

Harewood Centre Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108134
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	356306
Inspection dates	24–25 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Lesley Clark

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	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Jack Kershaw
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Harling
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2008
School address	Harewood Avenue Pontefract West Yorkshire WF8 2ER
Telephone number	01977 722835
Fax number	01977 722835
Email address	headteacher@harewood.wakefield.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Seven lessons were observed and one teacher and four staff were seen teaching. Meetings were held with governors and staff. The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including the children's 'record books' (collated information about children's nursery experiences), the school improvement plan and documentation relating to safeguarding. The team analysed questionnaires returned from staff and 31 from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether outdoor learning opportunities are exciting, purposeful and thought-provoking and promote children's independent learning as well as those indoors.
- Whether children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make better progress than other children and, if so, why.
- The factors needed to make governance more effective.

Information about the school

Harewood Centre Nursery school is smaller than other nursery schools. It serves a large estate, close to the centre of Pontefract. It offers flexible part-time nursery provision for three- and four-year-olds. Most pupils are White British. Very few children are learning English as an additional language. Twelve per cent of children have special educational needs and/or disabilities and a further 17% are identified as needing additional support. An above-average proportion has a statement of special educational needs.

The on-site playgroup and parent and toddler groups were not part of this inspection. They are inspected separately and the report is available 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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good nursery. It is improving at a good rate because it is well led and managed. The nursery has several outstanding aspects. It places equal opportunities at the centre of its work. As a result of some excellent practice, gaps between different groups of learners are closing. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. This is underpinned by outstanding partnerships with parents, carers and outside agencies. Children throughout the nursery are given excellent care, support and guidance. They flourish, as a result, gaining in confidence and developing good communication and social skills. Parents and carers rightly say their children, 'smile when they come into nursery and smile even more when they leave because they've had a good time'.

Children achieve well. From below-average starting points, children reach expected levels in all areas of learning. A small proportion exceeds this, especially in communication, language and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development, reflecting the nursery's focus on these elements. Children make good progress because they are taught well. They spend most of the time leading their own learning and have a good range of interesting activities to choose from. Opportunities outdoors for children to think for themselves and solve problems are sometimes limited. Staff take a great deal of pride in preparing children's 'record books'. These are beautifully presented and valued by parents and carers. However, while they clearly show children's varied learning experiences, they do not always give a full picture of what children know and can do.

The nursery has developed well since the last inspection. Self-evaluation is very largely accurate, though a little cautious at times. The nursery has a good local reputation for its outstanding provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attendance is now good even though some children have long-term absences due to medical needs. The governing body is effective and very supportive of the school. There is an improving trend in children's attainment, reflecting the impact of rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. The school clearly demonstrates its good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the opportunities for children to solve problems outside by:
 - ensuring activities are purposeful and make children think
 - developing the range and scope of problem solving, reasoning and numeracy activities outdoors.

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- Ensure that 'record books' give a sufficiently clear picture of what children know and can do by:
 - including some of the observations that staff make of children's small steps in their learning
 - including more annotated photographs which show children's progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children**2**

Children achieve well. They thoroughly enjoy their learning. They skip into nursery and quickly busy themselves. New starters settle very well because staff are welcoming. Children become confident and independent. They feel secure because their key workers take special care of them.

Children's starting points vary considerably from a sizeable proportion with little or no speech to a small proportion with above-expected levels of attainment on entry. More-able children make good progress in early literacy skills, writing down customers' orders in the Chinese restaurant, for example. Average-attainers make equally good progress, especially indoors where tasks require them to concentrate. At times, outside, children drift from one activity to another when the activities lack exciting, exploratory possibilities. When activities challenge them to think and to solve problems, they concentrate for long periods of time, as when the children used bricks and sand to build the 'Great Wall of China' or added different things to ice.

Lower-attainers make rapid progress in communication skills because staff skilfully develop their language so they can explain what they want. Children who are learning English as an additional language make good progress, supported by bilingual staff. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make exceptional progress because staff use very clear individual education plans to help them make small steps in their learning. They are fully integrated into all play activities.

Children become aware of how to keep safe through educational visits and visitors to school, such as the fire service. They know that they need to wash their hands before having a snack. They try a wide variety of fruit and vegetables with different tastes and textures. They behave well and use equipment safely. They know to say 'sorry' if they inadvertently hurt someone. Children use ideas from visits into the community in their play, requesting 'double buggies for twins' and 'diggers and cement' so they can build. They develop a good understanding of different cultures through studying the Chinese New Year, for example, and search for Antarctica on globes so they can see where penguins live. They are well prepared for their future lives, for they are sociable and communicative young people who like learning.

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These are the grades for children's outcomes

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

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good, with some outstanding practice. Staff understand exactly how to encourage children with special educational needs and/or disabilities to learn step by step, following the child's lead. They use signs as part of the daily routine, so hearing impaired children and those who have little language learn to 'speak with their hands'. Staff are skilled at generating conversation and asking questions. For example, staff asked children to explain what was happening as the tiny colourful sugared strips they were sprinkling on water turned white. 'The water's washed them clean', they replied. On occasions, staff miss opportunities to push children's learning on through giving them problems to solve on their own. When practice is outstanding, children learn rapidly, as when a group of more-able children shrieked with laughter, saying Snakey is slithering up' and told the snake puppet to 'start from the top' as he tried to draw his letters. Their own attempts demonstrated to Snakey exactly how to do it.

Staff collate a great deal of accurate information about children's progress, which they use to help them plan activities. They also take lots of photographs of children's learning, to use in displays or laminated books for the children. These are not shared fully with parents and carers in the 'record books', however, so they can see exactly what their children know and can do at each stage of their development.

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The curriculum, with its strong emphasis on communication, personal, social and physical skills, meets the needs of all children well, with exceptional provision for children who have physical disabilities. Outside, opportunities are missed to develop children's problem solving, reasoning and number skills through purposeful learning activities.

Children are known as individuals and key workers have excellent relationships with children and their families. This is why attendance is above average. The school's work with families, children and a very wide range of agencies, promotes the outstanding progress of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and gives exceptional support to individuals facing challenging circumstances. Children's special educational needs are identified extremely early and so they get help quickly. Pastoral care and transition arrangements are exceptionally good.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and nursery teacher are successful at communicating high expectations to all staff and developing a strong team spirit. All staff have specific responsibilities and contribute to the nursery's continuing improvement. The headteacher and nursery teacher check teaching and learning regularly and give apt development points. A major strength is the extensive training all staff undertake to develop their practice further. This has had a significant impact on the provision and support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, for instance.

The governing body plays a full part in decision making. Members have constructive relationships with staff and families. They ask the right questions to support the school. The school has highly positive relationships with parents and carers. It gives them a great deal of information each month about what they can do at home to support their children's learning. Informal discussions at the start and end of sessions, as well as regular parents and carers' meetings, ensure they are well informed about their children's progress.

The nursery promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination outstandingly well. As a result, gaps between different groups of learners are closing rapidly. For example, lower-attaining children are making excellent gains in language development as a result of targeted support. The school has clear safeguarding policies and procedures. Staff work as a team to ensure children are safe and secure and all have suitable child-protection training. The nursery has excellent community links and children are developing a good

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understanding of international places and customs through the curriculum. The impact of the school's good commitment to community cohesion is felt strongly within the nursery and children from different backgrounds get on very well together.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire have very positive views. They praise the nursery's 'warm and welcoming atmosphere' and say 'staff are very approachable.' Parents and carers of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities commented on how much progress their children have made, 'more than we would have thought possible', because of the nursery's 'excellent care'. The inspection team found that the school is extremely supportive of both the children and their families.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Harewood Centre 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 inspector received 31 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 61 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	84	5	16	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	94	2	6	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	22	71	8	26	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	68	10	32	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	81	6	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	84	5	16	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	81	5	16	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)	23	74	4	13	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	77	7	23	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	77	6	19	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	74	8	26	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	28	90	3	10	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	94	2	6	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 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



16 January 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Harewood Centre Nursery School, Pontefract, WF8 2ER

Thank you for your warm and friendly welcome. We really enjoyed meeting you and watching you learn. You certainly smile a lot at nursery! You behave well and clearly have a lot of fun. You go to a good nursery. Your key workers and other staff take excellent care of you. Your parents and carers think so too. Your nursery has excellent links with them and with lots of other people who all help you to learn well. You have interesting activities and turn into friendly, chatty young people who are interested in lots of different things. Those of you who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress.

We have asked your nursery to do two things to make it even better. This is what they are and these are the reasons why.

- We have asked staff to give you more problems to solve outside so you have to think and work things out for yourself, like building the Great Wall of China, for example! We want you to have more problem-solving, reasoning and number activities outdoors because there is so much more you could learn about in a fun way.
- We want your nursery staff to put some of the things they write about you straight into your 'record books' and some of the photographs too because these show your parents and carers exactly what you know and can do.

We hope you enjoy these new things and carry on coming to nursery every day just like you do now.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lesley Clark

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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