

Hart Hill Nursery School

Whitcroft Road, Luton, LU2 0JS

Inspection dates 26–27 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher has high expectations and is passionate about making the school as good as possible. Other leaders, managers and governors support her well in raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching.
- Senior leaders have developed very thorough systems for collecting and analysing information about children's attainment and progress.
- The school works in very close partnership with parents. It makes sure that they are kept regularly informed and closely involved in their children's learning.
- Teaching is good and there is some that is outstanding. The school makes sure that the curriculum is matched well to children's needs and interests.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding and they learn in a calm environment. They feel very safe and develop trusting relationships with the staff.
- Children achieve well and make good progress in all areas of learning. There are instances of some children making outstanding progress.
- The specially resourced provision for disabled children and those with special educational needs is led and managed well. It enables these children to make good progress.
- Children throughout the school make excellent progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The staff do not always support children's thinking and language development as well as they could.
- The assessment of the very few of children with the most complex special educational needs is not precise enough to capture all aspects of their progress.
- Only some activities for three and four year olds develop in-depth learning over a period of time, to promote fully their thinking and investigative skills.
- Two year olds do not have as many supported opportunities as they could to develop their thinking and perception using collections of materials of contrasting shapes and textures.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning activities for two year olds and three and four year olds, for disabled children and those with special educational needs, and sessions indoors and outdoors. This enabled her to gather evidence about different aspects of teaching and learning.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the leader responsible for provision for two year olds, and the special needs teacher who is also the leader of the specialist resource base. Informal discussions took place with some other staff and with individual children. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector considered the 16 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, the views of parents expressed in the school's own parental survey and spoke with a small number of parents. The inspector also considered the 12 completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation and development plan; records of children's attainment, progress and behaviour; and evidence of systems for protecting and safeguarding children.

Inspection team

Margaret Goodchild, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- All children in this school are in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- In addition to the nursery which children attend for five half-day sessions each week, the school provides for two to three year olds in 'Little Harts' and also offers early years care for two to four year olds. This formed part of the inspection. However, the children's centre which shares the school site is subject to separate inspection.
- A high proportion of children are of minority ethnic heritage, mostly from Asian, African or Eastern European origin. Over half the children are learning to speak English as an additional language which is a very high proportion compared with the national average.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for up to 16 disabled children and those with special educational needs. Most of this group have an early diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorders or Aspergers Syndrome; a small number have profound and multiple learning difficulties. At present, there are four children in the specially resourced provision.
- The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs in the rest of the school is broadly average.
- Hart Hill Nursery provides Forest School opportunities, which means that children take part in outdoor learning in the wooded area within the school's grounds.
- A new headteacher took up post in September 2012 and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise children's achievement and the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - spreading existing good practice in questioning children to deepen their understanding and in supporting their language development
 - providing more in-depth activities over a period of time for three and four year olds that promote their thinking and investigative skills
 - giving two year olds more regular opportunities to explore materials that have contrasting textures and shapes to stimulate their senses and develop their perception
 - assessing the attainment and progress of children with the most complex special educational needs more precisely.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides dynamic leadership and has high expectations. She has a very clear vision for how to take the school forward, and an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for development. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a shared vision and work in close partnership. Senior leaders have established a climate where teachers can succeed and where children are expected to behave well. The school is very well placed to improve further.
- Other leaders and managers have clearly defined responsibilities and fulfil their roles increasingly well. Staff with responsibility for different areas of learning produce action plans and have the opportunity to check developments. Teachers and non-teaching staff are very well qualified: many are trained to degree level.
- Senior leaders gather a wide range of data on children's attainment and progress. They analyse this closely and use the resulting information exceptionally well to judge the school's effectiveness, identify areas for development and to make sure all children have equal opportunities. Systems for tracking children's progress are very thorough and are used to drive improvement. The school ensures that there is no discrimination and that positive relationships are promoted.
- The leadership of teaching is good and senior leaders are working to increase the consistency of the staff's work. The performance of teachers and other staff is checked rigorously and the headteacher provides ongoing coaching for staff in how to improve their practice. This is bringing about improvements in teaching and weekly staff meetings focus on increasing the skills of all the staff.
- Parents are kept very well informed and closely involved in the life of the school. They are fully involved in their children's assessment and have regular opportunities to attend workshops to find out about how to contribute to their children's learning. All parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire would recommend the school to others. One parent commented on how 'amazing' the school is and how well it supports parents and families as well as their children.
- The specially resourced provision for disabled children and those with special educational needs is led and managed well. Close liaison with other agencies and special schools helps the school to meet these children's needs. Regular meetings for the parents of disabled children and those with special educational needs enable them to share their experiences and gain specialist advice.
- The school has exceptionally thorough methods for safeguarding and protecting the children. Staff work in close partnership with the family worker from the children's centre, with other agencies and with families where children are at possible risk. The headteacher keeps a very careful check on the safety of all the children. She ensures that the staff are fully trained in what action to take if children may be subject to extremism or practices that could harm them.
- The curriculum is matched well to children's learning needs. The different rooms are spacious and well resourced, and the outdoor area provides excellent opportunities for learning. Outdoor activities as part of the Forest School involvement provide children with stimulating and magical experiences which contribute to their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school makes sure that children have carefully planned experiences to prepare them for life in British society. It teaches values such as respect and honesty, it recently held a moment of quiet contemplation for 'poppy day' as part of remembrance activities and celebrates a range of different festivals.
- Two year olds have good opportunities to learn alongside three and four year olds, as well as spending some time in their own smaller classrooms. This supports their learning well. However, they do not have as many supported opportunities as they could to develop their thinking and perception using collections of materials of contrasting shapes and textures.

■ The local authority has a good understanding of the school's work. It has supported the headteacher well through termly visits to discuss children's achievement, through providing training for staff and joint lesson observation.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body provides good support and challenge for senior leaders. Those who have joined the governing body since the last inspection have been appropriately trained, and there is a good mixture of new and well-established governors. The creation of sub-committees has strengthened and increased the focus of the governing body.
- Members of the governing body are well informed about the school's work, including what termly data reveals about children's progress. Each governor is linked to an aspect of the school's work and comes in to gather information. The governors make sure that the appraisal of teachers rewards the most effective practice and that any underperformance is tackled. The governing body also ensures that financial management is strong and that all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is outstanding. As a result of the excellent procedures for settling children in when they join the school, children quickly adapt to the routines and develop very positive attitudes to learning.
- Staff are highly skilled in managing children's behaviour and all groups of children benefit from the calm atmosphere that pervades the school. Children take turns, play harmoniously together and become readily absorbed in learning activities. The children are encouraged to develop self-help skills, such as putting on their coats and shoes, and become confident learners.
- Children who have conditions that include behavioural and emotional difficulties make outstanding progress in developing self-control and learning to play alongside others. The staff are skilled in developing the attention span of children with autistic spectrum disorders and others in the specially resourced provision for those with special educational needs.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Staff thoroughly assess the risks associated with activities and pay careful attention to children's health and safety. Children are taught the importance of playing safely and learn to recognise risks for themselves, for instance, when taking part in Forest School activities.
- Parents are confident that their children are kept safe. Children feel very safe and develop trusting relationships with the staff. Children quickly develop very positive relationships with one another and records show that the school is quick to act if a child behaves inappropriately to another. Children know that it is important to treat one another with kindness, and this ensures that they are kept safe from bullying.

The quality of teaching is good

- Inspection findings, information about children's progress and the school's own checks on teachers' work show that teaching is typically good, with some that is outstanding.
- Teachers and other staff plan their lessons carefully and teamwork between teachers, early years educators and teaching assistants is strong. All the staff create a positive climate for learning and provide activities that engage children's interest and enjoyment.
- The teaching of early reading and writing skills, including letters and the sounds that they make (phonics), and mathematics is good. The staff give children plenty of opportunities to make marks and to develop

their pre-writing skills. They instil in them a love of books and stories, including through children borrowing books in their home language. The staff provide a good variety of experiences that develop children's knowledge of numbers and mathematical vocabulary.

- Staff generally promote children's language and communication well, and provide them with good opportunities to talk about their experiences. There is some outstanding practice in the way teachers explain and question children to probe their understanding and develop their thinking, especially during the 'meet, greet and fruit time' at the beginning of the morning session. The way staff use signing to support spoken communication is a consistent strength and benefits children at early stages in learning English as well as those with special educational needs.
- The teaching of communication for children in the specially resourced provision is good. Those with autistic spectrum disorders learn to use pictures and symbols to make choices and express their needs. Work in small groups prepares these children very well for joining in with whole-group activities. For example, children with complex needs took part fully in a range of challenging activities with the rest of the children in a physical education lesson as a result of skilful support by staff.
- With the exception of disabled children and those with special educational needs, the school has excellent systems for recording children's attainment and progress. Through the use of learning journals and a computerised program, the staff are able to identify the next steps in children's learning and regularly share assessment information with parents.
- The attainment of disabled children and those with special educational needs is regularly recorded and these children are included in activities exceptionally well. However, assessment does not break down progress into small enough steps to capture the development of the very few children who have the most profound and complex needs.
- Some activities for three and four year olds develop in-depth learning over a period of time, to promote fully their thinking and investigative skills. However, in-depth projects of this sort are not provided regularly. Similarly, while some staff use resources and questioning very well to support children's language development, these are not consistent strengths in teaching.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When children join the school, their skills and abilities are weak in writing, mathematics and in their understanding of the world compared with those typical for their age. In addition, at least half the children speak no English when they arrive.
- All groups of children achieve well, including girls and boys, those of minority ethnic heritage and those learning English as an additional language. Children make good progress in all the areas of learning and some make outstanding progress. Progress is exceptionally good in physical development and for children who spend time in 'Little Harts' as well as in the rest of the school.
- By the time children leave, the majority have developed skills that are at least typical for their age and a significant number are working above this. The school's outcomes were better in 2014 than in 2013, showing that children's attainment is improving. Children are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Physical education lessons develop in children an excellent sense of themselves in space. They are able to negotiate safely when moving around one another and when riding wheeled toys. They learn to move in a range of ways, including rolling, jumping, skipping and hopping.
- Children of all ages make good progress in developing their communication and language skills, including those learning to speak English. Children learn to use talking to sequence and organise their ideas, to listen to one another and take turns in conversation. They are learning the words of songs and rhymes, and some are able to make up simple songs of their own.

- Children make good progress in developing their literacy skills. They enjoy listening to stories and learn to treat books with care. Through rolling play dough, cooking and playing with a variety of equipment, children develop the muscles in their hands that will help with writing. They have good opportunities to make marks and some are able to say what their marks and drawings represent.
- The school is working to raise achievement further in reading and writing this year. Children make good progress in finding out about phonics and in learning to read. By the time they leave the school, a number of children are able to read simple words including some that involve blending letters together.
- Last year, the school placed particular emphasis on raising achievement in mathematics. Children are making good progress in learning to count, and to match and sequence shapes and colours. They learn vocabulary to describe the position of objects, such as 'under', 'over', 'behind' and 'in front', and to compare their size using terms such as 'thick', 'thin', 'tall' and 'short'.
- Children ask questions and explore their environment. They learn about the importance of recycling and through time spent doing Forest School activities, they find out a lot about the natural world. Some children think about the wider reality in which they live, as revealed when a child said, 'The moon is very far away and you need a rocket to get there'.
- The most-able children make good progress. At this early stage in the year, some children can already hold a pencil correctly. Their drawings are increasingly detailed and they are beginning to be able to copy letters and write their name. They can re-tell a story and use pictures to sequence a series of events. They use non-fiction books to find information, for instance, about the planets. They are able to recognise and recite numbers to 10, show knowledge of the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes and know how many are left when some are taken away.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs make good progress, including children in the specially resourced provision. The special needs teacher and teaching assistants work closely with therapists and other agencies to devise specialised programmes for the children. Their parents are full of praise for the way the staff adapt equipment and work 'in total partnership' with them and with health professionals to meet their children's needs.
- While achievement is good, it is not yet outstanding because there is some inconsistency in the way staff promote children's language and thinking skills. Children generally make better progress during adult-led sessions than in the activities provided at other times.

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	109418
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	448099

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	2–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Aisha Mohib
Headteacher	Tricia Penfold
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2014
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