

Highfield Nursery School

Finedon Road, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 4AB

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher has cultivated an effective, cohesive team. Together, they are quickly improving the quality of education that children receive.
- The executive headteacher, ably assisted by senior leaders, is determined and committed to ensuring that every child achieves their very best.
- Leaders have decisive plans for further improvement. They provide staff with a range of high-quality training and professional development. Staff morale is high.
- Parents and carers agree that the school is a safe and happy place for their children to learn. They value the school's 'family-centred' approach.
- Leaders ensure that the early years pupil premium funding for disadvantaged children is used effectively. Disadvantaged children make more progress and attain higher standards in all areas of learning than other children.
- The provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Children are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They are respectful, tolerant and caring.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and dynamic. Staff plan exciting activities that meet the needs and interests of most children.
- Leaders ensure that the safety and well-being of children are paramount. Leaders and staff act quickly to ensure that children at risk of harm are kept safe and receive timely support.
- Staff use questioning effectively to develop children's ideas or to follow their interests and fascinations.
- Staff have excellent relationships with children. Children are valued as individuals.
- Children are inquisitive and curious learners. They enjoy being at school and have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning.
- The behaviour of children is outstanding.
- Children make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development, physical development, and communication and language.
- Governors know the school well. However, they do not receive enough information from leaders about the progress children make in the specific areas of learning to hold leaders to account effectively.
- Staff expectations of what children can achieve in writing are not always high enough. Some children, particularly the most able, could achieve more.
- Attainment is improving, but not all children leave school with skills typical for their age in literacy and numeracy.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that governors have an accurate view of the progress children make in the specific areas of learning from their starting points, so they can hold leaders to account effectively for the actions they undertake to improve children's outcomes.
- Improve the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that staff provide regular opportunities for children, particularly the most able, to use the phonic knowledge they have learned in mark-making activities, so that more children are able to hear initial sounds in words and write these as letters.
- Improve outcomes by ensuring that more children leave the school with skills expected for their age in the specific areas of learning, including literacy and numeracy, so that they are well prepared for the next stage of education.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher and her senior leadership team lead the school by example. They are determined and committed to ensuring that every child achieves their very best while developing the skills needed to be caring, tolerant and active citizens. As one leader stated: 'Every child at Highfield is valued and every child is unique.'
- Parents value the school highly. They recognise the steps that leaders have taken to make the school inclusive, welcoming and 'family-centred'. One parent said: 'The school has supported me, my family and my daughter. She has grown in confidence and loves coming to school every day.'
- Leaders have made significant improvements to the school since the last inspection. They have successfully used research to reflect upon, discuss and improve the quality of teaching and learning. For example, digitally recorded 'peer lesson studies' are used to analyse strengths and weaknesses in teaching and 'The Voice of the Child' programme is ensuring that leaders gather children's views about how best to improve their learning.
- Leaders know the school well. They are quick to identify areas of practice that they want to improve. They put effective and decisive plans in place to tackle these areas and provide staff with a range of high-quality training and professional development.
- Leaders have cultivated an effective staff team. Leaders and staff meet regularly to discuss development needs and to ensure that staff receive sufficient support to fulfil their roles. Staff say they feel well supported by leaders and that morale is high.
- Senior leaders are developing effective systems to build the leadership skills of other staff. For example, through performance management procedures 'nursery officers' are given the opportunity to lead specific areas of learning, such as understanding the world and literacy. These staff are enthusiastic and are already having a positive impact upon improving the quality of provision in their area of responsibility.
- Leaders ensure that the early years pupil premium funding for disadvantaged children is used effectively. Leaders and governors have quickly addressed this area for improvement from the last inspection. They now closely monitor the impact of this spending on children's outcomes. For example, leaders know that funding used to provide one-to-one family support work, nurture groups and extension groups for the most able disadvantaged children have resulted in these children making more progress and attaining higher standards in all areas of learning than other children.
- The leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong. Leaders quickly identify children who require additional support and make timely referrals to a range of specialists, including speech and language therapists, community paediatricians and educational psychologists. Leaders ensure that children with SEND receive tailored support, including language development groups, 'in-house' speech and language therapy sessions and personalised equipment so that children with complex SEND can access the curriculum alongside their peers.
- The provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Leaders ensure that children have a wide range of opportunities

to learn about the different people in the local community. For example, children learn about Diwali and make visits to the local Hindu temple. They visit the local care home on a regular basis to sing songs to residents and show them their learning. Children develop an age-appropriate understanding of fundamental British values and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- The curriculum is broad, balanced and dynamic. Leaders and staff work hard to ensure that the curriculum is exciting and engaging. They regularly meet to discuss children's needs and interests and to reflect upon how the curriculum is designed to meet these. As one parent said: 'Staff plan exciting activities which meet their needs and entice them to play and learn.'
- Leaders ensure that accurate and detailed assessments of children are completed in personal, social and emotional development, physical development, and communication and language, when they start school. However, the assessments undertaken in other areas, such as literacy and numeracy, do not take place until much later in the school year. Leaders and governors do not always know the rates of progress children make in these areas until the end of the summer term. Because of this, they cannot use this information to monitor effectively the impact of actions taken to improve children's outcomes in the school's plans for improvement throughout the year.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They make regular visits to the school to check on the impact of leaders' actions in improving the quality of teaching and learning, and of safeguarding. Leaders value the high levels of support that the governing body offers.
- Since the last inspection, governors have developed a precise and accurate understanding of how the early years pupil premium funding for disadvantaged children is used and the impact it has. They receive detailed reports from the executive headteacher and ensure that the link governor for this area regularly meets with leaders to ask challenging questions to hold them effectively to account for this funding.
- The governing body is reflective. It regularly reviews its effectiveness and audits individual governors' skills. This information is used to match governors carefully to key roles and responsibilities within the school development plan.
- The governing body fulfils all its statutory safeguarding duties. All governors receive comprehensive safeguarding training when they begin their role. They receive regular updates from leaders about how they keep children safe from harm. They conduct thorough audits of the school's safeguarding arrangements, including recruitment and vetting procedures. Minutes of the governing body show that governors are skilled in holding leaders to account in this area.
- Governors do not have a thorough knowledge of how well children perform throughout the year. They do not receive enough information from leaders about the progress children make in the specific areas of learning. Because of this, they cannot effectively hold leaders to account for children's achievement or for the impact of actions to improve this.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that the safety and well-being of children are paramount. Leaders keep detailed records of incidents and respond promptly to concerns that staff raise about the safety of children. Together with the senior family support worker, they act quickly to ensure that children at risk of harm receive timely support and intervention from external agencies. They contribute effectively to action plans for children on the child protection register or for children looked after.
- Leaders recognise that there are occasions when support cannot be provided by other services. In these instances, they have worked hard to provide 'in-house' support for children and families. The senior family support worker is an excellent asset to the school. She provides a range of support, including, home visits, one-to-one parenting sessions, therapy sessions, and drop-in sessions to discuss housing or attendance.
- Leaders ensure that staff are well trained and vigilant. Staff receive annual safeguarding training, termly updates and paediatric first-aid training. Consequently, staff are aware of the signs of abuse; they are quick to spot changes in children's behaviour and/or attendance and act swiftly to report these concerns to leaders. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are kept safe in the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Staff develop excellent relationships with children. They know children well and work hard to plan activities that meet most children's needs and interests. As a result, children are keen to learn and engage quickly in activities. As one parent said: 'The nursery staff give genuine care and support to the children.'
- Staff ensure that there are many opportunities for children to learn through play. Staff are skilled at infusing the provision with opportunities to develop children's personal, social, and emotional development and communication and language skills. For example, children were seen sharing and taking turns while making porridge in the home corner, while recalling key phrases from the story of Goldilocks and the three bears such as, 'Who's been sleeping in my bed?'
- Staff have high expectations of what children can achieve in most areas of learning. For example, children were seen building towers in the construction area. Staff were quick to move learning on by asking children to measure the towers using their hands and by counting how many 'hands tall' the towers were. Staff encouraged children to find the number from a given selection and to record this number.
- Staff use questioning effectively. They ask thoughtful questions which encourage children to think carefully. For example, when acting out parts of the story of Goldilocks and the three bears, children were asked, 'Who do you think would wear this item of clothing and why?'
- Staff are highly skilled in following children's interests and fascinations. They build learning into every day occurrences. For example, one child was enjoying being outside in the rain. The teacher quickly spotted he was captivated by raindrops falling from the sail in the playground. She quickly spotted this and developed the child's learning by

counting the raindrops with him and asking questions such as: 'Where do you think the rain comes from?'

- The outdoors is used effectively to develop children's skills across the curriculum. Staff plan a wide range of outdoor activities, such as large-scale construction, bike riding, kite flying and painting. These activities help to promote further children's physical development and understanding of the world.
- Staff ensure that what they teach is broad and enriching. They provide activities that develop the 'image of the child' as defined by the school's vision. For example, children were seen being 'curious' and 'inquisitive' as they examined frog spawn in the outside area. They read books with staff and asked interesting questions about how tadpoles change as they grow into frogs. Staff support children's thinking well, through skilful modelling of their own thinking.
- Group times are used effectively. Staff use these times to identify and address gaps in children's learning and development. For example, children in the two- and three-year provision were observed singing 'Old MacDonald had a Farm' in a small group. This helped to develop children's rhythm and articulation, while building children's vocabulary and knowledge of farm animals.
- Staff develop children's love of reading throughout the school. They share books with children and regularly read stories at group times. Staff use these opportunities to develop children's language and vocabulary, particularly for those children who have English as an additional language. Children enjoy borrowing books from the 'home-school' library.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. However, not all staff encourage children to listen for sounds in the environment or in the words they use during their learning and play. Consequently, some children, particularly the most able four-year olds, find it difficult to hear and identify the initial sounds in simple words, including their own names.
- Staff ensure that there are many opportunities for children to make marks and draw throughout the provision. For example, children make lines and shapes while using chalks or paints, or by writing in the sand with their finger. Children ascribe meaning to the marks they make. However, the expectation of what some children can achieve, particularly the most able, is not always high enough. Some staff do not spot when children are ready to begin writing recognisable letters and they do not model how to do this. As a result, some children, especially the most able four-year olds, cannot write recognisable letters, including ones in their own names.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote children's personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Children enjoy being in the school and have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. They relish the opportunity to learn, explore and investigate through talk and play. As one parent said: 'My child loves this nursery and comes home everyday with something

new to tell me.'

- Parents say that the children are valued as individuals. Leaders ensure that children are fully involved in making choices about their own learning. As one parent said, 'Nursery gives my child a voice in their education.'
- Children are friendly, thoughtful and kind. They work and play together harmoniously. Children show particularly high levels of care for children with SEND, often helping them fetch resources or to complete tasks.
- Children show high levels of resilience and perseverance in their learning. For example, one boy asked an adult for help putting on his coat. The adult sensitively encouraged him to 'have a go'. Despite making several failed attempts, he finally managed to get his coat on and do the zip up. Afterwards, he jumped for joy and shouted, 'I did it!'
- Children are proud of their work. They are keen to show staff and visitors their learning and are confident to speak to them about their achievements. They listen well to other children and enjoy celebrating their successes.
- Children are taught about how to be responsible from an early age. Children as young as two are encouraged to tidy and clean the resources they use. For example, children were seen washing foam bricks that had been covered in shaving foam, while they cheerfully sang: 'This is the way we wash the bricks, wash the bricks, wash the bricks.'
- Children show high levels of respect and tolerance for each other. Leaders and staff use 'curriculum constants' to instil key messages such as 'magical me', which encourages children to value differences and to understand what makes everyone special.
- Children have an excellent understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles. Children sit around the snack table, talking to each other and sharing snacks, such as pear and cucumber. They pour each other drinks and chat about which foods are 'good for you'. Staff ensure that children have a vast range of activities to exercise and promote their physical development, such as playing football, climbing, jumping and cycling.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is outstanding.
- Staff ensure that routines are well established and that the school's behaviour policy is consistently implemented. Staff spend considerable time developing and modelling the personal, social and emotional skills that children need. Because of this, children's behaviour and conduct are exemplary.
- Leaders and staff provide outstanding support for children who display 'unwanted behaviours'. On the rare occasions when this happens, the senior family support worker is quick to provide bespoke support to the child and family, including home visits to model behaviour strategies for parents and play-based therapies for children.
- The overwhelming majority of parents agree that children behave well in the school and that there is no bullying.
- Leaders promote the importance of good attendance effectively. They hold regular coffee mornings and parent workshops around attendance. Leaders are quick to identify children who do not attend school regularly enough and put the necessary

support in place. For example, referrals for Early Help Assessments and 'Team Around the Family' meetings are used to improve these children's attendance. Consequently, most children attend school regularly and very few are persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Current records of children's learning in personal, social and emotional development, physical development, and communication and language show that children, including children with SEND and those who have English as an additional language, make excellent progress from their starting points. Most children leave the school with skills typically expected for their age in these areas of learning.
- Current records of children's learning in the specific areas of learning, with the exception of writing, show that children, including children with SEND and those who have English as an additional language, make good progress from their starting points.
- Disadvantaged children make strong progress in all areas of learning. Effective use of early years pupils premium funding for disadvantaged children ensures that more of these children leave the school with skills typically expected or above for their age compared with other children in the school.
- Children who begin the school at two years old and leave at four years old make better progress than those who start school aged three. High-quality teaching and learning in the two- and three-year-old provision ensure that many children leave this class with skills typically expected for their age and ready for the next stage of education in the three- and four-year-old provision.
- Although attainment is improving over time, a number of children leave school with skills below that expected for their age in the specific areas of learning, including, literacy and numeracy. Some of these children are not fully prepared for the next stage of education.
- Evidence from current records of children's learning shows that some children, including the most able, do not make the progress they are capable of in writing. Leaders do not ensure that staff have high enough expectations of what children can achieve. Consequently, some of these children leave school not able to hear the initial sounds in words and cannot write the sounds they hear as recognisable letters.

School details

Unique reference number	121784
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10057664

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	2 to 4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cath Draper
Executive Headteacher	Lyndsey Barnett
Telephone number	01933 225039
Website	http://wellingboroughnurseryschoolsederation.co.uk/highfield-nursery-school/
Email address	head@highfield-nur.northants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3-4 October 2013

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized nursery school.
- The school became part of the Wellingborough Federation of Nursery Schools in September 2015.
- The headteacher of Croyland Nursery and Day Nursery became the headteacher of the school in September 2014 and now works as the executive headteacher across both schools. The schools share one governing body.
- There have been significant changes to staffing since the last inspection, with many key leadership roles now shared across the federation.
- The proportion of children with SEND is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged children is below average but is increasing over time.
- The proportions of children from ethnic minority backgrounds and of children who have

English as an additional language are well above those seen nationally.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in both classes and at group times. Inspectors met with a group of children to talk about their learning and experiences in the school. He scrutinised records of children's learning with leaders.
- The inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, the coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND, the assistant headteacher, the senior family support worker and groups of staff. He had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority and held a meeting with three members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of governors.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour, children's outcomes and attendance, and records of the school leaders' monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education. The inspector also examined the school leaders' plans for improvement, plans for the use and impact of the additional funding, minutes from meetings of the governing body and information available on the school's website.
- The inspector spoke with parents informally at the start of the day. There were also 17 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Inspectors took account of the 17 responses to the staff survey and the 27 responses to the children's survey.

Inspection team

Steve Varnam, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019