

# Hornden Nursery School

Cotsford Park, Hornden, Peterlee, County Durham, SR8 4TB

**Inspection dates** 18–19 March 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
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 very warm and friendly nursery where everyone is welcomed and valued. Leaders and governors work very well together to give children the best possible start to their education.
- The vision and drive of the headteacher enthuse all staff in the nursery. Together with the deputy and her dedicated staff team, she has been very successful at maintaining and continuing to improve further the quality of teaching and outstanding achievement for all children since the previous inspection.
- Staff know children in their key groups exceptionally well, their likes, dislikes and capabilities. They use this knowledge very well to ensure that children grasp new skills quickly and make significant progress in their learning.
- The quality of the learning environment both indoors and outside is breathtaking and contributes significantly to children's progress and achievement.
- Children relish the time that they spend at the nursery. They feel very safe and settle quickly into the day-to-day routines.
- Children are very keen to learn and the standard of behaviour within the nursery is exemplary.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school. Typical comments from parents include, 'I am very impressed with my child's achievements', 'The nursery environment is lovely with lots of friendly staff who are very approachable' and 'I am over the moon with how well my child has settled and with the excellent progress in the nursery.'
- The nursery promotes children's spiritual, moral and cultural development very well. They have many opportunities to learn about respect, fairness and cultural diversity. As a result, from an early age children are being well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Excellent partnerships exist with outside agencies which ensure that the needs of children and families are very well met.
- Staff have opportunities to visit others schools to observe best practice. However, there are no formal procedures within the school to ensure that best practice is shared.
- Governors are very knowledgeable about the work of the school. They work in close partnership with the headteacher to make sure the school is the very best it can be.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector spent two days observing children’s learning as they played indoors and outside. She also observed focused key groups sessions. The headteacher took part in one joint observation with the inspector.
- Discussions were held with the children, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and members of staff. The inspector also met with seven members of the governing body and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. The inspector also talked to parents at the beginning of the day as they dropped their children off at the nursery.
- The inspector also considered a range of school documentation. These included the school’s own review of its performance, the school improvement plans, children’s learning journeys, data on children’s progress and planning records.
- The inspector scrutinised the 11 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire (Parent View). In addition, the inspector took account of the school’s own parental survey and considered the responses of 11 staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Sheila Iwaskow, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized nursery school.
- Children attend on a part time-basis, either mornings, afternoons or two-and-a-half days a week.
- The vast majority of children are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The nursery school also offers extended sessions for which parents pay. These sessions include an early drop off session from 8.15am to 8.45am and a lunchtime session from 11.45am to 12.30pm.
- The governing body of the school also manages Horden Early Years which is located on the same site. This provision is subject to separate inspection arrangements and details of which can be found of on the Ofsted website at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).
- The school offers outreach support to children with special educational needs who attend other early years settings within the locality.
- The acting headteacher who was in post at the time of the previous inspection has been appointed to this position on a permanent basis.

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

- Develop formal procedures for the sharing of best practice within the nursery.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, supported by her deputy, is relentless in her pursuit for excellence. As a result, the nursery is exceptionally well led and managed.
- Staff work very well together as a team and morale is high. The headteacher has the full backing of her staff as shown in the wholly positive responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Senior leaders have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for development. School improvement plans are clear and concise. Key priorities are accurately identified. These priorities are reviewed on a regular basis and there is a good deal of evidence to show they have been or are being achieved.
- There are clear and robust systems for checking the quality of teaching. Targets set are linked to school priorities and there is a strong commitment to on-going professional development, ensuring that staff's knowledge and skills are kept up-to-date. Teachers' pay awards are very closely linked to the progress that their children make.
- Equality and fairness underpin the work of the school. Senior leaders ensure that all children have their needs planned for effectively. No discrimination is tolerated and the school promotes good relations with all.
- The school prepares children very well for growing up in modern Britain. Children are made aware that they live in a very diverse world by celebrating cultural festivals, listening to music and tasting food from other countries. They also gain an understanding of their own community through visits to a local church, shops, allotments and woodland areas.
- Parents strongly support the school. They especially appreciate the home visits prior to their children starting at the nursery and clearly understand the role of their children's key person. The school provides workshops for parents to help them develop their children's learning at home. The school website also provides a lot of valuable information for parents.
- The local authority provides 'light touch' support to this outstanding school.
- The school meets welfare and safeguarding requirements fully.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are regular visitors to the school and very supportive of the staff. They have a secure understanding of the many strengths of the nursery, including the quality of teaching and of its priorities for improvement. The headteacher ensures that they are kept very well informed about the progress of all the different groups of children in the nursery and they have a very good understanding of achievement data. Governors attend regular training to help them fulfil their roles and responsibilities. They are heavily involved in setting challenging targets for the headteacher and oversee the performance management of other staff within the school, ensuring that staff only receive salary increases if their children meet their achievement targets. The budget is managed effectively and statutory safeguarding duties are met.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is outstanding.
- Children have a very keen motivation to learn. They arrive full of eagerness for each session and immediately get involved in activities. They work very well together, sharing and taking turns as they play.
- As a result of children being totally engrossed in their learning there is no bullying and squabbles are very rare. Behaviour is therefore exemplary.
- Children share very warm relationships with staff and are very considerate of each other. They are polite and exceptionally well mannered. Visitors to the school are made to feel very welcome by children who look very smart in their school uniforms.

#### Safety

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding.
- The school site is very secure and regular checks take place to ensure that the building and grounds are free from dangers.
- There are rigorous checks on the suitability of all adults who work with the children.

- Children are very much encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety. For example, police officers come into school to make children aware of the dangers of talking to strangers.
- Children are made aware of safe practices when taking part in outdoor activities in the natural world. For example, staff ensure that children have a secure knowledge of safe fire practices before toasting marshmallows over an open fire.

### The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Staff have an excellent knowledge of the underlying principles of early years education. They have high expectations of the children and they are very well deployed both indoors and outside. As a result, children receive very high levels of support which have a very positive impact on the outstanding progress that they all make.
- The quality of the learning environment and the resources both indoors and outside are a great strength of the nursery. The wealth of activities on offer provides children with an immense number of learning experiences which cover all areas of their learning.
- Activities are very well planned and linked to the interests of the children. Staff have an in-depth knowledge of what children in their key groups know, like and can do. As a result, activities provided capture their interest, meet individual needs and drive learning forward at a rapid pace.
- Teaching strategies used to engage the children are innovative and promote excellent progress. For example, to develop their fine motor skills boys are encouraged to knead and stretch play dough to music, an activity which they thoroughly enjoy.
- Questioning is highly effective and deepens children's understanding. This was seen during a phonics (letters and the sounds they make) session when a child correctly identified the sound 'h' in the word 'hurry'. The teacher then asked if he has the same sound in his name; the child replied that he has. The teacher then skilfully extended his learning further by asking if the sound is at the beginning or the end of his name.
- Children's love of books and reading is developed exceptionally well. Children very much enjoy listening to a story as part of a group or reading on their own for pleasure. Books are very often used as a stimulus for project work. A large number of children have an excellent understanding of book terminology. They proudly say that the author 'writes the words' the illustrator 'draws the pictures' and the blurb on the back cover of the book 'tells us about the story'.
- Mathematical skills are very well promoted as part of the daily routine and during focused activities. For example, a number game involving dice, sand and cups absorbed the children. Children had to throw a dice and either identify the number or count the number of spots on the dice. Using a spoon, they then placed that number of spoonfuls of sand into the cup. After several turns, each child was asked by the teacher to predict how many more spoonfuls of sand it would take to fill their cup. Children had lots of fun testing out their predictions. Such good practice promotes children's number recognition counting and problem-solving skills.
- Adults plan many different ways for children to write. For example, they use paint brushes and water to make letters on the wall outside, draw and label maps and write their name.
- Staff have opportunities to go to other schools to observe other teachers' practice. However, there are no formal procedures to share good and exemplary practice which already exists in the nursery.
- Adults take great delight in developing children's sense of awe and wonder. Children were captivated as they stared at an incubator watching eggs cracking and fluffy chicks hatching. Such lovely experiences contribute significantly to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The majority of children enter the nursery with skills that are below those typical for their age. However, a significant proportion enters with major challenges in some areas of their learning. All children make rapid progress so that by the time they leave the nursery many have the skills typical for their age whilst a good proportion are exceeding these. As a result, most children are very well prepared for starting in the Reception class.
- Children with special educational needs do particularly well as a result of outstanding teaching and timely intervention. The nursery works very closely with outside agencies, such as speech and language therapists, educational psychologists and family link workers to ensure that the specific needs of these children are very well met.

- Particularly noteworthy is the support that the nursery offers children with special educational needs who attend other early years providers in the locality. The nursery employs two members of staff whose specific role is to support these children. As a result, they also make very good progress and achieve well.
- School data and observations during the inspection show that children make very good progress in their personal and social development. Children are highly confident and extremely independent. They are very secure with the routines that operate within the nursery and follow instructions given by staff exceptionally well. For example, they know that when the music plays it is time to tidy up and as a story is being read they must sit still and turn on their 'listening ears'.
- Similarly, excellent progress is made in children's speech and language development. Children are cared for in a language-rich environment and conversation flows freely as children play. Staff model and reinforce the correct use of language exceptionally well. New and interesting words, such as 'hullabaloo' are introduced as they play to enhance and develop their vocabulary.
- Through meticulous tracking, the progress of different groups is very closely monitored and any underperformance is very quickly identified and addressed. For example, boys were not achieving as well as girls in reading, writing and maths. To support boys' development in all of these areas staff undertook relevant training and the nursery bought additional resources which appealed to boys' interest. As a result, boys' progress in these areas improved and caught up with the girls.
- The most able children also make very good progress and reach the higher levels. After entering the nursery, their needs are very quickly identified and more challenging work and activities are provided to extend and develop their learning. For example, in the teaching of phonics the most able are very quickly moved on to a more challenging phase. Similarly, a specific mathematics group has been set up purely for the most able children to ensure that they make the best possible progress in this aspect of their learning.

## 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>	113986
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	449529

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>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	66
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jane Long
<b>Headteacher</b>	Natalie Parkinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 April 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 586 5415
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