



Seaham Harbour Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113975
LEA Durham
Inspection number 279286
Inspection dates 2 March 2006 to 3 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Shirley Herring

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Bottleworks Road
School category	Maintained		Seaham Harbour
Age range of pupils	3 to 4		Seaham, County Durham SR7 7NN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 5812829
Number on roll	78	Fax number	0191 5812829
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Councillor Alan Fenwick
Date of previous inspection	1 July 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Carole Lesley Scott

Age group 3 to 4	Inspection dates 2 March 2006 - 3 March 2006	Inspection number 279286
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector

Description of the school

Seaham Harbour Nursery is popular and serves a wide community that includes areas of high deprivation. All children are from a white British background and attend part time. Children start the nursery with a range of skills but overall their attainments are well below a level expected for children this age, particularly in social and language skills. Three children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities including two children who have a statement of special educational need. The school is part of an Excellence in Cluster group. There are close links with the local Sure Start Programme and with the developing Children's Centre.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The inspector agrees with the school, parents and children that Seaham Harbour Nursery is an outstanding school. One parent describes the nursery as "A lovely place for a child to be!" It seeks to extend its provision through very close links with other centres for young children. It has responded to local needs by starting a new playgroup and a breakfast and lunch club on the school site. It generously shares its considerable expertise with other schools. For example, the local authority is providing funds for the school to work with a partner nursery to produce a booklet on the outdoor curriculum in which the school excels.

The strong emphasis on developing social skills results in excellent personal development and outstanding behaviour. Teaching is exceptional and so children learn very well. The curriculum is outstanding and so children make very good gains in all areas of learning. The Language Enrichment Programme has been very effective, though, currently, finances only allow it to be offered in the afternoons.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Although the headteacher recognises the school's many strengths, there is no complacency. This was seen when the school sought to improve on the very good judgements of the last inspection and has been very successful in extending opportunities for physical and creative development and the written information given to parents. The school has a strong capacity to improve further. It offers good value for money

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the Language Enrichment Programme to include children who attend in the morning, when finances allow.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children enter the nursery with a range of skills though their overall attainments are well below that expected for children this age with particular weaknesses in language and social skills. The excellent curriculum and strong teaching enable children to make exceptional progress in all areas of learning. There is a strong focus on successfully addressing the weaknesses in language and social skills through all activities. Staff make good use of their knowledge of individual children to build on their previous learning. They also seek ways to rectify any differences in the achievement of boys and girls, for example by including writing activities in the large construction area. Observations during the inspection, and examination of the comprehensive records, confirm the school's view that, by the time children leave the nursery, the vast majority are working at or above the usual level for their age in all areas of learning. This demonstrates excellent achievement for all children. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive very good support and achieve very well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Behaviour is exceptional for young children. Children clearly enjoy all the school has to offer and many parents talk of their children's disappointment at the weekend when the nursery is closed. Children develop good attitudes from the start and attendance is good.

They respond very well to the high expectations of responsibility and independence through choosing their activities thoughtfully and tidying away toys. Children are taught how to use equipment such as scissors safely. A healthy lifestyle is encouraged through daily exercise indoors and outside and drinking water is readily available. There is a good involvement with the wider community through attending local events such as the opening of the Sure Start Nursery and entertaining residents of the local retirement home. Children are very well prepared for the next stage of learning.

Staff treat each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This provides a very good example for children to follow and their moral and social development are excellent. Spiritual and cultural development are good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is outstanding. The exceptional teamwork amongst the cheerful staff provides a happy, stimulating learning environment in which children thrive. The wide variety of purposeful and interesting activities entice children to learn. All adults assess children's learning throughout the day in the full range of activities. They discuss and review children's progress frequently and all use the information very well to match work to the needs of individuals. For example, the teacher at the counting activity knows that some children need practice in counting to five whilst others should be challenged to look beyond ten. A strong feature is the way in which all adults are actively engaged in talking to children whatever the activity and this is the crucial factor in the very good progress they make in improving their speaking and social skills.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in all activities and, as a result, they learn very well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is of a high quality. It is firmly based on a wide variety of experiences that shows a very good understanding of how young children learn. There is a good balance between independent and adult led activities. The outstanding provision outside is very imaginatively planned to include all areas of learning. For example,

children enjoy the imaginative play near the 'shipwrecked boat', and joined in country and western dancing with all the staff. Technology is used very well.

The introduction of the Language Enrichment Programme is proving effective in developing the speaking skills of those with particular difficulty. Unfortunately, the school is only able to fund the more intensive support in the afternoon session though certain elements of the programme are incorporated in morning activities.

The curriculum is considerably enriched through a wide range of visits, such as to the farm and the theatre, and by visitors. Unusually for a nursery, weekly swimming sessions are organised for parents and children. The school runs a range of workshops for parents so they can be more involved in their children's learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Numerous parents took the trouble to write or explain to the inspector how the school had made exceptional efforts to help their families. This included adapting the ingredients in some meals so that a child with an allergy could attend the lunch club that he enjoyed, and the headteacher accompanying a mother to visit reception classes for her child with learning difficulties.

Staff are trained in child protection issues and all measures are taken to safeguard children in the nursery. All staff are actively involved in working with the children so they receive a good level of individual support where needed and their progress is monitored well. Children receive good guidance on many levels such as not running in case they fall or hurt others and how to hold a pencil to help their writing. This high level of individual care means children feel secure and this helps them to learn.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school is led and managed extremely well. The accurate self-evaluation is based on close monitoring of the school's work and on the views of parents gained through questionnaires. It is used well to identify ways of improving the school further. This was evident in setting up a new playgroup on site to improve children's skills before they come to nursery although it is too soon to fully judge its impact. The headteacher has high aspirations for the school and shares her ideas with colleagues in other educational establishments so that she can determine the best ways to raise standards. The views and expertise of all staff are valued and they feel an important part of the team and work hard to provide a very stimulating environment. The assistant headteacher has recently taken on new leadership responsibilities and provides good support for the headteacher.

Governors are very involved in the life of the school. They are proud of its achievements and work closely with the headteacher to find ways to improve the provision, for example by supporting the current building programme to extend the teaching space.

Improvements in the creative development and physical development areas of learning, and in information for parents since the last inspection indicate strong capacity to improve. The school gives good value for money.

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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?	1	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	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	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	1	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

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Mrs Carole Lesley Scott

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SR7 7NN

3 March 2006

Dear Children

I really enjoyed visiting you in your nursery. I particularly liked eating the duck biscuits you had made and watching all the teachers and the children dancing outside. You looked as though you were enjoying yourself very much.

I think your nursery is excellent and you behave very well. I could tell that you enjoy all the exciting things that your teachers set out for you. Mrs. Scott and all the teachers work very hard to help you to learn, and they take very good care of you all.

I think that the language lessons that some of you have in the afternoon are very good and are helping you a lot. I have asked Mrs. Scott if some of the morning children can have them as well.

Good luck with the Easter Concert.

Best wishes

Mrs Herring

Lead Inspector