



Hednesford Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123962
LEA Staffordshire
Inspection number 281597
Inspection dates 12 July 2006 to 12 July 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Edwards AI

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Eskrett Street
School category	Maintained		Hednesford
Age range of pupils	3 to 4		Cannock, Staffordshire WS12 5AR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01543 512 225
Number on roll	71	Fax number	01543 5122 26
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	10 July 2000	Headteacher	Miss Christine Wood

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 4	12 July 2006 - 12 July 2006	281597

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hednesford Nursery is a small school situated in the centre of the town. Children attend the Nursery either morning or afternoon. The majority of children are from White British backgrounds. When they start school, their attainment is broadly average, although their speech and language skills are comparatively weaker.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Hednesford Nursery is an extremely effective school that provides excellent value for money. The school has a very clear view of how well it is doing. Parents rightly think very highly of the school and are full of praise for all that it does for their children. Children thoroughly enjoy coming to school and the high quality of care provided ensures that they learn in a safe and supportive environment. In her successful endeavour to provide children with high quality provision, the headteacher's very effective leadership results in a continual search for improvement. The school recognises that a more analytical approach to assessing some aspects of the children's learning would make the very good procedures even better. Children enter the school with the skills that are expected for their age, although an increasing number have comparatively weaker skills in speech and language. Exceptional teaching and support ensure that the children make very good progress and, by the end of the year, are exceeding the expected goals in all areas of learning. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection and is well placed to improve further. The very effective teamwork and high levels of commitment by all staff are providing the children with a superb start to their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to develop the processes for monitoring children's progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The children's overall attainment exceeds that expected for their age by the time they leave school. They achieve exceptionally well and they are very well prepared for their next school. Children with learning difficulties make very good progress because their needs are identified early and they are provided with a good level of effective support. The staff know the children very well and consequently plan activities that are matched to their level of maturity. When they enter the school, children's skills are broadly average. They make rapid progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Their mathematical, physical and creative development is very good, as is their acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Although children's speech and language skills are weaker than in other areas when they arrive, the school's clear focus on this aspect ensures they progress very well. By the time they leave the Nursery, the children exceed the goals expected for their age in all areas of learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. Relationships between staff and children are extremely good and this helps them to settle well and feel safe

and secure. Behaviour is excellent. The well-established routines mean that children know what is expected of them and so they contribute well to this supportive environment. Children eat healthily and take advantage of the many opportunities for physical exercise in the spacious grounds. Children thoroughly enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their good attendance and punctuality. They participate with enthusiasm in all activities on offer to them and so make very good progress in their learning. As a result, children are very well prepared for transfer to infant school. They use scissors and other equipment safely, and understand the importance of taking care when on roads outside the school. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is impressive. For example, children delighted in having the chance to walk barefoot outside, through the grass, wet sand and water, as part of their story on 'the bear trail' and used exciting language to describe what it felt like. Opportunities for children to celebrate major festivals, such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year, enhance children's understanding of diversity well. Opportunities to perform for 'elderly friends' at other major festivals, such as Harvest and Christmas, help the children to make a very good contribution to the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are excellent. Children are keen to do well because they are enthused by the wide range of activities on offer. Staff make very good use of assessments to plan activities that match children's maturity and provide sufficient challenge for their varying abilities. Activities are well planned to promote independence and to encourage social skills through working in pairs and groups. There is a very good balance between teacher-led activities and free-choice activities and so children remain motivated and enjoy their learning. Assessments are in place for all areas of learning and are used very effectively to monitor progress. The school recognises that it needs to refine its analysis of children's progress in the areas of learning other than literacy and numeracy. The very spacious and stimulating outdoor area is extremely well used as a learning resource. For example, the teachers' imaginative use of the grounds to develop story trails, where children act out stories, greatly encourages children's use of speech and language. Staff are well aware of how such young children learn and use every opportunity to develop their basic skills. For example, staff are very precise in their pronunciations of letter sounds and so children make rapid progress in their speech. Children with learning difficulties are provided with very effective support, enabling them to make progress at the same rate as other children.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is excellent. Staff plan a very detailed programme of activities that ensures all of the areas of learning are covered in depth. Planning also builds in time for the children to take part in energetic activities and for more reflective moments.

The increasing number of children with weaker speaking and listening skills has been recognised and more activities are planned to give the children the opportunity to speak at length. Considerable thought goes into ensuring activities will enthuse the children and capture the attention of both boys and girls. For example, the simulated use of a 'satellite navigation' system particularly encouraged the boys' knowledge and understanding of the world around them. A good range of visits, for example, outings to the local library, enriches the children's learning. Learning is also brought to life by a range of visitors, such as the local policeman. Support for the children's awareness of a healthy lifestyle is very good and the children are becoming aware of what is 'good for them.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support provided for children are outstanding. Staff are committed to ensuring children are very well looked after and are vigilant in supervising them. The very detailed assessment of academic and personal achievements and the individual attention provided means that staff know children very well. Arrangements to ensure children are protected and kept safe are good. However, risk assessments in preparation for short visits out of school are not always recorded. There are consistent procedures and expectations throughout the school and so children have a very clear understanding of how to behave and the routines to follow. The school works very well with other professionals and parents to promote healthy living. For example, healthy snacks are sent in by parents, and the dental nurse has visited the school to support a topic on dental hygiene.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The excellent leadership and management by the headteacher have helped to create an environment where children thrive and, in the words of one parent but echoed by others, '... blossom and given an excellent start to their schooling.' The school's very good self-evaluation has enabled it to identify improvements needed and to be responsive to the needs of children and parents. For example, 'stay and play,' which offers the opportunity for pre-Nursery children to spend a little time getting used to the school environment, is valued. The headteacher is a skilled teacher and a 'hands-on' practitioner; her high standards are adopted by other staff, and this means that the school is extremely well placed to improve still further. Very good systems have been established to monitor the children's progress, although the school has rightly recognised it could be more thorough in its analysis of progress in areas of learning other than literacy and numeracy. The school has reacted very well to the recognition that an increasing number of children enter the school with weaker speech and language difficulties, and changes to curricular planning and to teaching have ensured the needs of these children are very well met. Governors provide good support and are actively involved in all aspects of school life.

Parents feel very welcome at the school and value the very regular information about how their children are progressing. They appreciate the regular opportunities to put forward their views and the way the school takes note of them.

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	1	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	1	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	1	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	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
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

Thank you very much for talking to us and helping us to find out what makes your school such a special place to be. We are pleased you enjoy coming to Nursery and having fun with your friends. You behave really well and all the adults at school are very proud of how hard you work and the good work that you produce. You learn such a lot because the adults take such good care of you and give you such a lot of nice things to do. They understand what you can do and what you need to do to get better. We have asked them to make some more notes of what you are doing to help you get even better.

We are pleased that you and your parents think you go to such a lovely school because we agree.

Thank you again for helping us with our work. We hope you continue to work hard and are just as happy at your new school.