

Helen Gibson Nursery School

North Lane, East Boldon, Tyne and Wear NE36 0DL

Inspection dates

16–17 May 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher, leaders and governors are aspirational for the children, their parents, the staff and the school. They constantly seek the highest-quality provision for the children.
- Since the headteacher's appointment, the nursery has gone from strength to strength. Her supportive approach means she gets the best out of everyone in the nursery community.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are highly effective. Most children make rapid progress, and the most able are consistently stretched to achieve their best.
- Children want to come to nursery because staff make learning fun in a stimulating environment such as the extensive outdoor area. Staff know the children exceedingly well, skilfully plan activities they know will engage them in learning, and support their progress.
- The nursery provides exceptional support for those children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensuring that these children progress as rapidly as all children.
- The care and welfare of the children and their families is of the utmost priority. Children are nurtured from the moment they arrive. Parents state that staff care for their children as much as they do, and that staff feel like part of their extended family.
- Children's behaviour is of the highest standard. Staff have high aspirations and children know this. Children learn the routines very quickly. They feel extremely safe, cooperate well and do not waste a moment of their time in nursery.
- Children are exceptionally well prepared for life in modern Britain. This highly inclusive school means they are meeting and working with children from many diverse backgrounds.
- Partnership with parents is exemplary. Parents state how they feel included in the life of the nursery, and with their children's learning.
- Governors bring a wide range of skills and knowledge to their role in the nursery. They are very effective in knowing when to challenge and when to support to ensure that the nursery continues to progress.
- The role of subject coordination has been introduced. This now needs embedding and developing further to ensure that middle managers know precisely how well their specialism is being delivered across the nursery.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the role of middle managers in the nursery regarding specialist areas to increase even further the progress and attainment of all children across all areas of learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher's high aspirations for the nursery have ensured that the many strengths identified in the previous inspection have been maintained, and further improvements made. Her wide experience and thorough knowledge of how children learn is clear to see and shared with the staff. As one parent put it, 'She knows her stuff!'
- Staff with responsibility for key groups of children meet daily to reflect on the children's learning. They discuss children's progress and identify support for any child who is at risk of falling slightly behind. They plan to achieve this by following the interests of each child. Additional support is also provided for the most able children to ensure that they make rapid progress.
- Through extensive monitoring, the headteacher makes sure that children benefit from a broad and engaging curriculum of well-planned, exciting activities which cover all the required areas of learning. The extensive programme of enrichment activities such as trips to places of interest, forest school, 'Sharing Week' with family members bringing their talents in to share with the children, visitors to the nursery, or environmental walks in the local area, are all planned to enhance children's outcomes.
- Teamwork is particularly strong. Staff work well together and support each other. They work collaboratively to plan for every child. This ensures that all children are ready for the next stage in their education. However, the curriculum coordinator role that has been introduced now needs embedding and developing further to better impact on the already outstanding outcomes for children.
- Extremely successful partnership arrangements with the local infant school and other nurseries in the area have enabled the nursery to robustly monitor its assessment judgements to ensure that they are accurate.
- Leaders' regular and rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and learning lead to impressive outcomes. Staff are always looking to increase their knowledge for the children and know that any areas identified for improvement will be followed up, and high-quality support offered.
- Staff morale is high because they know that the headteacher will support them. They have extensive opportunities for career development through carefully thought-out packages of support and training. This is clearly linked through their focused and well-targeted appraisals, meaning there is an ethos of continuous improvement running throughout the school.
- Nursery leaders ensure that additional funding, for the very few children in receipt of early years pupil premium and those eligible for two-year-old funding, is used specifically to support the learning and development of these children. The rapid progress by both these groups of children demonstrates that this money is spent wisely and is focused on meeting their individual needs.
- At the last inspection, the nursery was asked to increase the opportunities for learning outdoors to extend children's knowledge through exploration and investigation and to offer even more challenges to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills. This

has been fully implemented. Aably led by the headteacher, the whole community of staff, governors, parents and children worked together to develop a high-quality outdoor area based on a theme of 'Earth, Wind and Fire'.

- Opportunities for exploration and investigation abound, for example in the bug hotels and wildlife areas, in the use of metal detectors in the outdoor environment to identify metal and non-metal objects, or through group work around the fire pit. Through skilful questioning, staff consistently set real-life challenges to children to extend their thinking and problem-solving skills. For instance, in discussing footwear for dancing, children decide which are the best and staff ask them further to identify why certain types are not appropriate.
- The children's welfare is of primary concern. Transitions from home are exceptionally well managed, meaning children settle quickly and confidently. The care shown by the staff is exemplary. Parents know their children are safe and loved. They agree that staff 'care as much as we do'.
- The nursery delivers outstanding support and guidance for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children and their families benefit from the high level of training given to all staff so they can respond to the individual children's needs, and those of their families.
- Children are exceptionally well prepared for life in modern Britain. This highly inclusive school means they are meeting and working with children from many diverse backgrounds. Teaching ensures that children happily accept each other's differences, and learn about other cultures through effective partnerships.
- Children learn about democracy through making choices and voting. They know their voice is heard through improvements to the nursery that are based directly on their suggestions, for example having whole fruit for snacks and not having it prepared for them.
- The exemplary relationship with parents is the basis for much of the school's success. Every parent acknowledges the exceptional involvement they are able to have with their children's learning, development and assessment. This is because the nursery invests time and energy in ensuring that all parents have every opportunity to develop their understanding of how their children learn. From workshops and parent chats, to learning journals, records of children's work, and home challenges, the nursery has developed many ways of effectively engaging parents.

Governance of the school

- Governors work well with the school. They bring a wide range of skills and fulfil their role efficiently and effectively. They monitor the nursery's performance effectively and provide leaders with a good balance of support and challenge. They ask probing questions on the progress that children make based on their analysis of data.
- Governors know the school well through regular visits where they follow their individual responsibilities and work alongside the coordinators. This helps them in developing well-targeted improvement plans. They hold leaders to account and oversee a robust system of managing performance. They use the skills of the school improvement officer from the local authority to help them when setting stretching targets for the

headteacher.

- Governors monitor the spend of additional funding, including the early years pupil premium and funding for two-year-olds, to ensure that it makes a positive difference for children. They place a high priority on making sure parents are involved in their children's learning and in the life of the nursery.
- Governors receive relevant training from the local authority. They take their safeguarding responsibilities extremely seriously and have put in place robust monitoring and oversight arrangements to ensure that requirements are met and followed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Children's well-being and safety are of the highest priority for the nursery. Before they start to work with children in the nursery, in any capacity, all adults are rigorously checked and relevant references are taken up.
- Staff constantly update their training and knowledge of safeguarding. There are regular discussions in staff meetings, and the headteacher questions staff to ensure that everyone has a thorough knowledge of practices and procedures. In discussions during the inspection, staff could demonstrate their excellent understanding of procedures and the importance of record-keeping.
- The effective partnerships built between the nursery, local schools, social care, the police and the children's centre mean that children and their families can swiftly access services they may need to keep them safe.
- Paperwork maintained by the nursery is precise, clear and detailed. A summary of the information held is kept up to date to enable the swift retrieval of information if required.
- The policies and procedures for well-being and safeguarding for younger children are in place, and are robustly monitored by the nursery, governors and local authority to ensure that they are up to date and effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- The quality of teaching is highly effective in both two- and three-year-olds' provision. The calm and caring staff are highly knowledgeable about how young children learn and use this effectively in practice. They plan activities based on their knowledge of the children's interests and so promote the children's enjoyment in learning. Consequently, children readily explore the stimulating activities indoors and outside, and show high levels of engagement.
- Staff are exceptionally skilled at asking questions to extend children's critical thinking and enable exploration and experimentation. For example, when the two-year-olds are building a pipe run down the slope outside, the children are asked to suggest how it can be improved. All contributions are valued and tested to find out which will work. The children work together to successfully complete the activity. At the end of the

session one child exclaimed, 'We make a good team!', demonstrating how effectively children are taught even as two-year-olds to understand the importance of working together to solve a problem.

- Staff make activities fun, which means children enjoy learning and remain on task for extended periods of time. During the inspection, older children used the stimulus of a story to set about exploring the properties of metal using a detector and magnets. Subsequently they took on different team roles, and worked under each other's direction, to rebuild a metal robot.
- The high-quality learning environment and resources are used purposefully to develop skills. When children are observing tadpoles, staff ask questions, but also ensure that resources such as magnifiers and non-fiction books are available to further develop knowledge, understanding and independent learning.
- Staff are constantly alert to learning opportunities. For instance, as they ran outside, the youngest children noticed that it was windy. Streamers were swiftly provided and learning was stimulated by questions such as, 'I wonder what will happen if we run quickly across the hill?' Children were instantly engaged in their learning for a prolonged period and developed their observation and critical thinking skills.
- There is an excellent awareness of when to step back to let children apply their learning. For example, after rolling pipes down the hill, children were observed investigating and experimenting with other cylinder shapes and applying the learned principle to these objects.
- Staff make maximum use of learning time and every opportunity is used to develop reading, writing and mathematical skills. For example, staff frequently provide chances for children to count, sort, order, make marks and enjoy books, and so no learning time is wasted. There are constant discussions between staff and children. Staff model use of language extremely well, thus enhancing and developing children's communication skills.
- Staff use observations and accurate assessments of achievement when discussing individual children in a daily reflective session, meaning their planning captures children's interest and secures their progress from their varying starting points. This ensures that all groups do extremely well, and that no child falls behind in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Children are very confident. They readily talk with adults, and are respectful of others. Their confidence shines through when they say things like, 'I've got something very important to do in the other room,' having been asked to join in a whole-group activity. They know they have the right to hold their opinion.
- They are aware of themselves and others. They willingly share resources and equipment, and share their learning, such as, when experimenting with mixing colour in the water tray, one child demonstrated their findings to another and showed them

how they had achieved the result.

- Children's mental well-being is a high priority for the nursery. Every day during group time they are asked how they feel, and are given the time and space to explore their feelings and respond to the question in a meaningful way.
- Children can set their own challenge. In the park, they are asked whether they feel they can balance along the beam or whether they want support. They know how to play safely outdoors, for example waiting patiently to take turns on the slide.
- Children are effectively taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, in peer massage they are taught that they have the right to say 'no'. In whole-group sessions, they have discussions based on what they would do given different scenarios.
- Children learn about diversity because, through excellent provision, the school actively encourages them to understand each other's differences. Parents appreciate this immensely.
- Transition from home to the nursery is excellent. Children and parents visit the term before the children begin, and staff visit the family home, where the exceptional partnership with parents starts. All needs are identified early, and any specialist training required for staff is put in place immediately to ensure the inclusion and welfare of the child.
- Equally effective is the transition from nursery to school, where assessments and records and planning are passed on to ensure that no learning is lost between settings.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Children are polite and well-mannered around the nursery. They enjoy taking on responsibilities such as writing and delivering messages on behalf of one staff member to another, and are frequently given the role of leading learning. They learn how to take turns. For example, they wait until the slide is clear, ensuring others' safety, or wait patiently whilst the sand timer runs out before they work on the floormats.
- Children demonstrate excellent learning behaviours. All adults in the nursery have high expectations and the children consistently live up to these. Children know routines well. They follow instructions precisely, and quickly respond to any requests from adults. They respond to other children's direction when they are given a team role other than the leader. Any low-level disruption is extremely rare and effectively managed ensuring that no learning opportunities are lost.
- There are no forms of bullying present in the school. However, due to the excellent teaching, because children are confident and know how to just say 'no', or 'Stop! I don't like that,' then they are well equipped to stop any bullying should it ever happen.
- Children enjoy coming to nursery because it is stimulating and meets their needs. Parents are very confident and have excellent relationships with the staff which the children see and reflect. Therefore, levels of unauthorised absence are exceptionally low.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Most children make rapid progress from different starting points and across all areas of learning. This rate of progress is accelerating year-on-year. Children who left the nursery in the summer of 2015 and 2016 reached attainment typically expected for their age or better in all areas of learning, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- All groups of children make equally strong progress and close the gaps on their peers nationally. The nursery supports children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities very effectively. Staff liaise with other agencies to ensure that the children and their families get the full range of help available to them. The targets and plans are written in partnership with parents, enabling them to continue the same work at home.
- Insightful analysis of data and high-quality daily reflection identify any gaps in children's skills and knowledge, or slowing in their progress. This is swiftly and robustly addressed through individual or group interventions to ensure that children quickly get back on track.
- School use the early years pupil premium effectively and this group of pupils make even more rapid progress than their peers, particularly in speaking, listening and personal social and emotional development, meaning any gaps are closing or have closed.
- The teaching of reading and phonics is a strength of the school. The most able are effectively stretched, and are reading fluently using their skills to decode both simple and more complex words. They have an excellent understanding of how punctuation works, and how it adds meaning to sentences.
- Children also use their phonic knowledge in writing simple sentences such as when making invitations to a party.
- All children are very well prepared for their next stage of learning. Feedback from schools where children attend in the Reception class is very positive. The nursery is highly regarded in the community.

School details

Unique reference number	108663
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10002678

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	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eileen Thompson
Headteacher	Jennifer Parker
Telephone number	0191 519 6846
Website	http://helengibsonnursery.co.uk/
Email address	info@helengibsonnursery.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 March 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized nursery school.
- 'The Lodge' admits children aged two and three years old. The Nursery class admits children aged three to five years old. Morning and afternoon sessions are delivered flexibly.
- The school established provision for two-year-olds ('The Lodge') in September 2015. All these children are eligible for government funding.
- Very few children are eligible for the early years pupil premium.
- There are very few children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The nursery offers breakfast and after-school clubs, for children aged three to 11.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its

website.

Information about this inspection

- Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) has the discretionary power to inspect any school in England under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection began as a one-day, short section 8 inspection undertaken by one of Ofsted's Inspectors (OI). During the first day, the OI converted the inspection to a full section 5 inspection. The OI returned the following day to complete the inspection.
- The headteacher accompanied the inspector to observe teaching and learning in action in 'The Lodge' and the nursery. They observed activities led by teachers and those that children chose for themselves both indoors and outside. Morning and afternoon sessions were seen.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and middle managers, five members of the governing body including the chair, eight parents and the school improvement officer.
- The inspector considered a wide range of information that the school provides for parents.
- The views of 36 parents who responded to Parent View and all members of staff who completed the staff questionnaire were considered.
- The inspector looked at a range of the school's documentation, including policies and record-keeping for safeguarding children.
- The single central record of statutory suitability vetting carried out on all staff, volunteers and governors was checked.
- The school's information about how well it is performing and its plans for future improvements were evaluated.
- Minutes of the governing body's meetings were examined.
- A range of information about past and current children's achievement was evaluated, including information about disadvantaged children and other vulnerable groups.

Inspection team

Geoff Dorrity, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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