

Headington Quarry Foundation Stage School

Quarry School Place, Headington, Oxford, OX3 8LH

Inspection dates

20–21 May 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.

- The headteacher's resolute determination and high expectations have ensured that the school has developed and improved on the good practice seen at the last inspection.
- All staff are passionate advocates of high quality early years provision. They are very experienced and well qualified and strive constantly to hone and improve their skills.
- Teaching is outstanding, which results in all children achieving exceptionally well. Staff carefully plan and prepare exciting activities both indoors and outdoors. Consequently, children love coming to nursery and are deeply involved in their learning and play for long periods of time.
- Children behave exceptionally well. Together with their parents they feel very safe and happy at nursery and trust and respect the staff. They get on exceptionally well together and learn to consider and respect other children's needs.
- Since the last inspection the headteacher and subject leaders have significantly improved the way they record and measure children's progress. As a result, staff now know precisely at what level to challenge each child.
- All groups of children make excellent progress in their learning. Most reach and many exceed typical levels for their age by the time they leave. They are very well prepared for their Reception classes.
- An excellent partnership is quickly established between staff and parents. They are all delighted with what the nursery offers and greatly appreciate the very friendly and exceptionally caring staff. They also love the fact that their children rapidly become 'independent and quickly learn to socialise with other children'.
- The governing body shares the headteacher's vision and values for the nursery and are totally committed to providing high quality early years education. They provide very good support and challenge to all staff.
- The nursery promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. The areas of learning taught are stimulating, exciting and varied. Enticing activities such as a 'mud kitchen' and whisking milk shakes, develop children's imagination and stimulate their curiosity.
- Parents appreciate the tender way in which children with disabilities and special educational needs are supported. The children are sensitively supported by skilled adults to achieve exceptionally well.
- Children who speak English as an additional language rapidly become fluent in English as staff seize every chance to communicate and explain new vocabulary.
- Despite the staff's best efforts, there are a very small number of children who are reluctant to draw and make marks, which hinders the development of their early writing skills.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a wide range of sessions and activities indoors and outdoors in the nursery, including several visits to the nursery's day care provision, which is managed by the governing body. All of the observations were done jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior teacher, some children, three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector evaluated a range of school documentation. These included the documents relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan, children's special books, plans for learning, displays and information about the children's attainment and progress.
- There were 37 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector also spoke to several parents as they brought their children to school and read the school's latest parent survey to gain a broad view range of views about the nursery.
- Account was taken of the 16 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Joyce Cox, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- All children attending this nursery are in the early years provision.
- The school is a local authority maintained nursery which offers early years education on a part-time basis. Children either attend for five morning or five afternoon sessions each week.
- The nursery offers 15 hours of free provision for three to four-year-olds between 9.10am to 3.30pm five days each week. It also offers full day care for up to 24 children from 8.00 until 6.00, which includes lunch, above the 15 hours, which parents pay for themselves.
- Most children join the nursery in the September after their third birthday and most children stay for three terms.
- A third of the children are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language. This is an above-average number and a few of the children are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is below that found nationally.
- A small number of children are eligible for the early years pupil premium (EYPP) funding from April 2015. However, the school has not yet received this additional finance so no comment can be made about its effectiveness.
- The nursery is linked to a nearby local primary school. Children in the Reception class of this partner school are taught on the nursery site by staff from the primary school. This class was not inspected.
- The school is a lead for the Headington Partnership of Schools and organises the local networks, training and workshops for practitioners working with early years children in the area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Devise ways to support the small number of children who are reluctant to draw and make written marks so that they achieve as well as their friends in their early writing skills.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher is central to the nursery's successes and the children's outstanding achievement. She is very well supported by a knowledgeable and highly effective senior teacher, staff and governors. There is no complacency and the continuing search for further improvements is testimony to the high level of commitment and teamwork in the school.
 - High quality teamwork between the headteacher, staff and governors ensures that teaching and achievement are consistently outstanding and that children's behaviour is exceptionally well managed.
 - The headteacher and staff constantly search for ways to make the children's daily learning and play experiences even better. Staff's interactions and conversations with the children are filmed and discussed to make sure they are of a high quality and to ensure children are highly confident learners.
 - The headteacher and senior teacher regularly and rigorously check on the quality of teaching and learning and give support if needed. Staff who have special responsibilities for leading aspects of the school's work carry out their duties with considerable enthusiasm and energy.
 - The activities offered to the children are interesting and exciting and continually adapted to meet their individual needs, preferences and interests. The indoor and outdoor areas and the local park are used exceptionally well to provide children with stimulating learning experiences, such as going on a bear hunt, making mud pies and digging potatoes. All the activities are suitably challenging and staff make sure children are very well prepared for their Reception classes.
 - The headteacher and staff promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Children and families from a wide range of cultural backgrounds are made equally welcome by the staff. One parent said, 'This nursery is so inclusive of different ethnic backgrounds.'
 - Children love joining in celebrations from many different cultures. They swiftly develop curiosity about the world around them and learn to show kindness and respect towards each other. The nursery promotes British values very well as all children are successfully encouraged to show tolerance for children who are different from themselves.
 - Parents who spoke to the inspector were very enthusiastic about all aspects of the nursery and were full of praise for the headteacher and staff. They describe it as, 'The nicest nursery in the world,' and, 'An incredibly lovely place to grow up in with plenty of loving and competent staff.'
 - The local authority, recognising the high quality of provision, provides very light-touch support. They feel that the nursery provides a strong lead to many local early years settings.
- The school carries out rigorous checks when it employs adults to work with children and keeps meticulous records to ensure children are as safe as possible. The school's child protection work is very well documented and very supportive of children. The very regular health and safety checks ensure that children are safe at all times. Parents agree wholeheartedly that their children are cared for exceptionally well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is knowledgeable and effective and makes an excellent contribution to the school's development. Governors visit the school regularly to observe the school's work, consider strengths and contribute to identifying necessary improvements within the available financial budget. They have a very good understanding of the quality of teaching and how it is maintained, and know how well the children are learning.
 - Minutes of meetings show that they are ready to question leaders to ensure that the school's work continues to improve. They oversee and contribute to decisions regarding salary awards and are aware of the checks made on staff's performance.
 - They ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met and agreed policies adhered to.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Leaders have maintained the excellent behaviour seen at the last inspection.
- Children arrive with happy faces for each session and quickly and eagerly join their 'Key Person' groups. They rapidly learn to share nicely and cooperate with each other. They are very keen to learn new things and work together well in pairs and in small groups.
- Children rapidly become engrossed in various activities such as planting beans in the garden, cutting fruit

and building large models. They practice skills and persevere with tasks even if they find them difficult. Parents love the way their children come home full of enthusiasm and comments about what they have been doing.

- Staff are highly effective at managing children's behaviour and in ensuring no child is allowed to disrupt others' learning. They skilfully and successfully focus on developing children's self-confidence, independence and positive behaviour.
- The way adults sensitively support children with special educational needs is exemplary. Consequently, all children are deeply involved in their learning and become increasingly confident with new experiences. All children know that they will be listened to and respected.
- Most children attend regularly and the school does its best to make parents aware of the importance of their children not missing any time.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Friendly, smiling staff and well-established routines help all children to feel very safe and to settle quickly. Children develop very positive and trusting relationships with the staff and say they feel very safe and happy at nursery and enjoy 'everything'.
- All parents who expressed an opinion said that their children felt very safe at school. One comment, typical of others, was, 'Staff are very friendly and it makes you feel you leave your child in good hands.'
- Staff thoroughly assess the risks associated with activities and children increasingly learn to judge for themselves how to stay safe. One child commenting on the sun said, 'You mustn't look at the sun. It could blind you.'
- Children are very well supervised at all times. They are taught to keep themselves safe in risky situations such as climbing outdoors on the monkey bars and when using skewers to make fruit kebabs. They are very familiar with day-to-day health routines such as washing their hands before having a snack.
- Children swiftly develop very positive relationships with one another. They know that it is important to always be kind, and this is reflected in the fact that there are no recorded cases of bullying or racial abuse.
- Leaders and governors make sure that those who work with the children are rigorously checked. They make sure that all adults are trained regularly and know what to do in an emergency.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The school has maintained and built on the high quality teaching found at the last inspection. All staff have excellent knowledge and understanding of how young children learn best. Therefore, they can skilfully amend activities quickly to extend the children's learning and understanding.
- Adults are exceptionally skilled at being genuinely engaged with children and they know precisely when to intervene to extend their language, learning and play. They know all the children really well and skilfully plan a wide range of activities to make sure all children enjoy learning; children are highly motivated and curious as a result.
- The systems for checking the children's skills when they join the school are exceptionally thorough. Staff collect specific information about each child's development in all of their areas of learning. This information is used carefully to ensure that all children's different needs are catered for.
- For example, the most able children are skilfully challenged to extend their numeracy skills when counting numbers from 11 to 20.
- The teaching of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is of an excellent quality because staff are highly skilled at working with these children. Adults swiftly identify the children's needs carefully and make excellent use of various approaches, such as memory games, to support and develop children's communication and personal and social skills.
- Staff in the day care provision are highly skilled at providing a happy and safe environment. Parents greatly appreciate the 'flexibility of the day care arrangements and the experienced, dedicated staff'. Children cope very well with long days because staff are very sensitive to their needs and tenderly guide them through breakfast, nursery sessions and after-school care.
- Staff take great care to help children at an early stage of speaking English develop and expand their vocabulary, so that they talk to adults and their friends. They have many chances to listen to stories and join in with words or actions. This helps them to develop good communication skills.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics meets the needs of all the children exceptionally well. Children have many opportunities, both indoors and outdoors, to explore letters of the alphabet, to

become familiar with fiction and non-fiction books and to listen to stories. Staff frequently provide various activities for children to count, sort, order and write numbers.

- Despite children feeling very positive and confident, a small number are reluctant to 'have a go' at simple mark making and drawing to start their early writing skills.
- Indoor and outdoor areas are colourful, prepared carefully and used exceptionally well by adults to provide an exciting and imaginative range of experiences. The large, attractive outdoor area is exceptionally well designed and is used to provide many opportunities for children to develop all their skills, investigate the environment, make mud pies, grow plants, ride bikes, use binoculars to spot birds and explore.
- Skilled early years practitioners and nursery nurses play a key role in supporting teachers and children. They provide excellent support to individual children and small groups. All staff are very reflective about how they interact and work with the children.
- For example, they have recently all been working closely together to think of the most effective ways to support and develop children's thinking skills. Staff morale is high and they happily work together and share ideas and resources.
- All staff record and check children's learning. They observe and photograph the children at work and play and include these in children's excellent 'special books'. These are used regularly to provide a shared record between school and home.
- Parents are exceptionally pleased with the way staff educate and care for their children.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children learn exceptionally well because all staff are very skilled at getting the best out of each child through meticulously selected activities. This, together with the exemplary care and attention children receive from all staff, helps most children to acquire the necessary skills in early reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, they are very well prepared for the Reception classes.
- All children make outstanding progress from starting points which vary greatly. Most of children join the school with skills that are broadly typical for their age. However, a third of the children are below expected levels, especially in their communication, personal and social and mathematical skills.
- Staff seize every opportunity to talk to children and extend their vocabulary through explaining the meaning of new words. Consequently, children make excellent progress in speaking and listening.
- Skilfully designed and made role-play areas enable children to practise their new skills. For example, children carefully measure and record the size of their friends' feet in the shoe shop. They also learn new vocabulary such as 'foot gauge'.
- Children respond positively to the nursery's daily routines and quickly gain the confidence to mix with other children and adults. The development of their personal and social skills is a key priority in the school and children make accelerated progress in these areas. They swiftly learn to share nicely and take turns and they behave exceptionally well at all times.
- Early reading skills develop quickly. Staff have an agreed list of 'core' nursery rhymes and books which they want all children to experience. Consequently, children rapidly acquire very useful vocabulary and knowledge and understanding about the ways stories are written.
- Children make exceptionally good gains in learning about letters and sounds, and many children quickly learn how to recognise rhyming words such as 'leg' and 'peg'. The most able children also rapidly and correctly write simple words like 'cat' and 'hat'. Despite the staff's best efforts, there are a small number of children who are reluctant to draw or make marks, which means they are not acquiring early writing skills as rapidly as most of the other children.
- The most able children achieve exceptionally well in all areas of their learning. Staff quickly identify who these children are and make sure that they are given challenges to make them think really hard, for example, counting large numbers and dictating familiar traditional stories for staff to write.
- The achievement of disabled children and those with special educational needs is excellent. With guidance from fellow professionals such as speech and language therapists and sensitive support from staff, they make excellent progress in their communication and social skills.
- Disadvantaged children make outstanding progress. There is no gap between their achievement and that of the other children at the school.
- Children who speak English as an additional language rapidly expand their language because staff swiftly check how well they know and use spoken English. They are then supported by all staff, who are highly effective in ensuring they all learn to speak English quickly and fluently.

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	122968
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	449490

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katherine Bull
Headteacher	Lesley Carrington
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 June 2012
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