

Beechdale Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113985
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	289771
Inspection date	15 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alex Watson
Headteacher	Mrs Arlene Bell
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Beechdale Road Consett County Durham DH8 6AY
Telephone number	01207 505752
Fax number	00000

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The nursery serves an area which is average in terms of social advantage. Children attend part-time for either morning or afternoon sessions. The attainment of the majority of children when they start school is below what is typical for their age in most areas of learning. Almost all the children come from White British families, with a very small number from minority ethnic backgrounds none of whom are at the early stages of learning English. An above average proportion of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and from September 2004 the school became an outreach centre with members of staff using this school as their base whilst supporting other children locally.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school where children achieve exceptionally well. The parents of one child expressed the view of many when they wrote 'the nursery oozes a welcome to a wonderful and enchanting place of fun, friends and of course learning, the staff are friendly and cheerful and make our daughter feel valued as a person'.

Children love coming to school. They enjoy all their activities and behaviour is excellent because the children know exactly what is expected of them. Through excellent opportunities to develop independence children visibly grow in confidence. They are kind and thoughtful and relationships are excellent. Children have an understanding beyond their years of the importance of healthy eating and how to keep themselves safe. This is demonstrated throughout the day when they are keen to try new kinds of fruit, take every opportunity to be active and follow safe practices when engaged in tasks such as using the woodwork tools. This prepares them exceptionally well for their lives in and out of school both now and in the future.

Outstanding teaching from all staff, linked to an excellent curriculum and outstanding care and guidance, means that children make exceptionally good progress and attain standards well above those expected for their age. Excellent teaching and learning are the result of the teachers' very good knowledge of the children and their careful planning of lessons which take children's learning forward from whatever level they had reached previously. The outstanding curriculum ensures stimulating and enjoyable structured or play activities. Staff are extremely successful in laying the groundwork for developing children's basic skills. The excellent level of adult support ensures that as children are working on their chosen activity appropriate interventions are made to deepen their thinking and move their learning forward. At the end of each session children readily discuss their work and share in each other's success. The school agrees that even better use could be made of these times to encourage more able children to take responsibility for their own learning by discussing what they might do next to improve further.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and is highly respected by parents, staff and governors. The management of provision for those children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a particular strength. As a result, these children get all the help and support they need to make the same exceptional progress as their peers. There is a shared understanding of the school's performance and a commitment to continuous improvement from all. As successful as the school is, there is no complacency and no stone is left unturned in the drive to ensure that the needs of every child are met. Consequently, the school's capacity for further improvement is also outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the opportunities provided for the most able children to be involved in planning their future learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children's achievement is outstanding. The starting point at nursery of many children is below that which is expected for their age. All children, whatever their starting points, make exceptional progress in all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Consequently, by the time they leave the nursery, they have overtaken most children of a similar age to attain exceptionally high

standards. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make rapid progress, matching the outstanding rates of other children. Boys, particularly the very youngest, tend to start school with lower attainment than girls. The school is aware of this and matches its planned activities very well to the need of each individual child. As a result, boys achieve as well as girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development and well-being including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. They enjoy everything that they do; they play imaginatively and thrive in the outdoor area. In this happy and exciting nursery, children are extremely well behaved; they are very keen to learn and remain busy throughout sessions. They concentrate hard on tasks, confidently make choices and quickly become absorbed in teacher-led activities such as number and shape recognition or developing their listening skills. Children quickly become familiar with the nursery routines and readily take responsibility as they put materials back where they belong and help to clean up areas at the end of their sessions.

Children's knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy is excellent. They respond very well to the emphasis on healthy eating and the focus on physical activity indoors and outdoors. In role play this knowledge extends to safety in the workplace. Those working on the building site were meticulous in ensuring that their playmates using specialist equipment were fully equipped with safety clothing and insisted that passers by observed the warning signs! By the time they leave the Nursery, children are confident, self-sufficient and very well prepared for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. All staff have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and of how young children learn. They use this knowledge exceptionally well to plan activities which children find exciting and fun. Children enjoy many opportunities to investigate and solve problems for themselves. They are having so much fun they do not realise that adults' incisive questioning challenges them to really think and work hard. Every activity is planned to ensure that children make maximum progress in their skills and knowledge. Movement between child-initiated tasks and those led by staff is seamless because children are very clear about the staffs' very high expectations and relationships are excellent. Assessment information is used very effectively to ensure that children make the same exceptional progress in all areas of their learning whatever their ability.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

As stated by one parent, and echoed by many, 'The curriculum and the activities on offer are outstanding.' Inspection evidence agrees that all areas of learning are covered very well and enriched in many innovative ways. The system of developing the curriculum around a central theme is very successful. The current topic of 'buildings' provides children with a wide range of new learning opportunities; for example, children extend their numeracy skills when mixing cement, their creative skills in making models, and their knowledge of the world of work and safety in their role-play. Included in this is the excellent outdoor area which provides a wealth

of learning opportunities for every part of the curriculum. Staff are meticulous in the pursuit of ways to improve the school's provision for every child. This is demonstrated clearly by the recent initiative to learn Makaton (communication through sign) and PECS/TEACH (communication through pictures) and then include them in the curriculum to help those children who have difficulty with communication.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding and pupils learn in a very safe, calm and friendly environment. Adults get to know children and families very well and are extremely quick to respond to any concerns. As a result, children separate well from their carers and settle to nursery life quickly. Child protection procedures are fully in place and recommended guidelines to ensure children are safeguarded are adhered to. Staff are excellent at supporting and challenging children in both their academic and personal development. Children are asked to say what they have liked and disliked about an activity, but more could be done to involve the most able children in decisions about how they can improve even further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership and management are central to the nursery's success and the well deserved reputation it has within the local area. The school continues to thrive and grow under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. Detailed examination of children's progress and regular monitoring of the quality of teaching ensures that all staff know exactly how well the school and children are doing. They use this information exceptionally well to develop a clear shared vision for future development. Within this, teamwork is paramount, as seen, for example, in the excellent and varied contribution made by nursery nurses and teaching assistants. Governors are very supportive and use their knowledge of the school to provide an appropriate degree of challenge. The many strengths identified at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and built upon. This provides the school with an outstanding capacity to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	1
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	1
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	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

16 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Beechdale Nursery School, Consett, DH8 6AY

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your nursery recently. This letter is to tell you what I thought about it.

I think you are very lucky to go to such a wonderful nursery school. I saw you having so much fun and doing lots of exciting things. You are very well behaved and you all play and work very nicely together. You are very good at sharing and you are learning lots of very useful things that will help you to do well when you get older.

All of the grown-ups in your nursery work very hard and look after you so well that you are doing great things in your learning and becoming very nice people!

You have an excellent headteacher and other staff and governors support her very well to give you the very best education they can. They are always looking for things to do that will make the nursery even better. I wanted to help them with this so I have asked them to talk each day to those of you who have already learnt a lot about how well you think you are doing and help you to decide what you need to do next. I am sure you will enjoy this and you can do your bit by continuing with your excellent behaviour and hard work.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector