

# Oxclose Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108751
<b>Local authority</b>	Sunderland
<b>Inspection number</b>	377810
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 April 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Moira Fitzpatrick

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>	86
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Debbie Hull
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Heron
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Brancepeth Road Oxclose Village Washington NE38 0LA
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Moira Fitzpatrick  
Graeme Clarke

Additional Inspector  
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed two teachers and six practitioners in 17 lessons, indoors and out, including children's self-directed play. They held meetings with the staff, members of the governing body and a group of parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work, examined children's learning journals and looked at the school's procedures for safeguarding children. They examined a range of school documents including teachers' planning, records of monitoring activities and evaluations of its own work and data recording children's progress. In total 59 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed and their views taken into account, as well as the views of staff in the questionnaires they completed.

## Information about the school

The Nursery is larger than the average-sized Nursery school. The large majority of children are of White British heritage. A very small percentage of children speak English as an additional language. The Nursery is part of the physical and medical Partnership Local Authority Resourced Provision and has an allocation of four places for children with additional needs relating to physical and/or medical barriers to learning. The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs, including those assessed as school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. The school provides extended care for children in the Nursery and the adjoining primary school. The wraparound club provides before- and after-school care for these children, including breakfast and tea. Lunch is provided for those Nursery children whose parents and carers request it.

The school has undergone some staffing turbulence since the previous inspection. Since then two teachers have retired and been replaced. This year, several new staff have been appointed to accommodate the increased number of children who are disabled or who have special educational needs. The headteacher took up post in September 2010.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because teaching across the school is not consistent enough to ensure that children make exceptional progress. Pastoral care is outstanding, it promotes excellent feelings of safety and security in children and contributes exceptionally well to their academic and personal development. Provision for children with physical and/or medical barriers to their learning is good and improving well as staff develop their ability to pinpoint the needs of individual children. Assessment of children’s learning and developmental needs is not consistent or accurate enough to ensure the outstanding progress.
- Children’s achievement is good. They are enthusiastic learners who have developed confidence and can learn without adult support. All groups of children make good, and occasionally exceptional, progress in their learning. For all groups of children, progress is most rapid in their personal, social and emotional development and their language and communication skills.
- Teaching is good. Some recently introduced systems for assessing learning have not fully embedded so that the impact is not yet as strong as it might be. The well-planned and exciting curriculum takes good account of children’s natural curiosity and interests and is carefully tailored to challenge and engage them.
- Children’s excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning make a significant contribution to their learning and enjoyment of school. They show a well-developed sense of responsibility and feel safe because they have been taught simple rules. They know the boundaries of what they may and may not do without adult support.
- The headteacher provides an excellent drive for improvement through well devised and effective systems for leading teaching and managing performance. Good leadership and management, by the recently formed senior leadership team ensure that the school’s work is well monitored, so that ambitious and realistic targets are set for improvement.

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

- Raise children's achievement by:
  - sharing the school's most successful assessment methods to improve planning so that children are constantly given high levels of challenge and their progress accelerates
  - refining systems to quickly identify and meet the changing needs of children who have complex barriers to their learning through physical and/or medical needs.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Children of all abilities make good progress in their learning. Those children who are disabled or have special educational needs are well supported to make good progress by careful observation of their needs, and regular sharing of information between staff about their development and interests. For example, one child, with severe physical barriers to learning, sustained good concentration to develop hand and eye coordination, when building towers from wooden blocks. The support assistant knew well how much he enjoyed this activity and was careful to alter the challenge with different blocks. The child's delight at building each tower of sufficient height to make a real tumble when it collapsed was evident in the gleeful expression on his face and his determination to have another go.

Children's learning in lessons is good because of their excellent attitudes to learning. They thrive on well organised routines which give them the confidence to constantly try new activities. This fosters their independence very well so that they are able to make choices about what they will do and persevere with an activity till they have discovered all they want to learn. Children work happily alongside each other, often playing together and giving each other support. For example, a group of children 'cooking' outdoors were very happy to share 'ingredients' and give each other leaves and water to make their stew. They enjoyed comparing 'stews' and developed their language well under the careful guidance of the teacher who was on hand to suggest appropriate words. The gains made in communication, language and literacy skills are noteworthy. The result is that children are confident speakers, good listeners and have a very good awareness of different sounds, gleaned through short direct teaching activities such as making 'silly soup' with groups of words that have the same sound. When they join the nursery the majority of children show skills and development that are typical for their age. By the time they leave their attainment exceeds the level expected. Children with physical and/or medical barriers to their learning are well prepared for the next stage because they have learned to relate comfortably to a range of adults, to join in with other children and to express their preferences for different aspects of learning. Although assessment is not always ensuring teaching is consistently challenging there is no evidence that any group is making less than good progress. The headteacher's awareness of the need for sharper assessment indicates the school's determination to ensure all children make the best possible progress before they move on.

Parents and carers accurately believe that their children make good progress and achieve well.

### Quality of teaching

Teaching is improving quickly. The majority is good, with some that is outstanding. Staff have been fired with enthusiasm by sharing methods and ideas to develop the curriculum so they get the best for and from children. A comprehensive review of learning resources and planning has led to rapid improvement in teaching and made staff alert to how children can adapt resources to extend their learning. For example, a group of boys showed good cooperation and determination to pack boxes into a lorry for deliveries. They readily accepted a suggestion from the teacher to sort the boxes and work out how they would know which shops they were to be delivered to. This led two boys to devise labels for the boxes, while another suggested keeping them together for each shop. When the activity was played out, the children had engaged in much discussion, decision making, mark making and plenty of 'give and take'.

Staff plan direct teaching so that children learn through practical activity, which makes their learning memorable. In an excellent example, aimed at developing children's knowledge of number, the teacher used a bus journey to involve children in counting passengers on and off the bus. Every opportunity was used to extend children's knowledge of numbers and counting, so that children were undaunted by the challenge of keeping up with how many got off, then how many got on the bus. They were fully engrossed and delighted that they could surprise their teacher with the right answers. Activities such as these, which abound throughout each session, make a very powerful contribution to children's excellent spiritual moral, social and cultural development.

Teachers are constantly honing their skills of observation and recording the significant moments in children's learning. While the quality of this is still variable, overall the use of information about their progress is making a strong contribution to increasing the rate at which children learn. Staff are alert to the needs of children who are disabled or have special educational needs and give good support to ensure they make similar progress to others. The school is aware that to achieve the high standards for which it strives, further improvement is needed to ensure consistency in the assessment of children's learning and development. Parents and carers unanimously agree their children are well taught. Inspection found that teaching is good, with some outstanding practice.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Children's excellent behaviour is a hallmark of the school which has been maintained since the previous inspection. It creates a happy, safe climate in which young children thrive because they feel safe and secure. This positive atmosphere allows children to dare to try different activities or join in with others to learn from and alongside them. Adults set an excellent example in the quality of their relationships and in the way they support each other, so that it is easy for children to know how they are expected to behave. They are kind and helpful to each other and sympathise when another child is tired or upset. Any inappropriate behaviour is quickly spotted and gently dealt with by vigilant staff, so that bullying behaviour does not develop. Children enjoy having responsibility for returning the register, helping to make snacks by cutting fruit and serving drinks, and are always keen to help at tidy up time. Excellent care, support and nurturing give children, including those who use the wrap-around care provided by the school, a very strong sense of safety and belonging. Staff take the time to know all children well so that they are able to respond to any difficulties they may see children experiencing. For example, a child was given excellent support and encouragement to climb down from the Diddy-gym, after climbing higher than was comfortable. The child's relief and delight at having overcome the difficulty was obvious

and typified how much trust the children place in their teachers. Children's excellent feelings of safety are directly linked to good routines that are established quickly when they join the nursery. The care staff take time and patience to explain how to use equipment and which equipment, such as the Diddy-gym, children are not allowed to use by themselves. The needs of children, with physical and medical barriers to their learning, are meticulously monitored and weekly meetings ensure that information is shared regularly and expert medical advice regularly updates the school's practice. Parents and carers overwhelmingly agree that their children are well cared for, that behaviour is good and that bullying is not an issue in the school. Inspection evidence indicates that behaviour is excellent and that children are cared for exceptionally well.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher is uncompromising in her drive to raise children's achievement and has moved quickly to establish and train an effective leadership team. Senior leaders and all staff support her vision. Effective monitoring of teaching has led to improvement through continuous professional development and performance management. Roles and responsibilities are well distributed and all staff contribute to improving the school by constantly challenging themselves to improve and share good practice. The development of teaching is exceptionally well promoted in a climate of support and challenge. A strong passion for learning and total commitment to getting the best for children and their families is evident across the school.

Regular and robust monitoring of children's progress and staff performance identifies accurately where the improvements are needed and prompt action is taken to tackle these. This has enabled the school to improve the quality of curriculum provision, involve staff in improving provision through excellent teamwork and to accelerate children's learning in communication, language and literacy. The headteacher's ambitions for improved provision for children with physical and medical barriers to learning, to ensure that their progress is the best it can be, are being realised through the continuing development of staff expertise and close partnership with external specialists who advise staff. The accuracy of priorities and sustained improvements demonstrate a good capacity for further improvement.

The good, and rapidly improving, curriculum successfully promotes children's outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by providing a wealth of learning experiences which inspire and develop children's view of the world and themselves. The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs of all children, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs. Equality of opportunity is well promoted through robust policies which are well implemented by staff. To achieve its high ambitions for all groups of children, further improvement is needed in the accuracy and use of assessment of children's learning. The governing body is knowledgeable about the school and hold it to account well. Members ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Records are meticulously kept, staff and the governing body are well-trained in safeguarding matters and risk assessments are robust. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated.

## 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 pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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 pupils. 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 December 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](http://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 pupils' 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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 pupils 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 pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' 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.**



20 April 2012

Dear Children

### **Inspection of Oxclose Nursery School, Washington NE38 0LA**

Thank you very much for making us welcome when we inspected your Nursery. Your excellent behaviour and kindness to each other were a pleasure to see. We could see that you enjoy learning very much, that you are happy and make good progress in your nursery. You are learning so much that you will be more than ready to move into your next school when the time comes. This makes your families very proud of you. Well done.

Your teachers look after you extremely well and plan many exciting things for you to do each day. They take great care to make you feel safe so that you can be confident and decide for yourself what to learn about. They know that you like to learn by yourself and keep a watchful eye to make sure you have help when you need it. They also help you to learn well in your small groups which helps you know so many things about sounds and how to count and learn new words. I was very pleased to see how much you like to learn outside and that you are clever enough to put on your coats and wellingtons, and get out to play no matter how chilly or wet it is. It was lovely to see how well you washed those bicycles, to make them look shiny and new. I really enjoyed booking my holiday to Spain too and having a trip in the aeroplane that some of you made. It made me forget all about the rainy day!

Your headteacher and teachers want you all to be the very best you can be and have made a lot of changes recently to help you learn more quickly. One thing I have suggested to make your Nursery even better is to help teachers to share any information they have about your learning and work together to keep your learning exciting and lots of fun so that you learn even more than you do now!

Our best wishes to all at Oxclose Nursery.

Yours sincerely

Moira Fitzpatrick  
Lead Inspector

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