

Oxhill Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113970
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	325915
Inspection dates	18–19 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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 (total)	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Kevin Meredith
Headteacher	Mrs Pearl Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2005
School address	Oxhill Stanley County Durham DH9 7LR
Telephone number	01207 232266
Fax number	0

Age group	3–4
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Oxhill Nursery School is situated close to the centre of Stanley. This large nursery school caters for children between the age of three and four years. Most children reside in the local community surrounding the school but a significant number travel some way from neighbouring communities. Children attend part-time with many children coming from areas of social disadvantage. The nursery is a designated special educational needs outreach centre. There are no children from a minority ethnic background and no children whose language is not English. About one third of the children have additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Oxhill is an outstanding nursery school where the children achieve remarkably well in a stimulating, happy and caring learning environment. The view of one parent sums up the views of many, 'the atmosphere when you walk into the school is fabulous for the children'. From the start, the children have a sense of belonging. The often inspirational quality of children's learning, outstanding personal development and exceptional quality of welfare and care reflect the fact that in this school every child really is special. The comment of one family typifies the total confidence of parents, 'we trust the staff implicitly with our child's welfare.'

Children love coming to school and this is reflected in their good attendance. They behave impeccably as children know exactly what is expected of them. Relationships with adults are excellent. Children visibly thrive on the excellent opportunities to develop their independence. They rapidly grow in confidence, readily make friends and play exceptionally well together. Visitors give children an early glimpse of the diverse world in which they live, for example, meeting artists from China and Africa. This provides them with an excellent start in preparing them for future life beyond school.

Outstanding learning and development opportunities provided for children means that all achieve extremely well, often from low starting points, to reach standards above that expected for their age. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve equally well with individual children often greatly exceeding what is expected of them. Highly effective learning takes place because staff have an intimate knowledge of each child's needs. Staff adopt inspired approaches to make learning 'fun' but challenging; for example, the exceptional work of the special educational needs outreach team in making sure there are no obstacles to children's learning. Key staff are extremely successful in settling children into routines, carefully observing and quickly assessing each child's progress, whether inside or outdoors. This ensures a rapid start by successfully laying the basis for developing basic skills and nurturing talents. Highly effective adult support and guidance ensures that children feel confident to explore, ask questions and work independently. Well-timed intervention challenges and extends thinking. Children are encouraged to celebrate and share their success to help each other's development.

Leadership and management are outstanding in the way they promote achievement and learning development. Governors play a full part ensuring that the school is successfully managed and provides excellent value for money. Together, staff and governors carefully and systematically monitor the school's work. Evaluation of strengths and areas for improvement is accurate, although judgements are sometimes modest. Issues raised in the last inspection have been successfully tackled. As a result, children's achievement has been further boosted. Staff leave nothing to chance in their determined push to ensure the needs of every child are met. Consequently, the school has an excellent capacity to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no areas for improvement other than those identified by the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children's achievement is outstanding. Many children start nursery with skills below that which is expected for their age. Speech and language skills vary noticeably. No matter what the

starting point, all children make excellent progress in their learning, both in the classroom and outdoors. As a result, by the time they leave nursery nearly all children exceed the standards expected of them for their age. The achievement of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities matches the excellent rates of the other children because the care and guidance they receive is so very effective. The school is aware that on entry, boys' creative skills are not always as well developed as those of girls. Imaginative approaches are used to ensure that by the time they leave nursery, the boys have caught up.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development is outstanding. The warm, caring and safe environment ensures that children enjoy their learning and are not afraid to explore and be inquisitive. They thrive in the freedom of the outdoor area whether riding their trikes to the petrol station or learning how to grow vegetables. They have a very good grasp of the benefits of exercise and healthy eating. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. In this happy and active nursery children are exceptionally well behaved. They listen carefully to adult guidance and their sheer enthusiasm to learn results in them working constructively and with purpose. As a result, they often become engrossed for extended periods. They are considerate as they move around or when using equipment. They are very quick to adjust to routines, for example, learning the importance of personal hygiene by washing their hands after digging. They hold simple conversations with adults, express their views and readily take responsibility as they tidy and help clean up. By the time they leave nursery, children are confident, self-assured and really well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

Quality of provision

Effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development

Grade: 1

Learning and development are outstanding. Staff demonstrate an excellent grasp of how children learn. As a result, learning activities are extremely well planned and organised. Learning is made exciting, by for example, hatching chicks and butterflies, and giving children the skills to observe and make accurate comments. There is seamless movement between adult-directed activities and child-initiated tasks because of the high expectations and excellent relationships. Staff are observant and assess progress accurately so that approaches are exceptionally well tailored to meet the needs of each child. This aptly demonstrated in the communication through pictures approach used to help those children who have difficulties with communication. Successful use of themes, visitors and role play, for example, when the emergency services, provide first hand experiences of the wider world. Children enjoy learning about other cultures and languages. Staff miss no opportunity to boost personal skills no matter what the location or activity.

Effectiveness in promoting children's welfare

Grade: 1

The quality of welfare is outstanding. As a consequence, children learn successfully in an extremely safe, calm and friendly atmosphere. Adults quickly get to know their children and families and are swift to respond to any individual worries or concerns. This includes working with parents in the home often prior to child's arrival in the nursery. As a result, children settle

speedily when they first arrive. Arrangements to safeguard children and promote their welfare are in place. Despite being located in a Victorian building, great care and attention is taken to ensure the health and safety of everyone, whether indoors or outdoors. Children are effectively managed and taught how to adopt safe habits and routines. They also have the opportunity to attend breakfast or lunch club. Exceptionally strong links with outside agencies and parents ensures that comprehensive support is provided for all children especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The nursery has a well deserved reputation in the local community as a consequence of the strong and effective leadership and management. The headteacher, adeptly supported by staff, makes certain that all children thrive and do as well as they can. The headteacher inspires total commitment from all the staff. They know exactly how the school can continue to improve and is demonstrated in the very good progress made since the last inspection. They successfully use the information gained from the careful checking of children's progress to raise achievement, devising even more stimulating and often inspirational learning activities. Governors provide expertise and support though they are never afraid to critically challenge. At the last inspection many strengths were recognised and these have been successfully added to. This provides the school with excellent 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 is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do children in the EYFS 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/or disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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 effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 September 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Oxhill Nursery School, Durham, DH9 7LR

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to your school. A big thank you to you all for making me so welcome and telling me about the exciting things you do. This letter is to tell you what I thought about your nursery.

I think that you are very lucky to go to such a wonderful nursery. I could see how much you really enjoyed your learning whether indoors or outside. All of the grown-ups in your nursery work so very hard and look after you so really well. As a result, you are all doing wonderful things in your learning. You are also developing into considerate and nice young people. Your mums and dads think you go to an excellent nursery school and I fully agree.

You have an excellent headteacher and the staff and governors help her exceptionally well. They are always looking for new ways to make your nursery even better. I have asked them all to continue all their hard work and I have not asked them to make any improvements.

Good luck to you all and enjoy all the exciting activities you have every day.

Best wishes

Clive Petts

Lead inspector