

Oxclose Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108751
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	324827
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Joan Elton

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 on roll	
School (total)	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Deborah Hull
Headteacher	Mrs Kay Mills
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2006
School address	Brancepeth Road Oxclose Washington Tyne and Wear NE38 0LA
Telephone number	0191 2193618
Fax number	0191 2193619

Age group	3–4
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school is about average size for a Nursery and draws children from a wide range of backgrounds. A large majority of children are of White British heritage. Of those from other ethnic groups, a very small percentage is at an early stage of English language acquisition. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is small. The school offers wraparound care. This consists of before and after school sessions for Nursery aged children and older children from the local primary school, lunches and additional sessions. The school has a dedicated Community Room, which is used by local parent and toddler groups and for crèche provision, whilst families attend sessions at the local Children's Centre.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has some outstanding features. These include very high standards of welfare, excellent partnerships to promote children's well-being and very successful personal development. It is immensely popular with the overwhelming majority of parents and carers. One parent writes, 'The headteacher greets you at the door, making everyone feel welcome ... teachers, support staff and lunchtime supervisors all work to make Nursery a special place'. Parents appreciate the school's links with the community, the care taken to keep them informed and the well balanced education on offer to the children. 'I couldn't have asked for a better start to my child's schooling,' writes another parent.

When children begin Nursery, their skills are below those typical for this age group. When they leave, their skills are above expectations in most areas, helped by the majority of them having made good progress in language. This good achievement is the result of good learning and development, and outstanding standards of care, guidance and support. Staff work well as a team to ensure every child develops personally and academically. They ensure planning uses the children's own ideas to foster development, as well as including topical and seasonal subjects. Their explanations are always clear; they successfully encourage full participation in a wide range of stimulating activities and develop language and learning effectively by working alongside children. Questions and activities do not always fully extend the more able children but when this does occur, progress is accelerated. Staff are highly vigilant about children's welfare and give regular prompts about general safety and consideration of others. They ensure children understand the reasons behind the school's 'Golden Rules' of behaviour and praise positive examples.

As a result of this provision, children know the importance of nutritious food, keeping safe and regular exercise; they enjoy school and grow in confidence and imagination from their experiences. Basic skills are developing well, particularly awareness of sounds and number. The key worker system of identifying particular children with particular staff has resulted in better understanding of individual needs and therefore better targeted support.

The school is very well run because of good leadership and management. The headteacher sets a clear direction and communicates a strong commitment to the school's children and their families. Staff and governors all share this commitment and successfully use their expertise to raise achievement and affect improvements. As a result, teamwork is very strong and morale is very high. The leadership team has also provided high quality before and after school care as well as effective wraparound provision. These services offer the same warm, stimulating ethos as the Nursery, where children are helped to grow socially and to develop their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more able children are consistently challenged throughout the day to accelerate progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well. There is a wide range of ability on entry and entry levels vary widely from year to year although they are generally below those typical for the age group. In recent years, children's good progress has resulted in them leaving with skills above those typical for their

age. The evidence of inspection, alongside records of children's progress, show that this year's leavers are well on track to leave with above average skills, having made good progress towards their targets, even though many entered Nursery at a below average level. This progress has been achieved by successfully targeting specific areas for development and ensuring the curriculum is well matched to children's interests. In this way motivation has been sustained and success rates improved for all but some of the most able children, who are at times under-challenged.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This is outstanding, as is spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are fully aware of the importance of healthy eating. As all food served on the premises during breakfast, the after-school club, the wraparound care and the Nursery has been checked by a dietician, children receive consistent messages about nutrition. They also participate in a wide range of exercise and adhere to hand-washing procedures, without prompting. The environment is well organised to keep children secure and to allow them easy access to equipment so that they become very independent. Children are taught to keep themselves safe by wearing suitable clothing for particular weather and activities, tidying up spillages after play and by bending their knees when jumping or dropping from apparatus. Children's behaviour is excellent; routines are well established, courtesy is encouraged and positive behaviour is modelled throughout the day. As one child asked another as he fell nearby, 'Are you OK?' 'Yes, thank you. All right!' came the reply. Children really enjoy school and feel safe there. This is reflected in their good attendance and the recently presented Healthy School Award. Children enjoy participation in community events, such as singing to senior citizens and collecting litter. Their understanding of diversity is growing because of the school's multicultural resources, links with the charity 'World Vision' and sharing the language and experiences of others from different ethnic backgrounds. They are also confident expressing their own feelings and most are sensitive to the feelings of others.

Quality of provision

Effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development

Grade: 2

This is good. Staff know their children well and make every effort to ascertain their interests, incorporating them into weekly planning, so that children can extend them. Staff are highly motivated and enthusiastic. They recognise the success of the new curriculum and enjoy the originality of ideas and imaginative use of resources to develop learning across the six areas of learning. The key worker system of responsibility is working very well. Staff form warm, constructive relationships with children and their families. This leads to more confident children and a better flow of information between school and home so that children's learning is extended. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and the school makes excellent use of outside agencies to acquire additional resources for these children. Sometimes the needs of the more able are not fully met either by questioning or activities to extend learning. When these are successful, children are challenged, think more deeply and experiment more widely. Overall, staff are very effective at raising children's self-esteem, drawing out language and sustaining concentration. The environment is highly stimulating and variety and excitement are added by visits to the local area and specialist visitors.

Effectiveness in promoting children's welfare

Grade: 1

This is outstanding. The school not only has rigorous policies and practices to keep children safe and secure, it also provides exemplary support to families and to children with particular needs, using time, staff expertise and resources. The school meets all statutory child protection and safeguarding requirements and staff training is regularly updated. Risk assessments occur daily for the general site and appropriately for more specific occasions. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because staff ensure they receive the same opportunities as other children. Children's personal development is given successful priority from entry. There is very effective liaison with toddler groups and the school works actively with feeder schools to smooth transition. Children leave with effective basic skills, including speaking to a large group and cooperating with others. They also have a great enjoyment for learning and a wide range of imaginative experiences and interests, on which to draw.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has made good progress since the last inspection because of the leadership and management of the headteacher. She has successfully led a total review of all aspects of school life in order to raise achievement. This has been accomplished, whilst maintaining the high morale of staff and governors, during a long period of staffing instability. The curriculum has been completely revitalised so that it reflects and extends the interests of children. Systems of welfare are rigorously checked to ensure children's happiness and safety is paramount. The headteacher has been well supported by senior staff and governors. Training, role definition and positive encouragement have empowered staff at all levels and the school benefits from their total involvement and expertise. Staff enjoy leading initiatives and active participation in learning and its development.

Governance is good. Governors know their school, share staff's drive towards improvement and successfully help with the school's self-evaluation by regular monitoring. The finances have been well managed to maintain effective staffing ratios and the school is very well resourced. Community cohesion has been successfully promoted in school, locally and globally. The school currently provides good value for money and has good capacity for further improvement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
The standards[1] reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

5 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Oxclose Nursery School, Sunderland, NE38 0LA

Thank you for being so kind to me when I visited your Nursery. I enjoyed my two days with you and also enjoyed reading your parents' questionnaires. They were full of praise for your Nursery. Please thank your parents. Their comments were so interesting. Your Nursery is a good one and in some ways outstanding.

Your nursery takes excellent care of you and works with many other schools and groups to help you get the best start to your education. As a result, most of you make good progress in your work and outstanding progress as young people. You know about the importance of food and exercise for your future life. You know how to keep yourselves safe. I can tell by watching you and talking to you how much you enjoy your learning. You listen and concentrate so well. I am also most impressed with your behaviour. It is excellent. You follow the 'Golden Rules' throughout the day. I heard 'please, thank you and excuse me' many times during the inspection. The senior citizens were most impressed with your singing. It was very kind of you to collect litter. I'm sure people were grateful.

- I have asked your Nursery to do one thing to improve your education. That is to make sure that those of you who find work easy are asked more difficult questions and given more difficult activities to do. This sometimes happens already but not all of the time.

I know your Nursery will achieve this. It is very successful at present and I know your headteacher, staff and governors want you to have the best opportunities. They care about you and your families and want you to do well.

Yours sincerely

Joan Elton

Lead inspector