



Houghton le Spring Nursery School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 108746
LEA Sunderland
Inspection number 278039
Inspection dates 7 March 2006 to 8 March 2006
Reporting inspector Janet Bennett

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Neasham Place
School category	Maintained		Houghton le Spring
Age range of pupils	3 to 4		Tyne and Wear DH5 8AB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 5536557
Number on roll	69	Fax number	0191 5536557
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Emma Swansbury
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Jane Bulmer

Age group 3 to 4	Inspection dates 7 March 2006 - 8 March 2006	Inspection number 278039
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This nursery is situated in Houghton-le-Spring, Sunderland. The school provides part-time education for children aged 3 to 4. Children have a broad range of experiences, but many come from areas of social disadvantage. Attainment on entry to school is broadly average. Almost all children are white British, and they all speak English as their first language. The school offers some extended services, which include care for children aged 3 to 8 years from 8.00am to 6.00pm.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. This judgement matches the school's own evaluation. Children, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress and achieve well. Most children are on target to achieve or exceed the standards expected for their age by the time they leave nursery. Children enjoy nursery and are motivated to learn because activities reflect their interests, but sometimes adults do not use their knowledge of children well enough to challenge those who are able to tackle more difficult work. Children make very good progress in their spiritual and social development, and their independence. Staff provide good role models and, therefore, children learn to celebrate their achievements, to treat others with respect, and to make sensible choices. Good opportunities are provided indoors for children to explore ideas that really interest them. This contributes very well to their learning. However, opportunities for outdoor play are too limited. The headteacher provides very clear direction for the work of the school and has built a strong team that provides outstanding levels of care and support for children. The excellent relationships that exist within the nursery are appreciated by parents, who hold the school in very high regard. Self-evaluation systems provide an accurate view of the school's strengths but are not rigorous enough to accurately determine what needs to be done next to improve learning. Good progress has been made since the last inspection and the school has good capacity to further improve. The school provides good value for money.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve strategies for self-evaluation so that school leaders and staff understand what needs to be done to improve learning.
- Ensure that assessment information is used consistently to match work to children's prior learning.
- Improve opportunities for learning out of doors.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All children, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress and achieve well. When children enter school their skills overall are in line with those expected for their age. However, a considerable number of children start school with limited speaking and listening skills, and low levels of independence. Staff plan good opportunities for learning that enable children to build successfully upon what they already know and can do. As a result, by the time children leave nursery, many attain standards that are above those expected for their age. In communication, language and literacy, standards are average overall. Given their starting points, children make good progress in this aspect of learning. However, adults miss some opportunities to challenge children who are ready to tackle more difficult work, and as a result some children do not achieve as much as they could.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This aspect of the school's work is good. Children make very good progress in their social skills and spiritual development. This is because adults know children well and provide very good role models. They show genuine interest in what children have to say and help them to recognise and celebrate their achievements. As a result, children take great joy in their learning, they make sensible choices, and they grow to value and respect the views and feelings of others. Provision for moral and cultural development is good, but more could be done to extend children's understanding of the way in which different people live their lives. Children's behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good. Children use their time productively and work with high levels of concentration. This is because adults encourage children to be independent, and they provide good opportunities for children to explore ideas that are of real interest to them. Children are encouraged to eat healthily and to drink regularly, but more could be done to involve children in physical activity. Attendance is good because children enjoy nursery, and parents value the excellent relationships that staff establish with their children.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The excellent relationships that exist in nursery enable children to gain the confidence they need to try out new ideas, safe in the knowledge that they will be given the support they need. Children with learning difficulties are identified early, and help is well targeted to ensure that they make good progress and achieve well. Support for children's personal, social and emotional development is particularly good. This is because adults provide good role models, showing genuine concern and respect for children, and listening carefully to what they have to say. Children develop very good levels of independence because resources are carefully organised to enable them to make choices for themselves. Adults observe children carefully and they use their good knowledge of children to provide play opportunities that are relevant and interesting to them. This results in high levels of engagement and good progress in learning. However, information about what children can do and understand is not used consistently well to challenge children who are capable of more difficult work. This is particularly so in language and communication. Because of this some opportunities to extend children's speaking and listening skills are missed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is well matched to the needs and interests of all learners and, as a result, children show high levels of engagement and use their time purposefully. Good account is taken of children's differing attendance patterns to

ensure that no child is disadvantaged, and every child is included in the life and work of the school. Information about children's interests at home and school is used well to resource play opportunities that are interesting and relevant to them. Planned visits and visitors contribute well to a curriculum which is rich and broad and which effectively promotes all aspects of learning. Children have access to a good range of resources indoors. They are encouraged to use these imaginatively in order to explore their own ideas. This contributes well to their learning. However opportunities for learning outdoors are too limited. This restricts children's play and slows the pace of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This aspect of the school's work is outstanding. Care and education staff work together very well to provide excellent levels of care across the day. Staff listen carefully to what children say and provide very sensitive help and encouragement when it is needed. Each child has a 'key worker' who has special responsibility for them. This system, together with the good induction programme, ensures that children settle well into nursery and very quickly grow in confidence. The relationships which develop between the 'key worker', the child, and their family are particularly strong. Parents value this arrangement, and the opportunities it provides for sharing information between home and school. There are very good systems for monitoring children's progress. Children who require additional levels of support are identified quickly and appropriate action is taken to meet their learning needs. All statutory requirements for safeguarding children are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very clear direction for the work of this highly inclusive school. She is an excellent role model, who has been instrumental in promoting the very positive relationships that exist between children, staff, parents, and the wider community. She has built an effective team of professionals who provide care and education of high quality. All staff contribute well to the work of the school because their strengths are recognised and the opinions of everyone are valued. There are good systems for seeking the views of parents, which are taken very seriously. Roles and responsibilities are clear; therefore, the nursery operates in a calm and well-ordered way. Self-evaluation systems are satisfactory. They result in an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. However, opportunities for evaluating learning are not embedded well. As a result, the action that needs to be taken to improve children's progress is not clear. Governors provide satisfactory leadership. They are very supportive of staff and understand some of the challenges that they face. They recognise the need to improve their involvement in setting the strategic direction of the school, and to this end are currently establishing a formalised visiting programme.

Good progress has been made since the time of the last inspection. Given the very strong team approach, the high levels of commitment from staff, and the clear direction provided by the headteacher, the school has good capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	NA
Learners are educated about sexual health	NA
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Alexandra House

33 Kingsway

London

WC2B 6SE

T 0207 421 6800

F 0207 421 6707

Ofsted helpline

08456 404045

Mrs Jane Bulmer

Houghton le Spring Nursery School

Neasham Place

Houghton le Spring

Tyne and Wear

DH5 8AB

7 March 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your nursery. I really enjoyed listening to you saying nursery rhymes and watching you act them out with the props that you had made. I could see that you were really enjoying yourselves.

I think that the adults who work with you care about you very much. You know that they will help you if you need them, and that is why you are keen to try new things.

I was impressed by the way that you carefully chose what you were going to do, and how well you worked with your friends, sharing and taking turns. I think that the adults who work with you get to know you very well, and they help you to play with things that really interest you. Because of this you work really hard, and you learn new things every day. I think that sometimes your teachers could encourage you to do things that make you think a little bit harder, and this would help you to learn even more.

Your teachers provide lots of interesting things for you to play with, and because of this your Mums and Dads told me that you really enjoy nursery. I could see that you were having fun because of the smiles on your faces. I have asked your teachers to think about more interesting things for you to do outside so there will be lots of smiley faces when you play outdoors as well.

I do hope that you continue to have a wonderful time in nursery, doing lots of exciting things with your friends and teachers.

With very best wishes

Janet Bennett

Lead inspector