

Wallace Road Nursery School

Wallace Road, Northampton, NN2 7EE

Inspection dates 11–12 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Under the strong and purposeful leadership of the headteacher, the school has improved considerably and is now outstanding. The dedicated staff work together extremely well.
- Leadership is outstanding because leaders and governors are completely dedicated to making sure that children receive the best provision possible.
- Children's behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. They delight in having freedom to choose where, how and what they learn; they settle quickly and concentrate hard when gathered together, for example, to hear a story.
- There is a high regard for safety, and the care provided by the school is excellent.
- Teaching is outstanding. Stimulating activities indoors and outside take full account of children's stages of development and interests and inspire them to develop independence and creativity. Excellent strategies ensure the children's rapid progress in acquiring English.
- Children's achievement is outstanding in all areas of learning. This is because the headteacher and her staff provide each child with just the right support and stimulation to enable them to thrive. Targets set for improvement are shared with parents and children. Senior and middle leaders make sure that the progress each child makes in learning is accurately recorded. This helps leaders and governors to make sure that no group falls behind.
- Parents speak very highly of the school. The nursery school is greatly valued as an integral part of the local community.
- The vibrant curriculum is a particular strength and staff are especially successful at adapting it to meet children's wide-ranging circumstances and needs. Families appreciate the way the school reinforces their home beliefs while helping children to respect others. This, and the exceptional promotion of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, means that these very young children begin to develop those values that prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs receive high quality support, enabling their total inclusion in school life.
- The management of teaching is very good. There are rigorous systems to manage performance and the skilled leadership of teaching has resulted in the marked improvement of the school.
- Leaders make sure that their outstanding practice is shared with other local and regional providers of early years education through engaging in a partnership with a local group of schools. They support many other providers in ensuring that children in the area are ready to join Reception classes in primary schools.
- Children are prepared extremely well for moving to their new stage of schooling. Specialised lessons for children with communication difficulties are proving so successful that the school plans to use the same approach to enhance the learning of other groups of children, especially for those children who have attended the school for more than three terms.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed children learning in a wide range of activities, including those they had chosen for themselves, and others led by adults, including small group work. Several sessions were observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspector spoke with children about their learning and also looked at lunch-time arrangements. Displays and records of children's work were examined.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at progress and attainment data, the school's development plan, curriculum plans, documentation from the governing body, notes on the checks made on the quality of teaching, arrangements for safeguarding and the promotion of attendance, as well as some of the children's learning profiles and their individual progress, recorded on compact discs.
- Discussions were held with children, the headteacher, the senior teacher, and members of staff. The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. She also met the Chair of the Governing Body and vice chair, and two other governors as well as the headteacher of the primary school located on the same site.
- The inspector took account of the 14 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector spoke to a number of parents who stayed to see their children settle into the nursery, as well as holding a meeting with a group of parents and carers who contributed their views.
- Questionnaires completed by six members of the school staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized nursery school. The majority of children attend for three hours each morning or afternoon, although flexible provision is available for those families who choose it.
- Most children join the Nursery at three points during each year, at the start of the term after their third birthday.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is above that found nationally.
- A very small proportion of children are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Nearly half of the children speak English as an additional language. This is significantly higher than average. Over 10 different languages are spoken by children and their families.
- The headteacher plays a leading role in the Northamptonshire Nursery Schools Partnership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance learning and progress even more by extending the very successful use of focused teaching groups to include more groups of children, including those who have been in the nursery for more than three terms.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The very effective headteacher has used her knowledge and high expectations of early years' practice to drive significant improvements in all areas of the school. Teaching has improved and so children's progress has accelerated. The headteacher is very well supported by all staff and governors.
- The strong staff team including middle leaders, who are very effective in leading in their areas of responsibility, maintain an extremely close check on the quality of learning experiences for each child. Within the school there is a relentless focus on improving the provision still further.
- The school has a very accurate picture of its strengths and areas for improvement. Its development plan identifies the relevant strategies to take the school forward; it includes precise targets and criteria to measure the impact of actions taken. The success of this is evident from the measurable improvement, in all respects, since the previous inspection.
- Leaders are highly effective in measuring children's progress from the time they enter school to the time they leave. They check the progress of all key groups of children, including boys, girls, children eligible for free school meals, the most able and those who need extra support in learning. The high aspirations for every child are demonstrated by, for example, the school's readiness to adapt its approaches or seek specialist advice and support to meet individual needs.
- The improvement in teaching has been driven by carefully targeted training. Leaders' knowledge of where individual staff have particular strengths is used most effectively to spread best practice. The headteacher checks the teaching quality regularly. The outcomes, coupled with regular appraisals of teachers and teaching assistants, set exacting targets for their performance.
- The curriculum is outstanding because it is flexible and is continually adapted to meet the individual needs and interests of the children, whatever their levels of ability. An excellent range of visits and visitors adds greatly to children's overall experience. This wide range of activities on offer promotes excellent levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development amongst children. The school prepares children exceptionally well for growing up in modern Britain. They celebrate the richness and diversity of their own community which is representative of a wide range of backgrounds and cultures.
- The school's approach of knowing each child as an individual and giving expertly tailored support for their learning means that all children, including those who are most able, are given an equal opportunity to succeed, without any fear of discrimination. Work to develop the communication skills of the lowest-attaining children and those who speak English as an additional language is highly successful.
- Relationships with parents are strong. Home visits made by staff are valued by parents. There are daily opportunities for parents at the start and end of the session to have a word with their child's key worker if there are any concerns. These excellent home-school links ensure that parents are actively involved in their children's development.
- The school is highly regarded by the local authority, which encourages the school to share ideas and ways of working within a group of similar nursery schools in the locality.
- Safeguarding arrangements are robust, regularly reviewed and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring a wide range of professional experience to their roles, making governance extremely effective. They have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement because they visit regularly and actively seek out information. Governors are clear on how well the children are doing in their learning and how much progress they are making. They are influential in

making key decisions and in asking demanding questions. Governors are well informed on the school's arrangements for managing the performance of teachers, including that of the headteacher. They fully understand the link between the outcomes for children and staff pay progression. Governors ensure that finances are used effectively to secure further improvements and that all statutory requirements are met, including arrangements to keep children safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The high quality of care and support for each child demonstrated by staff contributes to the children making excellent progress in their personal and social skills. Parents and their children are welcomed warmly by staff at the beginning and end of each session. Parents often stay and talk informally to staff and help their child to settle. This secures a very positive and productive start to each session. Children are full of enthusiasm for learning because they are very involved in work and playing from the moment their session starts.
- Children who have difficulties with their emotional and social skills, or who are disabled or have special educational needs, make strong progress in learning and joining in with their peers. This is because of the excellent support and guidance that they receive.
- Children respond quickly to requests from staff to tidy away toys or come inside. Their relationships with each other are as warm as those with staff. They welcome others to join their play and willingly share resources. They help other children to complete tasks or tidy up. They know the routine of 'choose it, use it, put it away', which develops their levels of independence and responsibility.
- Staff manage behaviour well. No child has been prevented from attending the school because of poor behaviour. The calm atmosphere at the nursery promotes positive relationships, turn-taking and sharing. This contributes to children's exemplary behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. School leaders and managers ensure that the buildings and outdoor areas are free from dangers. Staff are highly trained in dealing with medical emergencies and in responding vigorously to any allegations of abuse.
- At all times, the children's physical well-being is given the highest priority. The outdoor area provides an impressive range of challenging activities for climbing, balancing and crawling through tunnels. Children judge risk confidently when they are tackling these challenges.
- Children feel safe, demonstrate confidence in the teachers and have excellent relationships with all the adults in the school. Their parents agree and typically comment on how well the staff care for the children and how reassuring this is for them. Several parents and carers commented on how their child's behaviour had improved since being in nursery and how much their children love coming to school.
- The school works closely with families to stress the value of their children coming to school regularly, despite attendance not being compulsory for this age group. Care is taken to record attendance and keep an eye on any unusual patterns of absence. Most children attend regularly and this reflects the strong partnership between home and school.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding and leads to the children making great strides in learning new skills. All staff have an excellent understanding of how young children learn and use this to provide the very best experiences for children of all ability levels, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs.
- An important strength in the teaching is the way that adults know exactly when to intervene in children's play to help them to extend their thinking, but equally, know when to stand back and let the children

continue with their own investigations. This is because adults' knowledge of the needs of each individual child is accurately based on highly-skilled, careful observations and the continuous tracking of their progress. Consequently, children of all abilities, including those who are more able, receive the correct type of support that they need to make outstanding progress.

- The wealth of activities on offer provide children with an immense number of learning experiences. Reading is treated as a particularly important activity. There are inviting corners supplied with cushions and books, and adults read regularly to the children in group story sessions. There are regular opportunities for children to share books and have a go at writing. For the children who speak English as an additional language, there are a wide range of books in their home language, bi-lingual electronic devices and many play opportunities to build their English skills and to develop confidence to speak.
- Adults develop children's number skills through a range of exciting activities. For example, the teacher built on the children's fascination with planning to build a tower of wooden blocks. The children were supplied with clipboards and record sheets, and invited to use measuring tapes to estimate how many blocks they might need. They made a tally of the different shapes and sizes they thought they would need to make their model. This developed the children's powers of concentration, helped them to count and encouraged them to make controlled marks on the paper.
- The adults promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Children have an enormous number of opportunities to feel wonder at the world around them. During the inspection a visiting speaker gave the children an opportunity to learn about a collection of reptiles she had brought in. The children were so excited to be able to stroke the snakes and lizards. They talked about the feel of the reptiles' skin, the different colours they could see and whether they were dangerous. Children also enjoy experimenting with colour when mixing paint and using computers and other electronic devices as part of their learning. Music and singing bring children together in a shared experience at the end of each session.
- All the adults play an important part in observing the children and checking their learning. These observations, photographs and children's work go into their 'learning profile' books. In addition the school makes a compact disc of photographs of children's work, videos of them taking part in activities and voice recordings of their discussions with their key worker. Parents are thrilled with these records, which help them to share with their wider families the progress made by their children. This is especially appreciated by those parents who have families living abroad. Both the profiles and the compact discs provide a valuable record, shared between school and home, of the excellent progress made by the children.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs are taught extremely well. Over the last two years, teachers have introduced short sessions during which small groups of children with communication difficulties are given focused support, for example, to extend their vocabulary. This work is having a clear impact on the target groups and the school plans to extend it to involve others, such as higher-attaining children and those who stay in the nursery for more than three terms.
- When the time comes for the children to move to their next school, they are prepared extremely well for the change and have acquired excellent and wide-ranging skills.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children arrive with language, number and social skills that vary widely. Overall, their starting points are below those typical for their age. Adults show children how to listen carefully and encourage them to express their preferences and offer their opinions. Children understand that they cannot always expect that others will agree with their choices and that they sometimes have to compromise. Consequently progress in personal and social skills is very impressive.
- The high priority given to improving children's speaking and listening helps to ensure that rapid progress is made in these areas, often from low starting points. Children want to talk because adults are interested in what they have to say, make time to listen and skilfully guide and prompt them as they search for the right word.

- Children receive short and focused sessions that encourage them to listen to different sounds, such as clapping and patting, and then to explore patterns in sound. This is the first stage in introducing them to initial letter sounds and patterns in words. Teachers gradually build on this so that the most able children can frequently recognise simple words and phrases. Opportunities for writing are similarly well promoted and children's development of simple skills in mathematical calculations and understanding shape, space and measures is strong because they have many resources to help them learn to count, to explore shapes and to measure. The outdoor area, as much as the classrooms, are rich in these resources.
- Children who speak English as an additional language are supported very effectively. Staff ensure that children are given individual support when they need it to help them learn rapidly. The school makes extremely good use of data about individual children and groups to check on the impact of teaching. Staff then make the necessary changes to planned activities to ensure that no individuals or groups fall behind. Some parents and carers expressed amazement at the speed with which their children become fluent speakers of English.
- Children who are eligible for free school meals do as well as others. This is because each child receives the right level of challenge.
- Disabled children and children who have special educational needs make similar progress to other children in the school. The school acts quickly to identify their needs and to set up highly effective support. The school also draws on the skills of a range of visiting specialists if the need arises.
- The most able children make very fast progress. Teachers ask them suitably challenging questions and expect a high level of work from them. Individuals occasionally reach levels not expected until the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school helps children to get ready for their next school very successfully. It builds effective links with the children's next school, making sure that any information about their needs is passed on securely.

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	121786
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	449443

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gillian Farmer
Headteacher	Kim Baxter
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2011
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