

Inspection of an outstanding school: Horden Nursery School

Cotsford Park, Horden, Peterlee, County Durham SR8 4TB

Inspection dates:

9 July 2024

Outcome

Horden Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Horden Nursery School's vision is that children develop a long-lasting love of learning. It provides amazing awe and wonder experiences that nurture children's curiosity. For example, children delight in finding snails of different sizes in the outdoor area, marvelling how they crawl across their hands.

Highly skilled staff harness every moment to maximise learning. Adults adeptly simplify and repeat key ideas to enable children, of all ages, to understand new concepts.

The school teaches children how to behave through their set of promises. For example, children promise 'to take turns and share' and 'to have kind hands and feet'. Adults praise children when they demonstrate the promises.

The school ensures that children understand how to manage their own emotions and the feelings of others. As a result, children behave exceptionally well.

Children demonstrate sustained concentration and immerse themselves in play. They are resilient. Staff foster independence to ensure that children are ready for the stage of their educational journey.

The school builds strong relationships with families and external agencies. This means it can offer effective support, alongside health visitors, to parents and carers. The school's 'nearly to nursery' group, for children considering joining the school, helps strengthen transition practices.

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

The school sequences its exceptionally ambitious curriculum to meet the needs of the youngest 2-year-olds through to the 4-year-olds who are ready for primary school. The school is highly responsive to children's interests and fascinations. For example, when

some children showed interest in the birds settling in the nursery grounds, staff organised a visit from an owl.

The school has an impressive understanding and oversight of vocabulary development. Adults focus on using open ended questions, modelling the use of language and repeating words. This has been particularly effective in supporting children with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND) and preverbal children to access the curriculum. Adults are extremely skilled at modelling vocabulary.

The school carefully selects core books to read to the children across each age phase. This ensures that there is progression in the vocabulary difficulty, they appeal to children's interests and fit with the seasonal calendar. The school uses speech and language therapy advice to identify vocabulary children will learn across the curriculum. For example, the 2-year-old group enjoy books that link to their recent farm visit. Adults supplement the book with songs and rhymes associated with farm animals. As a result, children readily repeat and use the language in provision.

There is an abundance of purposeful experiences to develop children's mathematical understanding. It is clear what children must learn, remember and develop over time. The well thought out activity choices provide many opportunities for creative and critical thinking. For example, children in the water tray worked together to fill different sized containers to transport water. Adults commentated on their learning using mathematical language linked to capacity, size and number.

There is an exceptionally well-designed outdoor space that encourages children to assess and take considered risks. For example, a child safely navigated the slippery climbing equipment in the rain by changing the position of their feet.

There are many planned opportunities for repetition of key skills linked to the curriculum. This happens through the daily routines so that children, including those with SEND, can experience success. For example, adults explicitly teach children to put their coats on independently.

The school checks children's progress regularly. Staff complete assessments on the child's birthday and six months later. All staff contribute to these profiles to ensure that they are gathering examples of children's deep knowledge. The school has milestone statements to track children's developmental progress. If children are not on track, they receive extra support. This ensures that staff continually identify and address gaps in children's knowledge.

The staff and governors are incredibly proud of the school. They share their expertise and good practice with other early years settings.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 March 2015.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

| | |
|--|--|
| Unique reference number | 113986 |
| Local authority | Durham |
| Inspection number | 10320354 |
| Type of school | Nursery |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 5 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 113 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Jane Long |
| Headteacher | Natalie Parkinson |
| Website | hordennursery.durham.sch.uk |
| Date(s) of previous inspection | 12 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, staff and children.
- Meetings were also held with representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these areas of learning: communication and language, mathematics and personal, social, emotional development. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited the provision, spoke to practitioners and spoke to some children about their learning.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and children; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.
- The views of parents and staff were considered from meeting with them and from the responses to Ofsted's questionnaires.

Inspection team

Alison Stephenson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Melanie Maitland

Ofsted Inspector

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 <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024