

Inspection of a good school: Hednesford Nursery School

Eskrett Street, Hednesford, Cannock, Staffordshire WS12 1AR

Inspection dates:

22 October 2019

Outcome

Hednesford Nursery School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy school. You can see this by the way children run ahead of their parents and into the school at the beginning of the day. This is because children are keen to start their activities. Children show great interest in learning. For example, they like getting stuck into activities in the mud kitchen. Children really concentrate and are absorbed during art activities. Children are also happy because they feel safe. Staff take great care of the children. Parents really value this and told inspectors about how the staff make the school a very caring place. Children are kind to one another and behave well. Parents also told us how friendly and approachable staff are. One parent, representing the views of others, said of the staff that, 'Nothing is too much trouble for them.'

However, staff's expectations of what children can achieve are not high enough. Staff set activities which are not challenging. Limitations to the curriculum are at the heart of this. Therefore, children do not achieve as well as they can. The quality of education offered by the school is not as good as it was.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Children do not achieve well because the curriculum is not well planned. The curriculum does not allow children to build on what they can already do. Staff do not give children activities that are hard enough to help them learn well. Often, the tasks staff set do not focus on the part of the curriculum they should develop. Staff do not develop children's vocabulary effectively. This is another reason why children do not achieve well.

Children do not achieve well in literacy, particularly in reading. The curriculum does not promote children's interest in reading, or their reading skills, well enough. Although story times happen each day, children's interest in books is not promoted well. Children enjoy activities to develop writing skills such as when writing in foam. However, because the curriculum is not well planned or delivered, staff do not set writing tasks that build well on

previous activities. This holds children's progress back.

Many tasks are interesting to children. Activities cover a broad range of subjects and are presented imaginatively. This is a reason why children enjoy coming to school and behave well. Staff also give children good guidance on how they should behave. They have routines in place to help children feel secure and safe. The curriculum places a clear focus on developing children's personal development. For example, children are learning well about the cultures of people from across the world.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are becoming better supported. The inclusion manager has just started her role at the school. She is providing guidance to staff that helps them to improve the way they support children with SEND. The inclusion manager has now ensured that children with SEND have the necessary plans and provision in place to help improve their learning.

After a period of uncertainty, the school recently joined a local school federation. The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher from the federation have introduced a fresh drive for improvement. Leaders broadly know the school's strengths and areas to improve. However, they do not always express precisely what needs to be done next to secure rapid improvements to the curriculum.

Leaders have made necessary changes to the school's work with sensitivity and have the support of most staff. Staff talk about how leaders have already reduced their workload, for example by refining how children's learning is recorded. Leaders have also ensured that expertise from other settings in the federation is shared with this school. Governors are at an early stage of their oversight of the school. They are starting to make regular checks on the school's work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's work to keep children safe is at the top of everyone's agenda. Safeguarding policies, procedures and checks are thorough and detailed. Staff are well trained. They have a good understanding of the potential dangers children might face. Staff are clear about what to do if they have concerns about a child. Classrooms and the school grounds are safe for the children to use. Children are taught about how to keep safe in the school and outside such as at events like bonfire night. Staff make in-depth checks on children's attendance to ensure that children are kept safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not progressively build on what children already know and can do. Staff are not clear about the sorts of activities they should give children next to deepen their learning. Staff do not have high enough expectations of children's capabilities. This

means that children are not achieving as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum builds up progressively in all areas of learning.

- Staff do not know enough about the teaching of literacy, and especially early reading. As a result, children are not achieving well in reading and writing. Staff need to know how to provide better and more challenging opportunities for children to develop their literacy skills. Staff also need to make the most of every opportunity to develop children's vocabulary across the curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Hednesford Nursery School to be good on 4–5 November 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	123962
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10058566
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	56
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Lloyd
Headteacher	Kelly Bracebridge
Website	www.hednesford.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school joined the Hednesford Hill's Federation in April 2019. The federation's governing body has oversight of the school.
- The federation's executive headteacher and deputy headteacher are supported daily by a centre manager.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the inclusion leader, the centre manager and a group of staff. An inspector also met with four members of the federation's governing body and spoke to a member of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked in depth at the areas of learning and development for literacy, physical development and understanding of the world. Inspectors visited several lessons with the deputy headteacher and the inclusion leader. Inspections also looked at records of children's learning and talked to the children and staff about the curriculum. Inspectors observed story time and talked to the children about the books they were looking at.
- Inspectors checked records and policies relating to safeguarding, talked to staff and

governors about their safeguarding work and met with the designated leader for safeguarding. Inspectors observed how safe children were at the school.

- Inspectors considered responses to the staff survey.
- An inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

Jonathan Moore, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kirsty Foulkes

Ofsted Inspector

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