

Inspection of an outstanding school: Helen Gibson Nursery School

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

Inspection date: 27 September 2022

Outcome

Helen Gibson Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children love coming to Helen Gibson Nursery School. From the day that children start, staff build very strong partnerships with families. Staff quickly get to know children and their interests. Staff tailor the curriculum expertly to motivate children. Children are never bored because there is always something enticing to do. Happy singing is often heard from children and staff. This is cleverly used to help children to gain the right knowledge and attitude to succeed.

Children feel safe and secure in the calm atmosphere. Children's behaviour is excellent. Every part of the day is purposeful, and children are always occupied. Staff help children to resolve disputes with each other on the rare occasions that these arise.

Leaders have high expectations for all children. They place no limits on what each child can achieve. Staff plan precisely for each individual day by day. Staff make constant checks so that they know what each child can do and what they should do next. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have exceptional support. As a result, they thrive.

Kids Club, for breakfast and after-school care, is equally calm and purposeful. Older children support and help younger children in a family atmosphere. Relationships between children of all ages and staff are very warm and caring.

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

Leaders have ensured that there is an ambitious curriculum in place. They have clearly set out the steps needed for children to achieve curriculum goals. Children learn how to be a good friend and to solve problems. They are well prepared to learn to read and write and to learn more difficult mathematics. This helps children to be ready for their next steps when they move on to their new school.

Staff choose resources and equipment that help to extend children's knowledge. Younger children read books that have fewer words and have repetitive language. This helps them to become increasingly familiar with the language and vocabulary in the books that they read. Older children listen to more complicated stories with more sophisticated language.

Staff expertly support each child's play so that children's knowledge is continually developing. Staff use their deep knowledge of child development to help children in the right way at the right time. Staff encourage younger children to experiment with making marks on different surfaces. This develops the muscles they will need later to be able to write. Staff prompt older children to solve problems and to extend their vocabulary.

Staff continually assess children's learning. Staff use this information to plan carefully for children's next steps. Staff make sure that children's knowledge is secure before moving on. As a result, children gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to succeed. Their learning is extremely rarely disrupted because they are so absorbed in what they do.

Children with SEND take part in all aspects of school life. They proudly take their turn at being a 'special helper', for example. Staff share information about children's learning with parents and carers. Together, they work on the small steps each child needs to succeed.

The steps needed to learn to read begin with the youngest children and build from there. They are introduced to books that quickly interest them. Children read with a member of staff, who expertly guides them to know that print has meaning. They enjoy books and stories because staff read with enthusiasm and enjoyment. When they leave Nursery, children can tell the difference between sounds. They can rhyme and read words that are important to them. Children are very well prepared to be successful readers.

Throughout the year, children go on visits to the local area and further afield. For example, they look forward to the annual farm visit. Visitors to the school broaden children's knowledge further.

Staff are well supported by leaders. Leaders consider staff well-being and take steps to reduce staff workload. Staff receive regular training and support. They develop their expertise through a carefully planned programme of professional development. Consequently, staff lead different aspects of the nursery's work effectively.

The governing body knows the strengths of the school and maintains a regular oversight. Governors take the right decisions to make sure that the school continues to thrive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know that children's safety is their first priority. Leaders provide regular safeguarding training and updates. As a result, all staff know how to identify a potential concern and what to do about it. Staff check that resources and equipment are safe every day.

Leaders regularly scrutinise safeguarding records to make sure that all important information is accurate and that they are doing all they can to help keep children safe. Leaders make timely referrals if they have concerns over a child's welfare, and draw on support from wider external agencies. Leaders are persistent in pursuing the right support for children.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn to listen before taking part in a fire circle. They learn to speak up if a situation is making them uncomfortable. Staff guide children to 'have a go', but to decide for themselves when something feels too risky.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in May 2017.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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	108663
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10226892
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	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Claire Aberdeen
Headteacher	Jenny Parker
Website	www.helengibsonnursery.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	www.16 and 17 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school offers places to two-year-old children in The Lodge, which is attached to the main nursery.
- Kids Club is registered by the school and offers before- and after-school care for children aged two to 11 years. Children from other local schools attend.
- The school has federated with another school in the borough, Clervaux Nursery School. The federation is known as The Early Years Nursery School Alliance. Some staff work across both schools.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors met with staff, governors and a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, and literacy. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited different rooms in the nursery and outdoors, spoke to staff and scrutinised records of children’s learning.
- Inspectors also discussed curriculum plans and spoke to staff about other areas of learning.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record. They talked to staff about their views of safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed children’s behaviour indoors and outdoors, at lunchtimes and during before- and after-school club sessions.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders’ self-evaluation and school development plans and policies.
- Inspectors considered the free-text comments on Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View. They also considered the responses from the online staff survey.

Inspection team

Susan Waugh, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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