

Ham Drive Nursery School

Ham Drive , Ham, Plymouth, PL2 2NJ

Inspection dates

7–8 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Children of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well. They make good progress, particularly in speaking and listening, and learning to read and write, because teaching is good.
- Accurate assessment of how well children are doing and good record keeping underpin good planning. Staff ensure that activities hold children's interest as well as covering all required aspects of the curriculum.
- The school takes outstanding care of children, making sure they are safe and that learning is enjoyable. Children are extremely enthusiastic and are keen to come to school.
- The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding. He is well supported by the staff and governors. Together, they make a good team and manage the school well. Senior leaders are well aware of the school's strengths and plan effectively to bring about improvements, especially to the quality of teaching.
- There are strong links between the school, parents and outside agencies that ensure children's needs are well known and catered for.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Some staff lack confidence in teaching mathematics. The subject has a lower profile within the school compared to other subjects and progress, although good overall, is sometimes less secure.
- Children have too few opportunities to make use of information and communication technology as part of learning.
- Recent successful initiatives, whereby governors use information about children's progress to check on the school's effectiveness, are not yet fully embedded.

Information about this inspection

- Frequently accompanied by the headteacher, the inspector observed children's learning in a variety of activities, indoors and outside. These included some chosen by children and others that they were directed to by members of staff.
- The inspector met with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, members of staff and a representative of the local authority.
- He looked at examples of children's work and at 'learning journals' which record progress.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at school documentation. This included data on children's progress, evidence of self-evaluation and procedures for managing staff performance.
- He evaluated the ways in which the school seeks to keep children safe.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire for information to be used in this inspection. However, the inspector was able to meet parents at the start of morning and afternoon sessions to hear how they feel about the school.
- The inspector took account of staff views, as expressed in questionnaires.

Inspection team

Michael Burghart, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average nursery school.
- The school federated with Plym Bridge Nursery School and Day Care in January 2014. The schools share the same headteacher and have one governing body.
- All children attend part time. The vast majority remain at the school until age five when they transfer to local primary schools.
- The very large majority of children are from White British backgrounds.
- By virtue of their age, no children are eligible for the extra government funding, known as the pupil premium, which supports disadvantaged children.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The school runs a lunch club which all children are entitled to attend if parents so wish. Currently, an average of 22 children attend daily.
- The school shares its site with Ham Drive Day Care Nursery. Provision at this setting was inspected in October 2014 and does not form part of this report.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - improving staff knowledge, understanding and confidence in teaching mathematics and raising the profile of this aspect of children's development
 - ensuring that children have sufficient opportunities to use information and communication technology to enhance their learning.
- Build on the good practice recently introduced, where governors make use of data and information about children's achievement to evaluate the effectiveness of provision, as part of rigorous checks on the school's effectiveness.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The staff work as a good team well led by the headteacher. Along with the governors, senior and middle leaders they share a vision and ambition for the school that gives rise to high expectations of teaching and learning. Their example of professionalism and their effective management of children's personal as well as academic development are at the heart of the school's ethos. Parents are convinced that the school is well run.
- A strong feature of leadership and management is the way the headteacher identifies staff strengths and prompts and supports areas for further development. Staff are equal partners in the process with high quality discussions leading to targets and actions that are reviewed and modified effectively. The quality of teaching is being systematically improved as a result.
- Leadership and management are not outstanding because some initiatives are too new, and some staff responsibilities too recently allocated, to have raised children's achievement from good to outstanding. The school's track record of improvement and the accuracy of self-evaluation in identifying priorities for further development demonstrate that the school has the capacity to ensure further improvement. A good example is that raising the profile of mathematics, which is partly due to the newness of the pair of coordinators and partly the result of the much needed focus on communication skills, is already a target of the school's development plan.
- As part of its federation with another nursery, the school benefits from joint setting and monitoring of policies and procedures, shared expertise and a variety of staff training opportunities. Improvements to assessment, moderation and record keeping have been developed as a consequence of the partnership between the two schools.
- The school provides children with a good curriculum which covers all required aspects. Good planning allows for personal, social and emotional development, as well as communication skills, literacy, numeracy, creativity and physical development. Children's awareness of the world is fostered well through the beginnings of science and topic work.
- Children are given a secure grounding in what it means to be British, with the fundamentals of respect, tolerance and fair play encouraged wherever possible. The school works effectively to see no child is discriminated against and that everyone has equality of opportunity. Support for those with additional learning needs is well managed. Consequently, such children make at least good progress.
- Nursery nurses and key workers forge outstanding relationships with children and often with their families. Staff ensure that the more vulnerable children are well known and supported, and fully integrated into activities for work and play.
- The lunch club is well run. Leaders take full account of health and safety considerations and ensure good supervision.
- The local authority supports the school well. This is not only in providing advice and training but also in extra financial resources to help balance the budget, which by virtue of small numbers on roll is in deficit.
- The school takes outstanding physical care of children. All statutory requirements of arrangements for safeguarding children are fully and effectively met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors are very involved in supporting the school. They work well with the headteacher and the local authority in pursuit of the highest possible quality of education and the best use of resources.
 - Recent improvements to their understanding of school data, which is a result of governor training, have significantly enhanced the potential of governors to challenge the headteacher and staff regarding the school's effectiveness. This new found heightened awareness of how efficiently resources are being used has helped to reconcile the budget and set a three-year plan to overcome the shortfall. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of this initiative on children's achievement.
 - Governors have a good knowledge of how effective the performance management of staff is and, although there is little room for financial rewards, seek to recognise and celebrate good practice. They appreciate how the headteacher tackles any apparent underperformance and offer their experience and advice where it is needed.

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

- The behaviour of children is outstanding.
- There is a buzz of anticipation as children arrive for each session. They are raring to go. Their extremely positive attitudes are driven by the way learning is planned around what will interest them. Unsurprisingly, despite there being no requirement to attend the school, attendance is good.
- Children get on very well together. They soon learn to share, take turns and be considerate, even when not being directly supervised and already understand that this is part of British culture.
- Children understand that there have to be rules and systems whereby not everyone can be involved in an activity at the same time. Making sensible choices, for example in how many children can physically explore the water tray or climb on the apparatus, makes a strong contribution to children's personal development.
- For their age, children have a very well developed sense of right and wrong and their appreciation of what is fair is obvious in the way they play together, for example who is to be next to ride the trikes.
- Parents, staff, governors and children all say that the excellent behaviour seen during the inspection is typical. They report that problems are few and far between and very quickly overcome. School records confirm that this is the case.

Safety

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding.
- The school has robust systems in place for risk assessment including for site security, the safety of equipment and for school trips. Parents have confidence in the ways in which the school looks after their children.
- Rigorous checks on the suitability of staff and safe recruitment are regularly carried out and records are very well kept.
- Children feel safe and know who to turn to if they have a problem. They clearly trust staff and the very strong relationships which are common throughout the school make a substantial contribution to the quality of learning. Very strong links with outside agencies, such as health and social services, extend the school's care and support not only for children but also for families.
- Children are very successfully encouraged to appreciate how to keep themselves safe. For example, they know that electricity can be dangerous and are aware of how to cross roads safely.
- Staff support children very effectively when using scissors and tools, and cleanliness and safety have a high profile when making cakes. Children are very well supervised during lunch club, where they are taught about healthy lifestyles and hygiene. Outdoors, while children are allowed to experience more physical activities like climbing, staff pay careful attention to their well-being.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Children are well taught. Records of their progress and the very positive comments of parents indicate that this has long been the case.
- Staff have a good awareness of the needs of young children. They effectively plan a good range and quality of activities that help children to learn. There is a balance of things they choose for themselves and those that they are directed to by adults.
- Benefiting from training alongside staff from the other nursery in the federation, staff have developed ways of assessing and recording what children know, understand and can do. Such information is used to evaluate how effective teaching has been and to set targets for future learning. A testament to the success of this is that children make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress.
- The low level of skills in communication, language and literacy that many children have when they join the school, rightly determines the school's number one priority. This pays dividends in good progress in speaking and listening and in children emerging as readers and writers. Staff effectively teach children to link sounds with letters, in what is known as a phonic approach to reading, and at the same time successfully encourage a love of books.
- The most-able children are well catered for, with staff providing extension opportunities where children predict what will happen next in stories and explore how the characters might be feeling.
- A positive feature of all teaching is that children are constantly prompted by staff to explain their thinking and express opinions. A fine example is in the descriptive vocabulary that evolved from a discussion about 'alien poo' that children had found near some strange footprints.

- Some staff lack confidence in teaching mathematics. The school is aware of this and, with the headteacher, the new pair of coordinators have identified the need to raise the profile of mathematics in displays and activities and to provide more training to develop quality. Notwithstanding these areas for improvement, the strength of other staff in helping children to count, sort by shape, size and colour, and begin solving problems still means children make good progress.
- Good planning, well coordinated by the assistant headteacher, ensures that all required aspects of the early years curriculum are taught. Themes derived from children's suggestions such as 'space' provide the focus for activities which capture children's imagination. For example, listening to Holst's Planet Suite and moving to the music as aliens from Mars appealed to children's creativity as well as encouraging the children to work as a team.
- A relative weakness of teaching is that there is too little use of information and communication technology in support of learning. Equipment is not readily available to children and this restricts their opportunities to extend their skills and understanding.
- Children are well prepared for future study by being set homework. This is a good balance of finding out, designing, making and collecting which enhances the home-school partnership and encourages good learning habits.
- Teaching and support for disabled children and those who have special educational needs are consistently good. The impact of this is that such children achieve at least as well as others in the school. Close one-to-one and small-group support, sometimes involving visiting specialists, helps children to grow in confidence and frequently make outstanding progress. The very small proportion of children whose first language is not English benefit from the same approach and make rapid progress, especially in learning how to communicate.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The majority of children enter the school with skills and experience that are below those typical of this age group. This is particularly so in terms of the personal, social, emotional and communication and language aspects of development. By the time they leave, the attainment of most children is close to what is expected at this age. This gives a clear indication that they are catching up and that their achievement is good.
- Good progress is sustained because staff know children well. Teaching is good and support for children of all abilities and backgrounds successfully identifies, and then plans for, the next stages of learning. The school is very good at making learning fun and children much enjoy the challenge of choosing activities as well as responding well to staff direction and guidance.
- Children make good progress in learning to read, benefiting from associating sounds with letters, looking at familiar stories and developing research skills from pictorial non-fiction books. A highlight of this approach is the good progress boys in particular are making in reading, captivated by the topic of 'Space'.
- Children are successfully encouraged to try to express themselves on paper. In a combination of art work and simple writing, children's confidence is fostered until the children are able to identify and write their names and then simple sentences.
- Despite there being less mathematical focus in displays and available equipment, progress is good. Most children are able to recognise numbers, some much more than 10, continue sequences and appreciate comparisons, such as smaller and greater than. Children enthusiastically showed the inspector how to use a number line to count on and back, and to demonstrate that they could solve simple addition and subtraction problems. Children enjoy weighing and measuring especially when cooking.
- Children's progress in personal, social and emotional development is a strength of the school. Children who arrive with little experience of forming relationships with other children, and who find it hard to accept that there are limits to what they can do, settle in quickly. They soon show the same outstanding behaviour and self-awareness as the majority.
- The most-able children achieve well because staff provide additional challenge and opportunities for them. For example, one response showed a markedly greater understanding than the rest of the group when thinking about zoo animals. Ethical questions were raised as to whether it was right to keep animals in cages. Staff skilfully encouraged talk about endangered species and population growth. Rapid progress in vocabulary and understanding followed.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs make at least as good progress as the others in the school. Some who find speaking and listening difficult when they first arrive make outstanding progress because staff are prepared to listen to them and give them help and time to express themselves.

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	113051
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	447954

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Rees
Headteacher	Brian Lee
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 October 2011
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