

# Aclet Close Nursery School

Aclet Close, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 6PX

## Inspection dates

8–9 March 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Outstanding</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher leads the school with passion and commitment. She wants only the best for the children, and is supported exceptionally well in this by the new deputy headteacher and the staff.
- Managers and leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and where further improvement is required. Governors provide strong support and challenge to the school. However, they do not always ensure that the targets in the school development plan are written in such a way as to enable robust monitoring.
- Through good teaching, both indoors and outdoors, the vast majority of children make at least good progress from their different starting points. Older children are well prepared for starting Reception class at school. However, the proportion of the most able children who make rapid progress is lower than expected.
- Adults provide a high standard of care and welfare for children. Safeguarding systems and procedures are well known, understood and implemented consistently. Children are effectively taught how to keep themselves safe.
- Children are confident learners. Most children behave very well throughout the sessions and know the routines of the Nursery very well indeed. Staff are good role models and have high expectations. However, the learning environment does not consistently enable boys to use every opportunity to learn and develop.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make very good progress towards their targets. Disadvantaged children make rapid progress and soon catch up with other children. Any slowing in progress for any child is swiftly identified and effectively acted upon.

## Full report

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

- Increase the proportion of children making rapid progress by:
  - ensuring that staff provide challenging learning tasks for the most able children
  - further enhancing the learning environment to better meet the specific learning needs of boys.
- Ensure that the planning process is more precise by:
  - continuing to refine and embed the new assessment and tracking system
  - developing staff confidence in using data more effectively.
- Strengthen governance by ensuring that actions in the school development plan are measurable and regularly monitored against outcomes.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The new headteacher has a clear vision for the school, which is supported by all leaders, managers and staff. She has proved extremely resilient during the four terms she has been in post. Even during a period of turbulence in senior leadership and changes for the rest of the staff, she has resolutely identified and correctly prioritised the areas for improvement needed in the Nursery. Her determination to push these changes through, for the benefit of the children, is widely praised by the staff and parents.
- The headteacher has led the refurbishment of the learning environment both internally and externally, and skilfully involved staff in these changes. This has had a major impact on enabling independent learning and experimentation. She recognises there is still work to do to ensure that boys' learning needs are fully addressed.
- She has introduced a new and more accurate system for assessing and tracking progress of individual children from when they enter the Nursery to when they leave. This has enabled the identification of any slowing of progress and effective interventions to take place swiftly. However, not all staff are fully confident in using the data provided to make consistent judgements.
- The new deputy headteacher, in post for less than a term, is already having a positive impact on teaching and learning in the school. This is demonstrated through the implementation of high-quality learning journals and better-quality recording of observations of children's learning. Staff are now focusing their observations on learning intentions and outcomes in order to better inform their planning.
- Managers and governors see continuous professional development as a priority for the staff. Staff really value this, and comment on how they can now more easily access training and how the headteacher proactively supports them in this. Teaching is strong across the Nursery. The staff think hard about their practice and show how they can improve their performance in feedback from regular observations of them at work.
- The clear majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, are pleased with the Nursery and what it offers their children. Those parents that the inspector spoke to said, 'The nursery feels like home. Teachers pay attention to what you tell them about your child. They make rapid progress here. There are lots of ways to get involved. The stay and play means you get to see how your children learn and get ideas on how to help them at home.'
- The curriculum is full of stimulating opportunities. The Nursery is very successful at widening the experiences of children, for example in visits to the theatre or the library, train journeys to visit the museum, working outdoors in the woodland area, cooking marshmallows on an open fire, building shelters, observing the wildlife and growing fruit and vegetables.
- Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects of learning are strongly promoted through the varied curriculum. Children learn about British values and what it is like to be a part of their local and national communities. This is achieved often through the celebration of festivals from a range of cultures, but also through a rich variety of

resources within the learning environment, such as using cooking implements from other countries in the water area. Children are taught to resolve any differences for themselves without too much resort to adults and so they learn about difference, respect and tolerance.

## **Governance of the school**

- The new governing body are passionate about the school. They come from varied backgrounds and have a good balance of skills to hold the school to account. They have undertaken an internal audit, and have commissioned an external review to further enhance and improve the governance of the Nursery.
- They have a very accurate view of the Nursery's performance. The headteacher presents data and reports regularly in a very accessible format meaning governors can easily analyse and use the information as a basis to challenge. They have already identified that boys are not making as rapid progress as girls. They know that some of the outcomes and targets in the Nursery development plan need to be sharper, so that they can monitor more effectively against them.
- They understand how the early years pupil premium is spent and the excellent impact this is having on those children who are eligible for support through this funding. They are also aware of the strong progress of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Governors take external advice when setting the headteacher's performance management targets and regularly review progress against these. They receive anonymised information regarding other members of staff and agree any pay rises with the headteacher.
- Governors are clear about their role and they ensure that their statutory duties are met.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding policies are up to date, that checks are carried out on the suitability of staff to work with children and that the record of these checks is regularly audited. Governors undertake regular training themselves and they ensure that staff are fully trained and know the correct procedures to follow. They also routinely monitor staff meeting minutes to ensure that safeguarding is always discussed and remains a priority.
- The headteacher has ensured that staff are clear about how to identify pupils who may be at risk from abuse. This includes regular training on radicalisation or abuse that occurs online. Staff understand what to do if they have a concern and follow the school procedures correctly. Leaders seek guidance and support from external agencies where necessary. This means that vulnerable pupils quickly receive the help and protection they need. The files and paperwork to support these children is held securely and the history and evidence is clear. The headteacher is relentless in ensuring that these vulnerable children are safe and their families are supported.

- Children are taught effectively how to keep themselves safe. When out and about in the community they practise road safety, and when in the Nursery they are taught how to climb safely and take turns with equipment. They know the reasons to have sensible footwear on their feet where the ground may be slippery, and know how to use knives correctly when whittling sticks in the outdoors.
- Parents talk about how good the Nursery staff are at prioritising the well-being of the children, for example by staff staying with the children as they move from the two-year-old setting into the three-year-old setting, and by making sure the flour used in baking is gluten free so that all children can take part without fear of allergic reactions.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Interactions between staff and children are good. Staff model language well in all activities describing and commentating on what children are doing. They use the correct terminology when describing characters while sharing a story indoors, or increasing the angle of a water pipe outdoors to increase the flow, so developing the children's understanding and vocabulary.
- Some staff are extremely skilful in how they pose challenging, open questions to the most able children. This makes them think about and review their work and critically assess their learning. For example, when painting daffodils in the art area, children are asked to look at their paintings and identify how they could improve them. However, this is not consistently practised across all areas of the Nursery and by all staff, which means the most able do not progress as rapidly as they might.
- The recently introduced assessment and tracking systems are becoming effective in supporting accurate judgements by the staff as to where children are in their development and what is needed next in their learning. The new ways of planning for individual children are beginning to show some positive impact on the amount of progress they make.
- Interventions are used extremely well to enable those who start to fall behind to quickly catch up. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by staff so that they too can access all the opportunities the Nursery offers, alongside their friends. Advice and guidance from other professionals is eagerly adopted by staff to ensure that these children progress well towards their individual targets.
- Disadvantaged children are known to all the staff. The good work staff do with these children, particularly in the outdoor woodland area, has really made a significant impact on their progress. They are making huge gains in their development and are catching up with the rest of the children.
- Staff have developed the environment to enable easy access to all aspects of the curriculum and effectively support independent learning. They have further enhanced opportunities for literacy both outdoors and inside. Reading books are taken home every night, and regular trips out to the local library to borrow books mean children are developing a real love of reading. This can be seen in the way children sit for long periods on the comfortable cushions outdoors 'reading' and 're-reading' their favourite stories.

- Phonics is taught well. Children can identify initial sounds and are beginning to read and write simple words correctly.
- Mathematics is embedded across the school with staff taking every opportunity to reinforce understanding of numbers, for example when searching in the large outdoor sandpit for objects or hunting for numbers and making number chains in the 'Secret Garden'.
- Staff share accurate information with parents about their child's progress. Positive relationships with parents are a strength of the school. There are many opportunities for parental involvement including 'stay and play' sessions, visits to local attractions and more formal parent evenings. Parents say the 'stay and play' sessions and the record of each child's learning and progress known as 'learning journals' really help them to know how to support their children's learning at home.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote children's personal development and welfare is good.
- Most children are consistently engaged in their learning. Even the youngest children know the routines to follow, which makes them feel secure, and develops their confidence as learners. This also means that they settle swiftly into school, which is particularly noticeable in the two-year-old provision. Parents say that the way the school welcomes them and their children is particularly effective.
- The youngest children are taught successfully how to play together, developing sharing skills, and an understanding of the needs of others. For example, when playing in the soil tray, they help each other to add water and happily share the resources provided, passing the watering can between them.
- Children are taught to keep themselves safe when taking risks. For example, they support each other when playing on the climbing frame, discussing how to come down safely, and directing each other onto each step. When toasting marshmallows on an open fire in the woodland area, they know how to behave sensibly and safely.
- Children understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and the importance of personal hygiene. The younger children talk about how eating the right food helps you to grow strong, and that you need to wash your hands before you eat, 'because they are mucky!'

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The majority of children behave well. They have good manners and listen intently to each other in discussions. They respond well to instructions and requests from staff. They are effectively taught and supported to resolve any minor disagreements themselves without immediately and unnecessarily resorting to adults.
- Learning is rarely disrupted by poor behaviour, although at times some boys are not

fully engaged because the tasks on offer do not interest them, so they do not make as much progress as others.

- Attendance is good because children enjoy coming to school and parents value what the school is offering their children. If any child is unexpectedly absent, the Nursery staff make contact with parents at the soonest opportunity. If there are any difficulties, staff work with the family and other professionals to support the child back into school as soon as possible. In some cases, staff will go out into the children's homes to teach them, so any negative impact on learning is as little as possible.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- A growing proportion of children enter Aclet Close Nursery with skills and abilities typical for their age. All children make at least expected progress during their time in Nursery and most leave in line with what is typical for their age. However, not enough of the most able children make more than expected progress and leave the Nursery with skills and knowledge above what is typical for children of this age. This is because they are not consistently challenged through the activities on offer to deepen their thinking.
- All children, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged, and those who are most able, make at least expected progress from their varying starting points. Children are therefore well prepared for their next school.
- Boys are beginning to catch up with the girls in terms of progress and attainment. However, boys are not making as good progress as girls because the learning environment does not sufficiently engage them. This means there are a few occasions where boys are not productively engaged in purposeful play, thus slowing their progress.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities demonstrate good progress and are integrated well into the life of the Nursery. The one-to-one interventions are correctly focused on their individual needs, meaning they achieve their individual targets. These are set with the effective support of families and other professionals.
- Children who are disadvantaged make rapid progress from their individual starting points and any gaps in their attainment compared with other children are soon closed. This is because the additional funding provided by the government is targeted very appropriately to give these children the additional support they need. The extra time in the woodland area, alongside the additional group work, positively affects outcomes for these children.
- Transition arrangements are effective. Parents state children settle swiftly into their new school because of the good grounding they have received at the Nursery. Parents appreciate the time taken by staff to support their children and how this means children are confident to move on to the next setting.

## School details

Unique reference number	113972
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10024082

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Celia Dixon
Headteacher	Lisa Jenkins
Telephone number	01388 603006
Website	<a href="http://www.acletclose.durham.sch.uk">www.acletclose.durham.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:acletclose@durhamlearning.net">acletclose@durhamlearning.net</a>
Date of previous inspection	4–5 February 2014

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Aclet Close Nursery is a smaller than average-sized nursery school.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher, and most of the governing body are new since the last inspection.
- The vast majority of children are White British.
- The proportion of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, as is the proportion of children who are disadvantaged.
- Since the last inspection, the Nursery now delivers provision for two-year-olds.



## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in several sessions both indoors and outdoors, two of which were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with leaders, other staff, a representative of the local authority and the chair and members of the governing body.
- The Parent View online survey responses from nine parents were considered together with the views of those parents who spoke to the inspector during the school day.
- Ten responses from the staff survey were also taken account of together with the views of staff who spoke with the inspector during the day.
- A range of information supplied by the Nursery was scrutinised, including the school's own analysis about how well children are doing, planning documents and children's work. The inspector also looked at the school development plan, checks on the quality of teaching, records relating to attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school website.

## Inspection team

Geoff Dorrity, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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