

Etherley Lane Nursery School

Hazel Grove, Bishop Auckland, County Durham, DL14 7RF

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and children

This is an outstanding school.

- This is a very happy place where children thoroughly enjoy their time and thrive because they are very well cared for and consistently motivated to learn. As a consequence, children’s achievement is outstanding.
- The outstanding quality of provision, including the quality of teaching, continually improves under the uncompromising drive for excellence of the headteacher and her team.
- Governors are rigorous in their duties and increasingly take an active part in observing and monitoring the daily life of the nursery school. They provide robust challenge to senior leaders.
- Leaders, managers and governors are highly supportive of one another. They lack any complacency and challenge each other to sustain the outstanding overall performance of the school.
- Children make significant levels of progress over time because practitioners are very skilful teachers and consistently set the highest expectations.
- Children have excellent attitudes to learning because the well structured and stimulating curriculum enables them to develop their own ideas and interests.
- Behaviour is exemplary both indoors and as children explore the fabulous outdoor space.
- Practitioners’ excellent practices and caring relationships underpin children’s safety. Through exceptional teaching, children learn how to assess risks in their surroundings and play safely.
- Every child is fully included and benefits from high quality resources which are free from discrimination and any stereotyping in their use.
- Practitioners build highly positive relationships with parents and work effectively with them to support their child’s learning; the vast majority of children attend regularly. Even so, a few parents do not bring their children to school regularly.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed indoor and outdoor continuous play and learning provision and activities led by adults with small groups of children, during the morning and afternoon sessions of both days of the inspection.
- The headteacher took part in one joint observation with the inspector.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher in her role as senior leader and special educational needs coordinator, early years practitioners, the governing body, the school business manager and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke to children and parents and took account of the questionnaires received from seven staff to gain their views of the nursery school. Fewer than 10 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire Parent View were received during the course of the inspection; Parent View results were not therefore visible to the inspector.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation including: the school's evaluation of its provision, the school development plan, data of children's outcomes since the last inspection, current data on each child's progress, records of children's work known as learning journals, minutes of governing body meetings, local authority reports, records of checks made on staff, health and safety policies, procedures and records.

Inspection team

Karen Ling, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This nursery school is of average size and offers morning and afternoon sessions; children may take their 15 hours entitlement over three days.
- Children may stay for lunch and extended sessions may be arranged for which parents pay.
- Most children are of White British heritage and a very small proportion has special educational needs, or is disabled or speaks English as an additional language.
- The headteacher is a national leader of education (NLE) and leads on early years work in the local Teaching School Alliance.
- The school is a teaching school and supports students through School Direct Early Years Teacher Status.
- Since the last inspection, a longstanding member of staff has retired and an assistant headteacher has been appointed.
- The nursery school employs one level 2 early years apprentice.
- In June 2014 the school's governing body registered with Ofsted to offer early years provision for two-year-olds. It is called Etherley Lane Nursery and operates from within the nursery school building. This provision is subject to separate inspection arrangements and details can be found at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop further strategies to encourage all parents to help their child attend regularly so that:
 - all children receive their full entitlement to the nursery school's high quality provision
 - all children establish an excellent routine of attendance in preparation for the next stage in their education.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's continual strive for excellence in all that she does is reflected in the consistently high quality provision and her own performance targets. She is well supported by the assistant headteacher. The school's priorities for further development link closely to accurate self-evaluation and are regularly reviewed.
- The targets set for teachers and practitioners link closely to school priorities and professional development and ensure that excellent practice and professional knowledge about the early years is continually improving.
- The headteacher promotes a sense of community where every member of staff plays an important role in contributing to the high quality and effectiveness of this provision. Without exception, staff responses to questionnaires were highly positive and reflect their enjoyment of working here.
- Children flourish because relationships between adults and children are positive and behaviour is exemplary. They achieve exceptionally well and this prepares them well for the next stage in their education.
- Teaching standards are modelled exceptionally well by leaders and so early years practitioners are highly effective. Their excellent practice is modelled beyond the school as they support other early years provision in the locality. Consequently, the local authority provides a light touch support.
- Actions taken since the last inspection have led to further improvements in the quality of teaching. Outcomes for children and the teaching of mathematics are now even better.
- Leaders accurately analyse assessment data and make adjustments in the curriculum where necessary to meet each child's individual needs.
- Leaders and the governors, along with the whole team of staff are committed to equality of opportunity for all and these values are successfully reflected in the inclusive environment and curriculum. Any inappropriate use of language or behaviour is rare, swiftly managed and children are helped to understand right and wrong.
- The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is cultivated exceptionally well throughout the whole curriculum and children explore aspects of different faiths and cultures in meaningful ways for their age. Leaders and practitioners are very skilled at helping children to value each other's views and talk about their feelings, for example when they do or do not need help. Children's views count and they are fully involved in decision making, such as sharing views on what the theme of their role play area could be. This prepares them well for getting along with others in life and modern Britain.
- A range of strategies effectively engage parents in their child's learning. For example, the termly 'Fun days for parents' are popular, such as 'Maths using the outdoors'. Parents' comments to the inspector were all highly complimentary of the nursery school and staff.
- The transition to primary school is managed very well. Visits to the nursery school from primary school staff as well as visits to the primary schools take place. Booklets are prepared to help children familiarise themselves with the new routines they face and the school uniforms are added to the role play area in the summer term.
- Overall attendance is good and absenteeism is followed up immediately. In spite of the school's efforts, a very small proportion of families choose not to bring their child regularly on all the days when they are registered.
- The excellent precision in managing the school's arrangements for safeguarding children ensures the welfare and statutory requirements are met and they are well understood and followed by all staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is highly effective and continually improving. For example, it now has a discreet section in the self-evaluation process with specific targets and actions. Governors manage the school's finances very well. They also ensure that all statutory requirements, including for safeguarding, are met.
 - Governors make accurate and very productive use of data to set consistently challenging targets for the headteacher. This drives senior leaders to improve still further what is already outstanding practice in order to ensure the very best possible outcomes for children.
 - Governors conduct school visits and meetings to closely monitor staff performance and children's progress and outcomes. They have an excellent knowledge of how well staff, including practitioners, are performing and effective systems are in place to reward and respond to performance.

The behaviour and safety of children are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of children is outstanding.
- The highly stimulating environment engages children's curiosity and imagination so they are motivated and persevere at activities.
- Exceptionally skilled practitioners successfully support children to work together in making decisions, such as taking turns and sharing resources. They help children to be tolerant of each other, understand the consequences of their behaviour on others, distinguish right from wrong and that rules apply to everyone, such as helping to put toys away when asked.
- Children are adept at helping themselves to drinks and healthy snacks during sessions. They make their own choices and pour their own milk or water.
- Children form trusting relationships with adults and are eager to learn. When appropriate, they sit and listen to adults and each other exceptionally well. They work harmoniously with their peers. They show a developing understanding of respecting one another's different needs and understand the agreed rules for working together.
- Small focused group activity has a very positive impact on those children who find it more difficult to listen carefully and respond to instructions. Well-planned support by practitioners ensures that, over time, they become more self-controlled and can successfully respond to requests from practitioners.
- Throughout the day, the laughter of children can be heard as they play and learn together alongside the adults who take very good care of them.

Safety

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding.
- Indoors, children show a very good level of awareness of the needs of others and show consideration and kindness as they play together. They understand how to use scissors safely as they cut materials and sticky tape, for example. They are very good at following rules, such as correctly putting toys and resources away at 'tidy-up time'.
- Children run freely and safely in the extensive outdoor space and display very high levels of independence as they select and use resources correctly. The recently acquired play-waders enable children to explore even more freely without concern of getting wet or muddy. Most manage to pull these on by themselves which is very impressive.
- Children take great care and show growing maturity in managing risks as they work in the carefully planted wild woodland. Practitioners are extremely vigilant and continuously reinforce with children how to use equipment safely and avoid hazards, such as nettles that sting and twigs which might scratch. When children looked at some fungi, the practitioner reminded them never to eat anything they find outdoors.
- Children follow good hygiene routines and know to wash their hands after playing outside, visiting the bathroom and before eating snacks and lunch.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Practitioners are highly skilled at moving children on in their learning because they know each child and their interests particularly well and help them to settle into daily routines. Staff evaluate their practice together each day and identify children's achievements and where more consolidation of learning is needed.
- Practitioners' highly effective use of accommodation and resources enables children to succeed. For example, children display high levels of independence in the outside play areas and the newly developed woodland area because high quality resources are accessible on a self-service style.
- Planning reflects practitioners' expert knowledge of each child and their specific needs. Learning intentions are clear, expectations are high and children are managed very well.
- Learning is successful because of the breadth of stimulating activities led by adults and initiated by children which build on individual stages of development and interests. Practitioners interact effectively in children's play to give clear explanations, new knowledge and offer challenging questions. They encourage children to try new experiences, for example, after making a kite the practitioner prompted children to run with it outside to see if it would fly.
- The focus on communication and language development successfully extends children's early reading and writing skills. For example, discreet sounds and letters sessions are taught with clear progression to suit

each child's stage of development and practitioners offer good levels of challenge to all. They engage children in active, fun games, such as listening for the different sounds in the names of toy animals and crossing the 'golden river' when they hear the sounds in the name of their toy animal. Children of all abilities progress well and thoroughly enjoy the game.

- Practitioners have further developed their skills in teaching mathematics through play. They frequently introduce into children's play ideas, opportunities to explore patterns and use mathematical language to count and describe shape and the relative position of objects.
- Familiar activities, such as sitting in a circle and stretching out elasticated fabric, promote effective learning. Children learn from older children who model accurate responses to instructions, for example, lifting the stretchy material 'up', 'down', 'in' and 'out'. Giggles of delight explode as toys are bounced 'on top' and children crawl 'underneath' the fabric.
- Practitioners are very skilled at assessing where children are at and do so systematically as they teach. They skilfully adapt their teaching as they go along in order to extend and promote children's own ideas as they occur.
- Excellent teaching successfully ensures every child is included, feels secure and their contributions valued. Practitioners work well with parents and effectively engage them in their child's learning in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

The achievement of children is outstanding

- A high proportion of children enter the nursery school with skills and knowledge that are generally typical for their age. A very small proportion have skills in some areas which are below those typical for their age. Boys and girls, make consistently rapid rates of progress overall from their starting points.
- Children with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, make sustained progress and come on leaps and bounds during their time at nursery school. Staff meet their specific needs exceptionally well including specific support from other agencies as necessary, such as a speech therapist.
- The most able children achieve outstandingly well. Any gaps in outcomes between areas of learning are minimal and outcomes in mathematics have improved since the last inspection. Practitioners know each child's particular strengths and plan extension activities to provide depth and breadth to their knowledge and understanding.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted particularly well because all staff have a very good knowledge of each child. Consequently, they develop the skills necessary for their achievement in all other areas of learning.
- Children develop a fondness for stories and practitioners are successfully promoting speaking and listening skills as stories are repeated and language is consolidated.
- Children experience a rich and creative environment which helps them to make connections between different areas of learning. They explore colour, form and texture in two and three dimensions. The sustained interest and perseverance were evident as one child made a fairground out of clay and supported structures with wire.
- Boys and girls take great delight in experimenting with the large water features and guttering. They learn that when placed at different heights and angles balls run more slowly or quickly. They work out problems, such as how to line up pieces of guttering to keep the water flowing and enlarge a bridge structure so that larger balls can pass underneath.
- Children become adept at using information and communication technology. For example, one child was curious as to why worms come out in the rain; the practitioner supported the children to use a hand-held computer to discover the answer. They learn how to use binoculars and magnifying glasses to see the detail in small creatures and confidently take photographs using a digital camera.
- Mathematics skills are developed in exciting and fun ways. When the mud kitchen became 'The Spider Cafe', children were totally engrossed in asking what visitors would like, writing down orders, counting out bugs into pans, writing the numbers on the board and serving up delicious soup and sandwiches.
- Children learn to count confidently and match numbers to items. For example, after building a stage with large wooden blocks, designing and displaying posters, they set out theatre seats and placed a number under each one, correctly numbering in order up to 12. What followed next were enthusiastic renditions of some famous songs from children's films. The audience were delighted and asked for more!

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	113976
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	449528

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	Barbara Lee
Headteacher	Leslie Patterson
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2012
Telephone number	01388 604835
Fax number	01388 604835
Email address	etherleylanenursery@durhamlearning.net

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