

# Inspection of an outstanding school: The Sue Hedley Nursery School

Campbell Park Road, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear NE31 1QY

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Inspection date: 25 April 2023

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Children are very happy at this friendly, warm and welcoming school. They enjoy growing and learning together. Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection have nothing but wonderful things to say about the school. Leaders, teachers and staff ensure that every space is used effectively to excite and interest children. They plan exciting activities which help to develop children's curiosity and support their wider development. An example of this can be seen when children visit the forest school provision each week. Leaders use this activity to encourage children to talk about the world around them and to develop their understanding of health and fitness.

Leaders and staff want the best for children. However, in some areas of the early years curriculum, leaders have not identified the precise knowledge, skills and vocabulary they want children to learn. As a result, this limits children's learning in these areas.

Staff encourage children to develop resilience, confidence and independence. They teach children how to put on their coats and their wellington boots independently. Children help to prepare the fruits for snack time and make choices about what to eat at the snack table. They learn how to share toys and resources with friends. Children display kindness and concern towards each other. They know that they can turn to adults in the nursery if they need comfort or encouragement. Because of this, children feel safe and happy.

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

Recently, there have been several changes to staffing. Newly appointed senior leaders have accurately identified strengths and areas for development in the school. The curriculum currently includes all the early years key areas of learning. However, the structure and organisation, including what is taught to children between the ages of two

and five, are not well thought out. There is a lack of clarity for staff about what to teach and when. Consequently, they do not consistently support all children to achieve.

Staff use a variety of texts, which children learn by heart, to support the development of communication and language skills. Children use toys and costumes to retell the stories. They are supported to learn new words through well-planned activities. Most staff are experts in supporting children to develop their language and communication. They join in with their conversations, modelling and repeating words. This helps children to hear the clear pronunciation of words.

Early mathematics concepts are cleverly planned across many learning activities. During the inspection, children were observed making rhubarb crumble. They were carefully cutting and excitedly counting the pieces of rhubarb. This made counting more fun. Children are encouraged to use specific language as they play. For example, they used the words 'heavy' and 'light' as they filled buckets of water.

Staff plan a wide range of activities that help children to develop core strength in their bodies. Children enjoy climbing and jumping as they are learning. Staff also focus on helping children to develop small-muscle skills. For example, children learn to make dough and make marks on it with tools.

Leaders have recently revised the school's assessment system so that staff can identify what children know and where they have gaps in their knowledge. This supports staff to adapt or enhance the curriculum to meet children's individual needs. Staff are particularly effective at identifying and supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children's needs are carefully identified, taking account of advice from external agencies. The support given to children with SEND is carefully tailored. Those with the greatest needs achieve well in the school's specialist provision for children with autism and social, emotional and mental health needs.

Staff know children very well and develop excellent partnerships with parents. Children respond well to adults' high expectations for behaviour. They have positive attitudes to learning. Children play and learn happily with their friends. They are keen and motivated. In the pretend kitchen, for example, children negotiate who should do different jobs. They share the equipment and concentrate on the task in hand.

Leaders, including governors, have an ambitious vision to continue to make improvements to the school. For example, they have identified that they want to improve the curriculum. Staff are deeply committed to their roles and the school. They are supportive of leaders. Staff feel listened to and are confident that leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff meet each day to discuss children's well-being. They are vigilant and report any concerns they may have regarding a child's welfare or safety. Leaders work closely with a

range of external agencies and follow up on concerns when they come to light. They make sure that parents and any professionals working with families are well informed about actions they take to follow up concerns. Leaders ensure that appropriate recruitment procedures are followed. The processes are robust and checked by the governing body.

The curriculum helps children to manage risks at an age-appropriate level. This includes using equipment safely when playing outside.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The curriculum is not sufficiently well planned and is not broken down into manageable steps. As a result, children receive a disconnected curriculum that does not build effectively upon their prior learning. Leaders should review the school's curriculum to ensure that the precise knowledge and skills that children should learn are identified and carefully sequenced in each area of learning, so that children's understanding builds cumulatively over time.

## **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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in December 2013.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	132799
<b>Local authority</b>	South Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255913
<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	105
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Alan Tricoglus
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ashely Honey
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thesuehedleynurseryschool.co.uk">www.thesuehedleynurseryschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Leaders currently do not use any alternative provision to meet the needs of children.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children.
- The school has two special educational needs resource bases, one for autism and the other for social, emotional and mental health needs.
- There is a breakfast club at the school.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and senior teachers. The inspectors also spoke with the representatives of the local governing body, including the chair of governors, the school improvement partner, and a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these areas of learning: language and communication, including reading; personal, social and emotional development; and understanding the world. For each deep dive, inspectors looked at curriculum plans and spoke with leaders and different members of staff. Inspectors looked at these areas of learning in action.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders and staff to understand how the nursery meets the needs of individual children, including those with SEND. Inspectors looked at examples of children's achievements, including their learning journals and learning records.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other areas of learning.
- A range of documentation was also scrutinised, including leaders' plans to improve the school, their self-evaluation document and information published on the school's website. Inspectors also looked at records of governors' meetings.
- Inspectors observed children's behaviour during the day.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding procedures. They checked the school's single central record of staff suitability and held meetings with leaders, staff and governors about safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with staff, including key workers. They spoke with staff and children informally throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors met with parents as they dropped their children off at school. Inspectors reviewed the free-text comments to Ofsted Parent View.

## **Inspection team**

Jean Watt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Oliver Flitcroft

Ofsted Inspector

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