

Hetton Lyons Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108750
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	288177
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Gianna Ulyatt

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Shirley Sharp
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Carter
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2002
School address	Four Lane Ends Hetton-le-Hole Houghton le Spring Tyne and Wear DH5 0AH
Telephone number	0191 5536698
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Hetton Lyons Nursery School is situated in a former mining community on the outskirts of Sunderland. Children who attend come from a mixed range of social backgrounds. The nursery is about average in size and provides morning or afternoon education for children aged three to four years. Children attend for up to five terms prior to entering Reception classes. When children first start at the school, their attainment is below the expected level for three-year-olds. Most children are of White British heritage and none is from a minority ethnic background. A few are from traveller families. The percentage of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school is a designated lead school for Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The Nursery offers extended services in the form of full day care, out of school care and family learning support.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Hetton Lyons Nursery is an outstanding school. It provides very good value for money. Parents are wholeheartedly pleased with the high levels of care and the outstanding education their children receive.

The inspirational leadership of the headteacher and the outstanding quality of teaching ensures that children of all abilities make very good progress from their starting points. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress because they are well supported and fully included in all activities. Children from traveller families also make very good progress, in part because the school has strong links with their parents. The school has successful links with other agencies which help to ensure that children progress so well. Workshops for parents focus on early literacy and mathematics, and parents say that these are very helpful in showing how they can become more involved in their children's learning.

When children enter the school, their attainment is below that expected for their age. They make very good progress and achieve particularly well in speaking and listening, early writing and mathematical understanding. They also make very good progress in their development as independent learners. Their attainment is well above the expected level by the end of the Nursery and they are well prepared for the Reception class. Children's personal development is outstanding; as a result, they display high levels of confidence. They demonstrate impressive levels of concentration and show mature attitudes of responsibility and independence for their age. Children feel very safe and comfortable in this exciting and busy nursery school and their behaviour is excellent. Attendance is good and they thoroughly enjoy school.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. The caring and friendly way adults interact with children make learning fun. Adults actively promote independence, and because they know the children very well, they challenge them to think through their ideas and to use the right words to express them. They make sure that they learn to take turns and play amicably together. Staff observe and assess children regularly and keep a close eye on the progress they are making. They use this valuable information to make sure that every child is challenged at the appropriate level. This is one of the main reasons why children achieve so well. Learning is brought to life by a full and exhilarating curriculum. A well-balanced programme gives children many opportunities to learn in a healthy and meaningful way. Activities, indoors and outside, are planned so that children learn in their preferred and individual way. The school is exceptionally caring and the required safety and safeguarding procedures are in place.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher's inspirational leadership is pivotal to the school's success in raising achievement. With the full support of all staff, the school is continuously improving provision. Recent work to improve attainment in writing is paying off very well and improvements to the curriculum have resulted in an exciting place for children to learn. All staff take part in regular monitoring of teaching and learning and in the development of initiatives, but responsibilities are not clearly defined so that all staff are clear about their areas of accountability. Governance is good and the governors provide effective support and challenge for the school. The school has an excellent capacity to improve further because of the outstanding quality of the highly motivated and committed staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop roles and responsibilities so they are more clearly defined and better distributed.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children achieve very well. They make exceptionally good progress in their speaking and listening skills, early writing and in their mathematical understanding. They also develop high levels of independence. The school expects, from its assessment of the current children, that the majority are likely to exceed the expected level of attainment for their age group in all areas of learning.

When children enter the nursery, their attainment is below what is normally seen for three-year-olds. They generally lack confidence and have limited mathematical, oral and creative skills. The school places a strong emphasis on encouraging children to talk and in extending their vocabulary; consequently, they learn to express their ideas using full sentences. Attainment in writing was slightly lower than usual last year but action to put this right has been successful; children make marks that resemble letters and many write their names. In mathematics, children achieve very well; they use number in play and know how to count, and some of them recognise numbers beyond 20. Daily opportunities to explore materials in a scientific and creative way result in very good achievement in creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Physical development is well promoted through planned daily activity, indoors and outside. Children from travelling families and children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress because they are fully included and well supported.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. The high standard reached is due to the way adults expect children to become responsible for their own learning and learning is structured accordingly. Children thrive in the school because it is a busy, exciting and rewarding place to learn. They work enthusiastically and demonstrate very impressive levels of concentration and great determination to succeed. They make good friendships and thoroughly enjoy school; this is reflected in their good attendance. A strong focus on developing self-confidence prepares children well for the Reception class. The school has the Healthy School Award and children help prepare a healthy snack each day explaining that, '...apples, vegetables and milk give you strong muscles'. They feel safe in school because relationships are excellent. Behaviour is outstanding. Children work and play amicably together and know it is good to be polite and friendly to everyone. They respond very well to the high expectations of responsibility and independence through choosing their activities thoughtfully and tidying away afterwards. Children learn about their local community and become aware of the world beyond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. The exceptional teamwork amongst the talented staff provides a happy, stimulating learning environment in which children thrive. The extensive

variety of purposeful and interesting activities entices children to learn and adults are always close at hand to join in their play and extend their ideas. Adults know children very well because they assess their learning in the full range of activities. They are very skilled at using the information to match activities to the needs of individuals. For example, when playing Bingo, the teacher knows that older children recognise numbers beyond 20, whereas younger children need practice with numbers to five. A strong feature is the way that adults interact with the children and encourage high levels of talk as part of the activities and games that the children have chosen. As a result, everything the children do has a clear purpose, and adults use this time very effectively to improve children's speaking skills, extend their vocabulary and challenge their thinking skills. This is one of the major factors in the very good progress children make, in academic and personal development. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn very well because activities are planned to ensure they can make a strong contribution and learn at the right level.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is excellent because it is based on a very wide variety of stimulating experiences and activities that cover all areas of learning. Effective planning by adults ensures a good balance between independent and adult-led activities, reflecting a very good understanding of how young children learn. The introduction of continuous provision has a strong impact on children's desire to learn and prepares them well for the Reception class. The outstanding curriculum outdoors is planned very imaginatively and takes full account of the different ways children choose to learn. For example, children enjoy painting with rollers, listening to musical chimes and planting seeds. The curriculum is well enhanced by a range of visits and parents are particularly pleased with the variety of places children go to. Visitors help children become aware of the world beyond their immediate locality. The introduction of language enrichment programmes, alongside parental support, is proving very effective in developing children's speaking and listening skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Safeguarding systems meet national requirements and risk assessments are in place to ensure the health and safety of children. Staff treat children with great consideration and highly value each individual. They immediately go to any child who needs help or support. Consequently, children feel very safe in school. They clearly enjoy working with adults and trust them completely. Adults are meticulous in looking after the vulnerable, and are knowledgeable about, and vigilant, in child protection.

The support and guidance provided for pupils' academic progress are outstanding. Key workers know their groups of children extremely well. During focused activities, adults make sure that children know what they are going to learn and praise them when they are successful. They monitor progress in detail and use the information extremely well when supporting children during self-chosen activities and when planning focused sessions. The school quickly identifies children who have learning difficulties and they are given the support they need to ensure their very good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides strong and inspirational leadership through the example she sets in her own teaching and through the way she encourages innovation in curriculum delivery. Teamwork is strong and staff are very focused on providing the very best for all children to ensure that standards continue to improve and expectations for children's personal development are particularly high. Whilst monitoring of teaching and learning takes place on a regular basis and all staff work together effectively on initiatives, their responsibilities are not well defined or distributed. This has already been identified by the school as an area to develop. The school actively seeks to ensure that all children do as well as each other and it makes very good use of staff and resources to achieve this. Governance has improved since the last inspection and is good. Governors are well informed and through recent training, monitor provision, challenge the school and offer support. The school continually evaluates itself very well and constantly looks at ways to improve. Since the last inspection, there have been alterations to the school building to cater for extended services and extensive developments to the curriculum and the outdoor area. As a result, the school is an exceptional place for children to learn.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

17 May 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Hetton Lyons Nursery School, Tyne and Wear, DH5 0AH

I had a fabulous time in your nursery school. You are so friendly and kind and I really enjoyed playing with you. Some of you gave me quite a shock when you undid the lock with the key, but it did make us all laugh!

You are so lucky to go to such a wonderful nursery. The adults work very hard each day to make sure you have very many activities to choose from. It must be hard to decide where to go first. You are so clever at using the construction equipment to make trucks and robots. You mix paint really well to make lovely pictures and patterns. You show great care when planting seeds. Some of you write your full name very well and know lots of numbers. You certainly enjoy the computer games. By the time you leave, you are really ready for the Reception class.

It was good to see how hard you work both inside the nursery and outside. Many of you asked me to play with you and I did enjoy your company at the sand tray and in the book area. You are very good talkers. I can tell you like stories because you already have favourites. You are great at selling things in the Victorian shop too.

I have asked the school to look at ways that more adults can look after different things that go on in the nursery. I am sure you will help out too!

With best wishes,

Gianna Ulyatt

Lead inspector