

# McMillan Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117692
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kingston upon Hull City of
<b>Inspection number</b>	339052
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 June –1 July 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joe Peacock

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	184
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs A Hallows
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A Shimmin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	Eleventh Avenue Hull HU6 8HT
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited twelve lessons and observed all three teachers. They also inspected the day-care provision located in the Children's Centre, spending time in all the three rooms allocated to different aged babies and children. Inspectors held meetings with the acting headteacher, governors and staff, talked to parents and children, and looked at school planning and assessment data. They examined the school's documentation including minutes of governors' meetings, improvement planning and that relating to safeguarding and children's welfare. They scrutinised 43 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and the ones returned by staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of strategies to raise attainment in communication, language and literacy, particularly for boys
- the quality of provision and its impact for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the resources for modern technology and if these are being used well enough to support and enhance children's learning
- how effectively staff with management responsibilities and governors are continuing to improve the school in the absence of the headteacher.

## Information about the school

This nursery school is part of a Children's Centre which opened five years ago and includes an original Sure Start building. Only about 20% of children transfer from the day care into the nursery school. Most children are from a White British background. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. The school provides morning and/or afternoon education for children in three classes, each with its own outdoor learning area. Day care for young children between 0 and 5 years of age is provided all year round between 7.30 am and 6.00 pm in three rooms within the children's centre. A breakfast club is also organised and managed by the governors. The deputy headteacher has been covering as headteacher since April because of the long-term illness of the headteacher. The school has been identified as a School of Creativity.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

McMillan Nursery School is outstanding and the day-care provision offers an excellent quality of care and education. Children attending both settings benefit from the high quality of leadership and management and from staff working in close partnership to share expertise. The good quality of teaching and learning is instrumental in developing children's curiosity and fosters an enthusiasm for new learning experiences. The generous staffing ensures children with special educational needs and/or disabilities have the close support and expertise they need to do well. Specialist expertise for the few nursery children who spend time in the nurture unit, is reinforced by staff when they return to classes. This enables most of these children to make outstanding progress.

The excellent level of care, support and guidance ensures that children are very happy at school and in day care. They often hide in the bushes from their parents if they have to leave early! Attainment on entry to the nursery school is well below that which is typical for this age. The close attention afforded by the attentive and well-trained staff throughout gives children confidence and a strong sense of security. Most settle quickly and soon become engrossed in the many interesting and exciting activities that surround them. Their behaviour is excellent when working with adults or sharing resources indoors and outside with others. They achieve well and make good progress from their starting points. By the end of their nursery year, many reach the expected level for their age in most areas of learning. Boys' communication skills, however, lag behind those of the girls'. The school has identified this weakness and introduced some measures in both settings, such as providing more activities of special interest to boys. One aim, to use modern technology equipment much more, is limited by the availability of resources. All children make particularly good gains in their personal and social skills and creative development.

The school is one of thirty nationally to be a School of Creativity following its successful involvement in the project. This stresses the importance and sensitivity of adult-child interaction in promoting a personalised and relevant curriculum. The result is an outstanding curriculum providing memorable experiences and rich opportunities for learning for all. Self-evaluation is rigorous, giving staff an accurate picture of strengths and areas to be improved further. Given the expertise available from staff and governors, and their united determination to minimise the effect of the absent headteacher, there is a good capacity to go on improving.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Close the gap in attainment in communication, language and literacy between boys and girls in the nursery and day care by:
  - embedding the recently introduced initiatives to raise boys' attainment in general and their writing in particular
  - planning more activities indoors and out which interest boys and encourage them to write
  - making better use of modern technology to support and enhance their learning.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of children****1**

Children listen attentively to their teachers and respond quickly to instructions. They clearly enjoy excellent relationships with the caring and supportive staff in school and the day-care provision, and this gives them the confidence to share equipment and help one another when working independently. In all activities, children are usually totally absorbed in what they are doing and work harmoniously with one another. For instance, they enjoyed bird watching, identifying those seen from a chart and helping one another to complete their lists, huddled in the tepee. Boys in particular relish the play and adventurous activities outdoors, with many preferring to spend time on these rather than practising their writing skills.

Children invariably make good progress because of the outstanding provision for them during their time in day care and nursery. All are carefully assessed on entry so that staff can better plan for their individual needs. Assessment data and inspection evidence clearly shows most make good progress in all areas of learning and achieve the expected levels for their age by the end of their time in nursery. A recent focus to close the gap between boys' and girls' attainment is making a difference in most areas of learning but the gap remains the widest in communication, language and literacy. Initiatives such as the National Reading Campaign, aimed at encouraging a love of language, stories and reading, are raising the attainment of boys and girls. Most confidently use computers and modern technology such as digital and video cameras, but having relatively few of these resources means less time spent using them as children have to wait their turn and share them with others. This is a limiting factor on their impact on children's learning.

Children are quick to highlight potential hazards and have an excellent understanding for their age of how to stay safe and live a healthy lifestyle. They speedily find an adult, for example, if they think something is dangerous or 'not allowed'. Most are very proud of their school and delight in sharing pictures of their activities and adventures in the forest. They respond immediately to the signal to tidy up and share responsibility for doing a thorough job. All enjoy wearing different national costumes from around the world and the celebrations for Chinese New Year and Diwali, for example, enhance their knowledge of other cultures and religious festivals. Self-reliance, self-discipline and independence are strengths of their development and their joy of learning ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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*These are the grades for children's outcomes*

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Children's attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of children's learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which children feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Children's behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Children's attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Staff expertise, a common set of values and shared procedures ensure that the overall quality of provision is just as high in the day-care provision as it is in the nursery school. Effective teaching throughout is the result of effective teamwork between teachers and support staff. In the day-care provision, staff in each of the three rooms regularly have the support and advice from a nominated teacher from the nursery school to ensure high standards are maintained. Strengths in both settings include high expectations of children, excellent behaviour management and the imaginative use of resources, particularly outdoors. These features promote learning and enjoyment. Outdoor learning is exceptional because the space allows for many stimulating activities to be planned, such as building dens and adventure and role-play experiences. Occasionally, staff do not get the right balance between how much they talk and how much they listen to children. After particularly exciting experiences, they do not always give children the opportunity to tell others about them. Staff use modern technology resources well to

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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stimulate learning. For instance, children enjoyed counting frogs projected onto a white sheet, trying to catch the image of a spider or showing others their shadow dance moves.

Staff constantly assess and record children's activities and use this information exceptionally well to plan the next steps in their learning carefully. This ensures individual children, including those who are at different stages in learning to speak English, are provided with activities which precisely meet their needs. In the day care, planning is of the same high quality and stems from the equally meticulous assessment of learning. As a result, children are enveloped in a rich tapestry of memorable experiences, particularly in terms of their creative development. Personalised learning journeys provide the driving force to the constantly evolving curriculum. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is further enhanced by exciting visits to a nearby forest where children can use tools to make stick puppets or light fires under close supervision. Throughout, all children have their own key member of staff. The care, support and guidance that this arrangement provides is exceptional. It ensures all children make the most of their time in the nursery school or day-care provision. Highly effective policies and practice, rigorously applied by leaders and managers, ensure there is seamless provision between the two settings. Children are closely supervised and safely transferred from the breakfast club into school and when leaving the school to spend time in day care. Those staying for breakfast are provided with a healthy and nutritious start to their day.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>2</b>
	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

### **How effective are leadership and management?**

The nursery school and day care are in safe hands because staff are used to working as a team. They are successfully compensating for the absence of the headteacher as management systems and routines are so well embedded. This is ensuring the smooth day-to-day running of the school and day-care provision, where all specific requirements are met.

Staff and governors share the same passion, ambition and drive for continuous improvement. Governors have their fingers firmly on the pulse of things and are increasingly becoming involved in rigorously monitoring how effectively current priorities

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for improvement are being met. The benefits are seen through the consistently good quality of teaching and excellent use of assessment to plan the curriculum. Staff are determined to provide the best possible start for the children in their care and are already planning to meet the challenges of a reduced budget for next year.

The partnership with parents is a major strength and being part of the Children's Centre facilitates close partnerships with a wide range of other agencies and services which meet the needs of families and children. Comprehensive policies and procedures ensure all children are equally valued and supported. All have equality of opportunity in many respects but boys are still lagging behind girls in the development of their skills in language and communication. Action plans to promote all aspects of community cohesion are in place. Both settings are cohesive communities and children have a good knowledge and understanding of the wider community. There are good policies and procedures for safeguarding and ensuring children's safety and welfare. Risk assessments are particularly rigorous and allow children to enjoy exciting activities which are closely supervised.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	2
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	2
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	2

## Views of parents and carers

The response to inspection questionnaire was very positive. Every parent and carer agreed, for example, that they were happy with their children's experiences at school. 'It has been truly amazing for me and my child,' was a typical comment. Inspectors agree



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with their positive views after observing the high level of care and attention given to every child and the encouragement for their learning afforded by the spacious, inspirational outdoor accommodation and exceptional curriculum. The nursery school and day-care provision staff clearly enjoy the same excellent partnership with parents and carers and have rightly earned their trust and admiration.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at McMillan Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 184 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	80	12	20	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	77	14	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	66	16	26	5	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	61	23	38	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	45	74	14	23	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	62	20	33	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	61	24	39	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	30	49	27	44	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	62	21	34	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	67	16	26	2	3	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	62	21	34	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	40	66	19	31	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	72	15	25	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



2 July 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of McMillan Nursery School, Hull, HU6 8HT

The inspectors really enjoyed their visit to your school and the day-care rooms in the Children's Centre. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful.

Three big and very, very loud cheers are in order because inspectors agree that you go to an outstanding school. That is a very big word and it means that your school is fantastic, super and one of the best! We also agree that it is just as outstanding in day care.

Your parents see how keen you are to come to school and day care to enjoy all the interesting and enjoyable things planned for you by a hard-working staff. The inspectors were impressed with your shadow dancing to Mamma Mia music, the fun you had in the forest lighting fires, the dens you built in the bushes, the clever things you can do on computers and the way all of you tried your best to be good readers and writers. We think the boys need a bit more practise to catch up with the girls, particularly in their writing skills. So, we are asking your teachers to plan some fantastic things for them to do so that they can have lots to write about. Maybe they would enjoy reading and writing even more if they did it on a computer?

Inspectors could see how superbly well all the staff look after you. It is easy to see why you are so proud of your nursery school. I hope that you will carry on enjoying your learning indoors and outside and having a happy time in your brilliant school and wonderful day-care rooms.

Yours sincerely

Mr Joe Peacock

Lead inspector

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