

Bensham Grove Nursery School

Sidney Grove, Bensham, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE8 2XD

Inspection dates 6–7 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Parents are highly appreciative of all that this nursery offers. One view, reflecting the thoughts of parents, refers to children who are 'happy, supported, safe and well taught' in a school where 'staff can be praised and best practices recognised'.
- The achievement of all children is outstanding. Improvements to how children learn have had a very positive impact on children's independent learning and their understanding of letters, sounds and numbers.
- Whatever their starting points, each child receives the appropriate care and support they need to make excellent progress in all areas of learning.
- Teaching is outstanding because staff reflect on the day together and make sure that learning moves on quickly from their observations of what individual children show they can do.
- The outside environment is particularly exciting and provides wonderful opportunities to investigate, explore and question the natural world.
- Behaviour and safety are excellent. As they play and carry out tasks, children learn to take measured risks as they use different tools safely.
- Children have secure and caring relationships with staff and this helps them to grow into confident and independent learners.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to learning. Children are encouraged to reflect upon new situations they encounter as they play together and make friends.
- The headteacher is inspirational. Staff and governors share her clear direction for the school. Raising the quality of teaching has ensured that children's interests and assessments determine their next learning needs.
- Assessments are regular and there is a clear overview of the progress of all children and of individuals. The progress of specific groups of children is not as clearly demonstrated.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector over two days. The inspector visited nine learning sessions or parts of sessions. The headteacher took part in a joint observation with the inspector.
- Separate discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body, the manager of the day-care centre on site and a representative from the local authority. The opinions of eight members of staff were also considered from their questionnaire responses.
- The inspector observed the school's work, looked at children's learning journals, data on children's progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and information relating to the welfare of children and safeguarding.
- The inspector considered 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). She took account of the results of the school's own questionnaire to parents, as well as a letter from a parent and discussions with parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Kate Pringle, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This nursery school offers placements for 91 children. Most children access their 15 hours entitlement by either five morning or afternoon sessions.
- Most children enter the nursery when they are three-years-old and transfer to reception classes in neighbouring schools in the term before their fifth birthday.
- Most children are of White British heritage. About a quarter of children come from different ethnic backgrounds and most of these children speak English as an additional language.
- At present there are no children with special educational needs supported at early years action. Few children are supported at early years action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The nursery shares the building with a national day centre with which it has a close working partnership to provide wrap-around care. The day care centre was not part of this inspection and will be inspected separately.
- Recently the nursery has received Government funding for the two-year-olds in schools project and works with these younger children in partnership with the day-care centre.
- The headteacher and staff provide examples of excellent practice to other schools in the local area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Use assessment data to record the progress of different groups of children on a regular basis and be able to demonstrate the proportions making expected or better than expected progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- From starting points that, for most, are below those typical for their age, children make rapid progress in all areas of their learning. By the time children move to reception classes in a range of neighbouring primary schools, all reach the expected levels for their age and a good proportion attain at higher than expected levels.
- Children develop considerable confidence and independence as they make choices of where to play and learn. Children's social skills develop very well in every aspect as they learn how to work and play together happily as they share and take turns. They learn about responsibility as they help their teacher in small tasks, for example, when they give out drinks to their friends, or take a message.
- Communication and language skills develop quickly. Adults constantly extend children's knowledge of words through questions encouraging them to reflect and explain their thoughts and ideas. Good opportunities for children to engage in role-play and share stories help their understanding that text has meaning.
- Staff constantly refer to the sounds letters make and children are encouraged to develop their reading and writing skills through mark making using paint, chalk, pencils, felt pens and mud sticks. Almost all recognise their name and many write their name using the initial letter. Some make a very good attempt at writing it all. As children become ready for further challenge, they work in small groups to learn how letters and sounds link to make words.
- Children are challenged to develop their physical and creative skills. Indoors and outside, a wide range of activities encourage children to build their strength, coordination and balance. They become skilled at climbing and building using large apparatus. They cut and fix in a variety of ways, as when children constructed rockets using scissors, tape, sticky plastics and glue. They are encouraged to use their imagination to create pictures, investigate sounds and tell their own stories using different resources.
- Children become increasingly good at recognising and using numbers to 10 and sometimes further. They are able to use their counting skills for example, to accurately correspond one item with one number. The more-able children readily identify one more or less than a number. Teachers constantly draw attention to shape and measures through children's play as they talk about where to place objects or how long objects have to be to fit a space.
- Children who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, or those who are at any early stage of speaking English as an additional language have additional support, which ensures that these children make similar progress to other children.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Staff work very successfully as a team to provide exceptional learning. This is because teachers constantly record the abilities of each child, which they use to prepare for the following day's activities. They consider appropriate resources, how to extend activities to provide additional challenge and new activities to develop children's interests.
- For instance, discussions about the birds and the colder weather promoted a discussion about feeding the birds. As a result, the following day small groups of children made bird feeders using cones, lard and seeds. As they worked they talked, increasing their vocabulary, their understanding of what birds needed to eat to stay alive and developed their fine motor skills as they wrapped the wool around the cones and twigs to hang them.
- Children arrive ready to engage with whatever is on offer. With their parents they 'sign in' and quickly become involved in the activities on offer. As parents depart, children begin well-organised sessions in which they are encouraged to make choices about what and how they learn. There is always time to consider, and talk through, their experiences with their key

workers who listen and respond to their findings, prompting new vocabulary and ways to express thoughts and ideas.

- Both indoors and outdoors, children show high levels of concentration as they complete their chosen tasks. As they retell the story of Goldilocks together, make diva lamps, shine torches on different surfaces, or cut up fruit for their snack, children concentrate for long periods of time on the activity and this improves the quality of their learning.
- The outside area provides children with different environments and activities to learn in, from the mud kitchen to the forest school. Children investigate every nook and cranny turning up stones and leaves and discussing together what they find. Talking is central to learning and staff probe children's learning as they ask just the right questions to further their understanding and challenge their thinking.
- Assessment is thorough and is used very successfully as a tool to measure individual progress. Notes are constantly taken and used in children's learning journals to chart their progress. All information is fed back through daily team meetings to determine where more support is needed or to increase challenge and this is why all children progress so well.
- Parents greatly appreciate the learning journals because they can share with their child the progress they make. They also find the home/school books to be a good link, especially for those children who attend the day-care centre, and say they help them know what their child has been learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children are safe and happy at school. Parents are unanimous in their support of this. There is no evidence of any bullying and children are taught to care for and to look after one another.
- Children obviously love their time in nursery and attend regularly. They enjoy all of the different activities and learn responsibility as they help to tidy up. They are encouraged to be independent and make every attempt to put on their boots and waterproofs when they go out to play in the water, on bikes and trikes or make pies in the mud kitchen.
- Simple rules of hygiene are introduced as children are encouraged to use the toilet and to wash their hands independently afterwards or before working with food.
- Safe risk-taking means that children learn to judge what is safe for them in their work and play. They use various tools including scissors to cut different materials, real knives as they chop up their fruit for their snack and garden tools when they are digging and planting in their forest school.
- Relationships with staff are very positive and children feel secure. A number of children are looked after by day-care staff and the handover between nursery and school at the beginning and end of sessions is quiet, calm and seamless.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The strengths of the last inspection have been built on with much greater emphasis to use what children have learnt to inform teaching plans. Changes to the way in which key workers plan together have been crucial to improved progress. Detailed discussions identify what changes need to be made for the following day. This has resulted in all children making consistently good progress and a good proportion who make outstanding progress.
- Together, staff work to make sure all children have the same opportunities and there is no discrimination. Assessment information is shared enabling all staff to have a good understanding of how individual children are progressing and where additional support or challenge is needed.
- Data records clearly show the progress of individuals and all children. However, for specific groups of children, such as boys and girls, those with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language, the records do not show well enough the proportions making expected, or better than expected, progress.

- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Regular monitoring of teaching and safeguarding ensures that children are safe and have the best access to learning. Outcomes of monitoring are fed back to staff and this, together with wider discussions about performance, identify appropriate professional development linked to the needs of individuals and the school. Salary progression is clearly linked to performance.
- The curriculum has been developed to widen children's experiences and make best use of available space. Pertinent decisions by the headteacher have raised staff expectations, increased children's independence, creativity and opportunities to think for themselves. The outside area and the forest school make the best use of the outside environment and these are supplemented by well-chosen local visits and visitors to the school. The constant promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness permeates every aspect of school life.
- Parents are seen as having a crucial part in their children's learning and the school makes every effort to share their expectations for each child. Relationships are honest and every attempt is made to help parents to contribute to learning. The school works with a wide range of external agencies to support those children and their families whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- Links with the day-care provision, which provides wrap-around care for children, are very good. There are increasing opportunities for staff to work together and provide for children and their families.
- The school is well supported by the local authority which works closely with staff on a regular basis. The local authority makes good use of the expertise of the headteacher and her staff to demonstrate best practice in local primary schools, and of those further afield.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is strong. Governors understand well the strengths of the school and what it needs to do to improve further. Individual roles and responsibilities are linked to individuals' expertise and governors make regular visits, or check documents, to ensure that best practice is sustained. Governors are confident to question and challenge and provide excellent support for the headteacher. They know how the recent money from the government for the two-year-olds project in school is being used and keep a pertinent eye on all finances to secure best provision, rewarding good performance when appropriate. Safeguarding practices are thorough, well documented, well monitored and more than meet statutory requirements.

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	108320
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	425904

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	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Donavan
Headteacher	Denise Henry
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2011
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