

Seaham Harbour Nursery School

Bottleworks Road, Seaham Harbour, County Durham, SR7 7NN

Inspection dates 11–12 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- This is a happy and nurturing environment in which all children thrive. Excellent relationships with staff and the high level of their care make sure that children feel extremely safe and secure.
- All members of staff, leaders and members of the governing body understand the school very well. They work extremely effectively as a team to identify areas for development and successfully address actions for improvement. This ensures that the school remains at the forefront of early years practice.
- A wealth of policies and procedures ensures that children are kept safe and every eventuality is covered. All staff are very aware of these and daily practices in implementing them is excellent. However, some documents are out of date and need to reflect the current leaders' and managers' areas of responsibility.
- Parents recognise the excellence of the setting and the commitment of staff. Parents appreciate greatly the staff's warmth and understanding as they support their children in building children's confidence and helping them become independent learners.
- The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children are taught to consider the feelings of others and how to manage their own emotions. This encourages outstanding behaviour as children work happily together, caring and sharing.
- Children access a wide and exciting curriculum which stimulates and motivates them to investigate and learn more. Staff constantly consider children's achievements and interests as they plan activities which continue to engage children's imaginations.
- Teaching is outstanding and all staff work at high levels of competency as they understand how children learn best. Teamwork is exceptional and, together, staff continually change and adapt plans for learning in order that each child is supported to make best progress.
- Children are encouraged to learn through play. A successful blend of direct teaching and supportive learning ensures that learning moves at a rapid rate. Children are encouraged to question, explore and investigate. Consequently, the children quickly become confident and independent learners.
- The development of early reading, writing and mathematics is highly effective. Every opportunity is used to weave the recognition and use of letters and numbers through a range of activities. Children demonstrate their grasp of these as they make use of them in their play.
- Achievement is outstanding. From their starting points children make rapid progress and are very well prepared for their move to primary school. All groups of children are extremely well supported to make best progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector made observations over eight formal and informal nursery sessions. The headteacher took part in one shared observation with the inspector.
- Separate discussions were held with nursery staff, parents, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. The opinions of nine members of staff were also considered from their questionnaire responses.
- The inspector observed the school's work, looked at records of children's achievements through learning journals, tracked information on children's progress, planning for learning, the monitoring of the quality of learning and information relating to the welfare of children and safeguarding.
- Account was taken of the 25 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the views of parents as they picked up their children from nursery.

Inspection team

Kate Pringle, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is of average size for a nursery school.
- All children access 15 hours of provision each week either as five morning and five afternoon sessions. Additional sessions, which are chargeable, are available to parents throughout the week.
- The vast majority of children are of White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- Additional wrap around child care facilities are run by a private company in their own premises adjoining the nursery. The provision works in partnership with the nursery sharing the use of the facilities and staff. This setting also provides early breakfasts and lunches for nursery children. The work of this provision did not form part of this inspection and is reported upon separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Regularly review and update policies and procedures so that they reflect the current responsibilities of leaders in school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The passion of the headteacher for the school and its children is compelling. Her enthusiasm and drive are reflected in the work and aspiration of all staff and governors as they work together to promote children's excellent progress and exceptional behaviour. The relatively new assistant headteacher has quickly become an integral part of the setting bringing her individual expertise to promote further change.
- Regular monitoring of teaching and carefully focused staff training ensure that the quality is consistently high. Staff share their strengths to support each other's needs and the sense of teamwork is considerable.
- Every child is valued and included in this warm and harmonious setting. Staff recognise when children require specific support and work together successfully providing equal opportunities for all children to achieve well whatever their background or needs.
- Children's needs, and those of their families, are very well addressed through the strong and effective relationships between staff and a range of different agencies from outside of the school. There is deep understanding and rapid recognition of every child's needs, and practitioners are quick to respond and ensure that children and families receive the appropriate support.
- Systems are embedded well to track children's progress and the school continues to work upon further improvements to present systems. The excellent links between children's achievements and what they need to learn next form the basis of planning the curriculum for the week. Careful tracking of different groups of children means their progress over time is carefully considered and this information is shared regularly with staff and governors.
- Partnerships with parents are outstanding. Parents are effusive in their admiration for this nursery which, they believe, provides exceptionally well for their children. Parents recognise how well their children are supported and the lengths that staff are prepared to go to provide the best care and learning for their children. Levels of communication are excellent and parents take advantage of the many opportunities to share in their children's learning and celebrate their achievements. Parents believe that their children enjoy nursery and make excellent progress. Parents who responded to Parent View and those spoken to by the inspector all recommend the school wholeheartedly.
- An exciting curriculum reflects children's interests and developing skills as staff constantly review and adapt plans to widen children's understanding of the wider world. Excellent use is made of a range of experiences through visits and visitors and these stimulate children's curiosity to learn more. Children love stories and take every opportunity to share books as they happily 'read' big books retelling stories to their friends and staff.
- Personal and social development is central to the work in this school. Every opportunity is taken to enhance children's understanding of how to play happily with their friends and to understand what is right and wrong because they are encouraged to consider how they would feel in a given situation. Children learn about the celebrations of different cultures throughout the year through festivals such as Diwali, and Chinese New Year alongside those traditional British celebrations of, for instance, Pancake Day and Easter. This means that, from an early age, children begin to understand the different life styles of people in modern Britain.
- A raft of policies and procedures support every aspect of provision in the nursery. These are well understood and implemented on a daily basis by staff to ensure the safety and support of all children. However, some of these policies were out of date and need to be updated to reflect the changes of named leaders' roles and responsibilities.
- The implementation of statutory safeguarding requirements by leaders is very well managed. Regular risk assessments and the monitoring of logs, for example, for accidents and the administration of medicines, are well embedded and ensure the safety of children.
- The local authority provides a light touch for this outstanding school. Its qualities are well recognised and the headteacher's expertise is shared with others in the county.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very active and highly knowledgeable of this school. They understand what makes it outstanding and how to retain this quality. Governors celebrate the successes but are mindful of the need to be constant developing in the light of changing standards nationally. To this end they support and challenge senior leaders further to improve provision.
 - Governors have high levels of knowledge and skills which they use to good effect, for instance, by appointing high quality staff in order to maintain excellent quality. Governors carefully track the monitoring of teaching against the progress children make and carefully link teaching to performance to pay.

- Together governors and leaders have excellent capacity to continue the high performance of the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is outstanding. From the very start, children are encouraged to play positively with their friends. They learn to share and take turns as they are encouraged to understand how their actions could affect the feelings of their friends.
- There are well-embedded, established routines in place which the children understand, and comply with. Routines are applied consistently by staff. Children listen carefully to adults, and this has a good impact upon their learning. Children behave extremely well both indoors and outdoors.
- Children are very caring of each other and recognise when their friends are hurt or upset. They take the time to draw the attention of staff to their concerns and ask 'Are you ok?'
- Parents believe that behaviour is excellent, and this helps to keep their children safe from harm.

Safety

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding. Children love coming to school as seen in their excellent attendance.
- The children trust the staff implicitly and feel extremely safe as shown in their confidence in making independent choices as they access all areas of the setting.
- Staff consistently consider the level of risk in activities and teach children to recognise dangerous situations. As a result, children have a very good understanding of what is safe and what is not. They access a wide range of situations where they are encouraged to carry out tasks safely. For example, children are taught the safe use of drills and hacksaws as they make seats for the small world and notices for doors from wood off cuts.
- Parents believe their children are safe and secure. They know the high expectations of staff in the school help to keep their children safe and happy.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Children enjoy their learning. They love coming to school where they quickly become confident and independent learners.
- The consistency of approach and the excellent interaction of staff with children ensure that all children engage fully in learning at their individual levels. Adults note the progress children make and use this information very well to 'tweak' activities which further motivate the children's interest.
- Staff continually use questions to search the depth of children's understanding giving them time to consider and reflect. There is an excellent understanding of the capabilities of individual children and what they need to learn next.
- Staff focus upon the development of children's speaking and listening as they develop language and increase children's bank of words. This is central to children's understanding as they make outstanding progress in expressing their thoughts and ideas.
- High-quality play means that children learn successfully. For example, carefully planned activities enable children to strengthen muscles through tasks which encourage them to refine their co-ordination. Whilst some children happily dug their way through the sand pit looking for pirate treasure, others carefully drew maps of their pirate island.
- Children investigate and explore through activities which increase their understanding of the world in which they live. Staff quickly take steps to advance vocabulary and extend learning. For instance, children digging found a number of bones which they deduced must be dinosaur bones and this introduced new vocabulary such as fossil and diplodocus.
- There are excellent opportunities both indoors and outdoors for children to use their early skills in reading, writing and number. Staff sing their way through the day and children happily join in with this strong focus on rhythm and rhyme which provides an excellent way to remember new learning.
- Children quickly become emerging readers and writers and use their skills to 'read' stories from books to their friends and write in the cards they have made. Children have a well-developed understanding of letters and the sounds they make for their age and many use these successfully as they write lists.
- In mathematics, children happily count to 10 and re-order numbers successfully on the washing line

understanding the concept of more and less. They happily add to or take away to arrive at the correct number needed. Children recognise basic shapes and use this vocabulary in their play.

- Low ability children, those who are disabled or with special educational needs and the most able make equally excellent progress because individual needs are quickly identified and the necessary support or challenges are put in place.
- Staff record children's achievements through learning journals which are shared with parents. These carefully chart the progress their children make and parents enjoy reading them and make contributions to them.
- Parents believe that teaching is excellent and that their children make outstanding progress.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- When they join the nursery, the vast majority of children have considerably weaker skills than is normal for their age in all areas of the learning. Skills are particularly low in personal and social development and creativity, in mathematics and understanding the world.
- Children make outstanding progress in all areas of learning, and children leave nursery very well prepared for their Reception Year in local schools.
- Because their confidence levels are high, children quickly show their independence and happily make choices that interest them. They find their coats and hats as they prepare for outdoor activities trying their very best to put these on, seeking help only when they 'get stuck'.
- Children are supported extremely well in their language development and the considerable strides they make in this areas helps them to express themselves well in making equally good progress in other areas of learning.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress from their different starting points. The school identifies their individual needs very quickly and puts in place individual programmes to support their needs, and this assures their best progress.
- The most able children also achieve exceptionally well because every chance is taken to provide exactly the right levels of challenge for them. As a result, the most able children leave nursery with skills above those expected for their age.
- Children have excellent opportunities to develop their physical abilities. A wide range of outdoor equipment helps to develop successfully their agility, such as in climbing and jumping. Other activities help children to fine tune their manipulation of tools as they stir and mix in the mud kitchen and drill and saw pieces of wood. This accent upon strengthening of fingers helps children to develop a good pencil grip ready for writing.
- Throughout their nursery experience, children thrive in this provision which seeks to provide the very best of learning opportunities.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113975
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	449527

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 of pupils on the school roll	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Ward
Headteacher	Carole Scott
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2012
Telephone number	0191 581 2829
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