

Tudhoe Moor Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113991
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	325920
Inspection dates	12–13 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Rodger

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)	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Louise Shepherd
Headteacher	Mrs Steph Collings
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2006
School address	Tudhoe Moor Spennymoor County Durham DL16 6EX
Telephone number	01388 816112
Fax number	01388 814634

Age group	3–4
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The Nursery serves a wide area with mixed levels of social and economic disadvantage. Most children are White British with a very small number of children learning English as an additional language. A small number of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and a very few have a statement of special educational need. The school runs an outreach centre for children with additional learning needs. A Sure Start Children's Centre runs alongside the Nursery and provides full day care for children from age 0–8. In addition, there are several support groups for parents. There are various patterns of part-time attendance for the children attending the Nursery. The headteacher has been in post for two terms.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good Nursery which is successful in its aim for 'every child in this setting to feel safe, secure, happy and healthy'. Personal development is outstanding. Parents appreciate the care and attention given to the children. They praise the supportive and helpful ways in which staff help children to settle. This is a major strength excellently supported by the recent introduction of children from the Children's Centre working alongside the Nursery children.

Children enjoy coming to Nursery. They relate very well to all adults, particularly their key workers. Children are developing a very good appreciation of a healthy lifestyle and value the freedom they have to play outside. Children behave very well. They learn to cooperate and take turns which equips them well for later life. The Nursery is a focal point for the local community. The local supermarket sponsors the Nursery by, for example, providing the ingredients for the children to bake cakes as a fundraising activity. This activity enables the children to learn how they can help to support those less fortunate than themselves.

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are slightly below those expected for their age. They make good progress and reach above standards by the time they leave, as a result of good teaching and a varied curriculum. There is some underachievement in learning letters and sounds that the new headteacher has identified as a priority for improvement. This area for improvement was confirmed by the inspection because helping children learn to read and write is not consistently given a high enough priority in the planned weekly activities. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early so they achieve well. The Nursery has excellent links with specialist support staff, such as the health visitor, and social care and health workers. There are good systems in place to track the progress of individual children. Weekly meetings are used to share information about the children which is then reflected in the following week's plans. Recent changes to the daily organisation mean that children are able to follow their interests and work closely with an adult in planned activities, but the time spent in very large groups is less effective because children are not always sufficiently involved.

Children's welfare is excellent. Children become good learners as a result of the example set by all staff. The impact of the extended provision, such as breakfast, lunch and after-school clubs, is evident in the confidence and ease with which transitions are made and the value placed on these services by parents. Staff are vigilant in checking safety around the Nursery, inside and outside, through their daily checks of equipment. Children are kept safe and their well-being is assured because of the extensive training undertaken by staff to protect them.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has particularly high aspirations for the Nursery and the continuing development of the excellent partnership with the Children's Centre. Good steps are taken to seek parents' views with the result that self-evaluation is accurate. A strong, common sense of purpose is developing with all staff. The Nursery has made very good improvements since the previous inspection, for example in planning and assessment, and has an excellent capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the priority given to developing children's literacy skills in adult-focused activities.
- Review the daily organisation to provide more small-group activities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start in the Nursery with a level of skills that are a little below age-related expectations. They achieve well and many exceed their early learning goals; standards are above average. Children attending the Nursery for five terms make particularly good progress. Achievement in personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. Learning in aspects of communication, language and literacy is less effective. The Nursery's analysis of progress confirms this and there are plans to improve this in the near future. Day-to-day opportunities to promote good listening to stories and to talk about matters of interest are good, but there is insufficient priority given to reading and writing in the weekly adult-focused activities. Children learn to count and recognise numbers in many ways through games and practical activities. Children with additional learning needs make good progress and achieve well. Children who attend day-care sessions as well as the Nursery generally achieve better than other children in all areas of learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's outstanding personal development and well-being are excellently captured in the close partnership the Nursery has with the Children's Centre. The opportunity for children in day care to play alongside the Nursery children helps to achieve a smooth transition into the Nursery. This results in very confident children who are able to forge excellent relationships with each other and the staff. Children's behaviour is excellent and their attendance is good. They are exceptionally well motivated, and work and play together very harmoniously. Because children stay for lunch, they understand that some food is good for you. Healthy snacks reinforce the importance of leading a healthy life. Children have time to follow their own interests inside and outside, and learn to develop independence as they put on their coats and boots to play in the snow. Sharing is promoted by playing games and taking turns on the sledges. Parents are very happy about the ways their children are kept safe and secure. Links with the community are good. Children visit the local community and perform for shoppers at Christmas time.

Quality of provision

Effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development

Grade: 2

Children learn and develop well. Teaching and learning in small group sessions organised by key workers are good and sometimes outstanding because all children are involved and explanations and questioning promote effective learning, for example, of days of the week or recognising their names. At other times, children choose to learn independently inside or outside. Sometimes, children are taught as a large group which is less effective as it makes meeting the individual needs of the children difficult and leads to some children losing interest. A new planning system is developing very well. Specific activities for each week are planned to take account of the needs of individual children. The narrow focus of these on only one area of learning means that opportunities for children to learn and apply basic literacy skills are too infrequent. Displays around the Nursery reflect the good breadth of the learning and development but do not give a high enough priority to reading and writing. Parental involvement is central to the work of the Nursery. Assessment is excellent. Recently introduced individual

profiles provide an ongoing photographic record of achievement with comments and next steps. An evaluation of parental views admirably demonstrated how pleased they were with these journals.

Effectiveness in promoting children's welfare

Grade: 1

The care of children is outstanding. The key worker system works extremely well. Small groups of children meet together with their key worker daily and this very effectively eases them into the sessions and provides them with a secure haven when they come into the Nursery. There are robust systems in place to ensure that all children are safe. Risk assessments and health and safety audits are very well maintained. Arrangements to safeguard children meet requirements. First aiders are recently trained and up to date with current requirements. Staff are vigilant at all times. They work very well in partnership with the Children's Centre staff to maintain the safety of the Nursery and centre. This partnership also works very well in preparing children as they move into the Nursery.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management by the headteacher are good in all respects and exemplary in the priority given to continually seeking to make improvements. This is a most impressive aspect of the headteacher's visionary leadership. Alongside this ongoing vision is a clear understanding of the need to work as team and value the contributions of everyone. Parents are full of praise for the calm and secure ethos that pervades the Nursery. There is an excellent partnership with the Sure Start Children's Centre that is making a tremendous impact on the personal development and well-being of everyone, children, staff, parents and external support agencies alike. This success is down to the very good work done by the headteacher to make the partnership work. The headteacher uses her professional knowledge well. For example, she has introduced a more manageable assessment scheme. This is now delegated to a senior member of staff and is proving to be a very useful tool to monitor children's progress. In addition, there is particularly good deployment of resources and staff to support learning.

Areas for improvement identified by the inspection concur with the school's development plan. Self-evaluation is therefore an accurate appraisal of current strengths and weaknesses and future needs. Governors are very supportive of the headteacher, attend appropriate training and work closely with the headteacher to identify what needs to be improved. The Nursery contributes greatly to the development of community cohesion. The school works very hard with those families that are hard to reach. There are close links with the various organisations in the local community and festivals and celebrations are used very effectively to develop children's awareness of the diversity in distant communities.

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

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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
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?	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
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	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Tudhoe Moor Nursery School, Durham, DL16 6EX

Thank you all so much for making my time in your Nursery such great fun. You clearly enjoy playing inside and outside, especially in the snow. Please thank your mums and dads for letting me know what they think about your Nursery. I am sure it is no surprise for you to know that your Nursery is good and has some outstanding features too.

What is good about your Nursery:

- you enjoy learning inside and outside and have a great time
- you learn well and make good progress that prepares you well for your next school
- you all learn how to behave and play together as good friends
- all the staff in the Nursery care for you and make sure you are safe
- your headteacher works very hard to make sure you have the best.

I have asked that the Nursery give you lots of time to play and to work in small groups. Also, I have asked them to give some of you more help in reading and writing, just like the recently introduced system to read your name cards at the start of each session.

I really enjoyed the heart-shaped biscuits you made to raise money for a charity.

Best wishes

Rosemary Rodger

Lead inspector