. Staff extend learning by encouraging children to think how many children will be present if one more arrives.
- Children's progress is tracked carefully. Staff work very closely together to follow and check on how well children are learning. As a result, they have a detailed understanding of children's abilities and the next steps they need to take. Staff use this understanding to plan purposeful and interesting activities that meet children's needs exceptionally well.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children join nursery with varying skill levels, and many have weak skills, particularly in number, speaking and personal, social and emotional development. Children make rapid progress from their starting points and achieve exceptionally well. They are well prepared to start Reception class in their next school.
- Children who begin nursery with weaker skill levels make extremely rapid progress. This is because staff know children's abilities well and carefully plan activities to support children so they catch up quickly.
- Children who are disabled or have special educational needs achieve exceptionally well, due to the high level of support from staff and other professionals. Staff are skilled at identifying where children need

extra support and make sure that this is put into place quickly. As a result, children make rapid progress.

- Relationships with adults and each other are highly positive. Children show confidence in talking with adults. They play harmoniously together and show care and consideration for each other.
- Children concentrate for long periods of time in imaginative play, creative play, and at times when talking with staff. They show a high level of independence as they select their own activities and resources.
- Children achieve extremely well in early writing skills. They enthusiastically make marks using the many opportunities provided through painting, list-making, and drawing. Children learn to write their names and show when they have done this with pride.
- Children’s physical skills are promoted extremely well. Children enthusiastically run and jump in puddles in the outdoor area. They develop skills using the many tools and equipment in the mud kitchen. Indoors, they use different tools to manipulate dough and to cut and join materials on the creative table. They thoroughly enjoy taking part in a weekly dance session with a visiting teacher.

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	108753
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	448094

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	61
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Margaret Parsons
Headteacher	Claire Nicholson
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2011
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