

Seaham Harbour Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113975
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	378776
Inspection dates	24–25 January 2012
Lead inspector	Margaret Shepherd

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	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Williams
Headteacher	Carole Scott
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Margaret Shepherd

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent six hours observing teaching across indoor and outdoor provision, and children's learning as a whole school, in groups and also independent learning. The school's one teacher was seen and all of the support staff. Discussions were held with parents and carers, children, governors and staff. The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised documents relating to self-evaluation, safeguarding, baseline assessment, tracking information and teachers' planning and assessment. Thirty-six questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed. There were no responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Information about the school

The school, which is of broadly average size for a nursery school, serves a large area of Seaham and feeds into six different primary schools. All children attend on a part-time basis. From September 2011 the school increased the number of children attending the morning session by 13. The great majority of children are White British. A small proportion of children are at an early stage of learning English. Two per cent of children have statements related to their disabilities or special educational needs. Since the previous inspection, extra accommodation has been added on to the main buildings.

Childcare facilities are run by a separate, privately run company with their own premises adjoining the site. They share some of the school's facilities. This includes a breakfast club that some Nursery children use. The setting did not form part of this inspection but its inspection report can be found on the Ofsted website.

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	1
Achievement of children	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of children	1
Leadership and management	1

Key Findings

- This is an outstanding school. It is committed to continually extending and improving provision. The headteacher, governors and staff are determined to provide high-quality education for every child. Children's achievement is outstanding, with each individual making excellent progress. Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school's provision.
- The quality of the teamwork among staff is excellent. Each team member has an excellent understanding of every child's different needs and quickly identifies any barriers to learning. The organisation of each session is complex and extremely effective. Planning is meticulous, systematically covering every strand of the Nursery curriculum while taking into account children's current interests or suggestions. Indoor provision and outdoor provision are equally effective. Assessment systems are extremely thorough and include the production of high quality learning-journey books.
- Behaviour is excellent. The key-worker organisation is extremely effective. There is a very calm and productive start to the beginning and end of sessions. All staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. They support individuals very well. There is a strong emphasis on the importance of keeping safe. There are very clear routines across all parts of the school session, which children understand very well. They move independently between indoors and outdoors with great confidence. They tackle new experiences with enthusiasm. Children develop a very clear understanding of the importance of sharing and cooperating with each other.
- The headteacher has very high aspirations for the school. She introduces change skilfully and monitors all aspects of the school in depth. The analysis of data used to track individual children's progress is very productive. It identifies individual children very specifically for future support but the technical systems for producing these data are too time-consuming. The school provides excellent opportunities to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development. There is a highly stimulating curriculum based firmly on children's needs and interests.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further refine the systems for analysing data about children's progress to make them more efficient, by:
 - scrutinising and evaluating other nursery school data collection systems
 - modifying the current methods on the basis of the evaluation
 - monitoring the new system to check its efficiency.

Main Report

Achievement of children

All parents and carers are very pleased with the progress that their children make. The inspection confirms their views. Children relish the wide range of learning opportunities throughout the school. They settle very quickly into their key-worker groups and thoroughly enjoy responding to their new learning. They show high levels of confidence in choosing from the range of activities on offer, whether this involves working with an adult on tasks, such as constructing a huge rocket from their own designs, or selecting an independent task. They move confidently between the outdoor and indoor areas and show great imagination in combining different resources to extend their learning. For example, children used a wide range of different methods to fix a large tube that had split in the desert sand area. Children engage in imaginative play very confidently. They thoroughly enjoy taking different roles. For example, in the new Chinese cafe the customers chose their menu with care and were thrilled to develop the skill of using chopsticks to eat the healthy stir fry. Progress in reading is particularly good, with children listening carefully to stories, suggesting what might happen next and handling books with care. They also make rapid progress in language and communication, and numeracy because of the many opportunities they receive to extend these skills.

Children with special educational needs and disabled children achieve very well because they receive extremely well-focused adult support. They relish the different special activities, such as bursting bubbles or stroking the fabrics on each page when responding to one of their favourite books. More-able children rise to the additional challenge that is provided and are delighted to share their new learning with the rest of their group. Children are very proud when staff produce non-fiction books for the reading corner, based on their experiences. Children with English as an additional language make outstanding progress in acquiring language skills. They gain great confidence in extending their vocabulary within the different practical group activities where key words are introduced systematically. The school's data analysis identifies a clear group of carefully targeted children with specific learning needs. These individuals respond extremely well to the many opportunities planned for them to increase their progress.

The great majority of children enter the school with skills below the expectations for their age, with some children having skills well below this level. A very small minority of children enter with skills above the expected level. By the end of Nursery the great majority have reached the expected level across all strands of the curriculum and the more able children have reached higher levels than expected for their age.

Quality of teaching

Staff have an excellent understanding of the way that children learn and they use this to stimulate and challenge individuals throughout their time in Nursery. They use very carefully focused questions to extend children's learning, and skilfully intervene during independent learning. There is very careful deployment of staff across the outdoor and indoor environments and between leading groups or supporting individuals after they have chosen a task. Adults have an excellent understanding of each other's roles during any part of a session and they complement each other's teaching extremely well. All adults are very ready to act on children's initiatives to extend their learning. For example, when a child suggested marching around after a group had been introduced to different musical instruments and investigated their sounds, the child was delighted to lead the group in a grand procession.

All planning is based on a thorough analysis of individual children's learning from the previous week, as well as children's own ideas about what they would like to do next. There is a very careful balance in the planning between indoor and outdoor learning, independent or adult-led learning and small groups or whole-school activities. Staff provide an excellent range of well-organised resources that are very accessible for children. Staff plan and use information and communication technology very effectively, ranging from the provision of carefully written programs to the use of child-friendly cameras to record learning throughout the nursery. The teaching of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an integral part of the staff's approach to learning. They are quick to seize opportunities for extending children's imagination and to help them to reflect on their experiences.

Assessment systems are an integral part of the daily sessions. All staff play a valuable role in observing individuals' progress, which is then recorded efficiently. There are efficient checking systems to ensure that every child's learning is assessed across all the areas of learning. These assessments are collated in very high quality learning-journey books. They are beautifully presented and include records of whole-school activities, such as Remembrance Day. Parents and carers play a valuable role in contributing to these books. The books are used extremely effectively in termly parents' and carers' meetings and include very child-friendly reports that outline progress made, future targets and the child's own views. Parents and carers are very grateful that staff are so accessible and that they have such a thorough understanding of their children's particular needs and interests. The inspection confirms these views.

Behaviour and safety of children

Personal, social and emotional development has a high priority throughout the nursery. The planning and assessment for these areas is of the same high quality as

the other areas of learning. This results in very good levels of behaviour within each aspect of the school's provision and confirms parents' and carers' views.

Children move confidently between parents and carers and the school staff because there are well-organised systems at the beginning and end of sessions. This also allows very good communication between adults that contribute very well to individual children's safety. Parents and carers greatly appreciate this feature of the school's provision. They all agree that their children are happy and say that staff are always accessible if they have any worries. Children's movement between the nursery and the childcare provision is also very well organised to ensure their safety and well-being.

Children have high levels of respect for each other. Boys and girls play happily together. They all have a good understanding of the school rules and of making the nursery a safe place to learn. They develop a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. There is no tolerance of any intimidation between individuals and no bullying. Children with special educational needs and disabled children play a full part in nursery activities and other children are delighted to celebrate their successes, no matter how small. There is the same picture with children in the early stages of learning English. Individuals handle resources carefully and are aware of the importance of taking other children's needs into account. For example, they were willing to wait their turn in choosing from the range of toppings for the pizzas they were making and were interested in each other's preferences.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and acting assistant headteacher work very effectively together, in close partnership with the governors. Leaders evaluate the school's provision very thoroughly and take decisive action to drive improvements forward. Monitoring is an integral part of improvement planning and is strongly focused on the quality of learning. For example, the outdoor provision was judged as less effective than indoors. Systems were extended outdoors to such good effect that it is now an extremely powerful learning environment, a very valuable resource, which has a significant impact in increasing children's progress. All staff have clear roles and responsibilities and are keen to play their part in developments. Administrative systems run very smoothly. There is a very well-organised programme for staff development that applies to all members of the staff team. All these features ensure an excellent capacity for future improvement.

The curriculum is outstanding. It provides highly positive, memorable experiences and rich opportunities for high-quality learning. It ensures that opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are part of children's everyday experiences. For example, children were very delighted to take part in the whole school dragon dancing to celebrate the Chinese New Year.

The promotion of equal opportunities and tackling discrimination of any sort is one of the key principles of the school. It results in all groups of children making rapid progress through the rigorous systems that allow every child to access the vibrant curriculum and the high quality teaching. Leaders, governors and staff all monitor safeguarding carefully. The governing body has a very good balance of expertise. It

has a very good understanding of the key strengths and improvement issues for the school.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the child's work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the children's attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



26 January 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Seaham Harbour Nursery School, Seaham SR7 7NN

I thoroughly enjoyed visiting your school this week. Thank you very much for welcoming me into your nursery. I would like to tell you some of the things that I found out.

You go to an excellent school. All of your teachers work very well together to help you do your very best to learn all sorts of exciting things. They plan interesting things for you to do every day. I could see that you thoroughly enjoyed celebrating the Chinese New Year with your dragon dancing and your Chinese cafe. Your learning is excellent, whether it is indoors or outdoors.

Your behaviour is excellent and you understand how important it is to keep safe. You move around the building and outside very sensibly and are very good at making choices about what you are going to do. When you have chosen you concentrate really hard. You are very respectful to each other and are very pleased when other children are successful; particularly your friends who are just learning to speak English and the children who find it a bit harder to learn new things. You make lots of suggestions about what you could learn next and then really enjoy carrying them out. The huge rockets that you made were wonderful.

Your headteacher, staff and governors work very hard to check how well you are learning and then they record what you have done in your learning-journey books. These books are excellent and I know that you are very proud of them.

I wish you every success in your future learning.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Shepherd
Lead inspector

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