

Boldon Nursery School

Reginald Street, Boldon Colliery, Tyne and Wear, NE35 9DG

Inspection dates 3–4 March 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The inspirational and forward-thinking headteacher inspires a highly effective staff team who ensure that all children are provided with rich and interesting learning experiences. This includes first-hand practical experiences outdoors in the extensive natural environment.
- Children make rapid and sustained progress from starting points below those typical for their age. Consequently, their achievement is outstanding, enabling them to catch up quickly.
- Teaching is outstanding because the innovative learning experiences and high expectations for each child, including the most able, ensure that all realise their potential in all areas of learning.
- High quality intervention and support is extremely responsive to the precise needs of each child. This ensures that those with specific needs make the same rapid progress as others.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Children are considerate and kind. They are highly motivated and extremely eager to join in a wide range of activities, whether inside or outdoors. They demonstrate high levels of curiosity, imagination and focus when investigating and exploring in the natural world around them.
- Children’s relationships with staff are excellent.
- Children are extremely safe and secure in school. They are taught exceptionally well to recognise risk and danger, and are thoughtful and highly responsive to staff guidance.
- The school’s promotion of children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and firmly underpins the key British values of tolerance and respect which the children learn so well.
- Assessment is rigorous and accurate. High quality observations are sharply focused upon evaluating children’s learning and development. Now and then, opportunities are sometimes missed to document the progress of early writing and mathematical skills even more fully.
- Teaching is exceptionally well led and managed. The talents and skills of all staff are highly effectively nurtured in reflective and self-critical ways.
- Strategies to engage parents are highly positive and effective. Parents particularly appreciate that their views are valued by staff.
- The governing body is extremely well informed. Its members challenge and hold the staff to account in positive ways. Consequently, the school has successfully added to its many strengths since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a range of sessions or part sessions, including seven paired observations carried out with the headteacher. The scrutiny of evidence in children’s learning journals was also carried out with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to sessions and undertook various observations around the school in order to check the quality of what is provided for children.
- The inspector spoke with children and had discussions with the headteacher, a middle leader, staff, governors, parents and the local authority improvement adviser.
- The inspector also examined a range of documents including those related to safeguarding, the school’s view of how well it is doing, the monitoring of staff performance, the school’s improvement plan and records relating to children’s progress and behaviour.
- The inspector took account of 28 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 14 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized nursery school. Children attend part time, mainly for morning or afternoon sessions.
- A very large majority of the pupils are of White British backgrounds with very few who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is typically average.
- A children's centre is situated on the same site, but is not managed by the governing body. It is subject to a separate inspection.
- The nursery works with a wide range of schools locally and nationally to share best practice.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teaching maximises the opportunities that exist to document children's progress and achievement, particularly in their early writing, number and work with shape and measure.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Under the exceptional leadership of the headteacher, supported by a knowledgeable governing body, staff ensure that all children get the best possible start and are extremely well prepared for primary school. The highest levels of achievement are maintained because senior leaders have a crystal-clear vision, are highly ambitious and have high expectations of both children and staff.
- Rigorous and thorough checking of the quality of children's learning by staff ensure that they have a deep understanding of how children learn best. This ensures that children undertake highly challenging activities and their thinking is constantly stretched.
- Performance management is very well embedded with no automatic pay progression. The training and nurturing of staff skills and talents, including those students on placement, draws on regional, national and international best practice highly effectively. Reflective and self-critical approaches at the end of each day, led by staff with responsibilities, make a considerable impact on maintaining children's high levels of achievement in their learning.
- The curriculum is extremely stimulating, incorporating a broad range of rich, inspiring, varied and creative experiences. The statement, 'the best classroom and richest cupboard is roofed only by the sky', underpins the school's ethos and drive to use nature and the seasons to stimulate children's curiosity and enhance their learning. This includes in their early reading, writing and mathematical work.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity exceptionally well and ensures that all children are able to achieve their full potential in all areas of learning. Good relations are fostered extremely well through all that the school does. Discrimination of any form is not allowed and tolerance and respect for difference is promoted highly effectively. This helps to prepare children especially well for life in modern Britain.
- Parents, in their responses to the online questionnaire, are overwhelmingly positive. This is the result of the highly successful strategies from the initial home visit undertaken by staff to ensure full involvement of parents in their children's learning and development.
- Safeguarding and child protection arrangements meet requirements. Vigilant and consistent implementation of effective practice ensures that the day-to-day care and protection of children is excellent.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's performance because it systematically checks performance and challenges senior leaders appropriately.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body plays a full part in shaping the strategic direction of the school. Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and of school performance, using a combination of regular visits and first-hand observations of learning. They analyse children's progress information carefully and use training and briefing sessions effectively to enhance their expertise.
 - The governors assiduously check the impact of any additional funding received to enhance the quality of children's learning. They make very good use of performance management to ensure that underperformance is tackled, when appropriate, and make certain the school is constantly enriching the quality of teaching and learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is outstanding. Children are highly motivated and keen to learn. They play and learn together happily and highly successfully. For example, they learn to share, take turns and help each other very speedily after arrival.
- The warm, caring and happy family atmosphere fosters independence and self-confidence exceptionally well. The excellent role models provided by staff promote tolerance, courtesy and respect extremely well. Consequently, children quickly learn to be considerate, kind and polite. Any unkind behaviour is quickly spotted, questioned and corrected by staff.
- Children display much maturity as they listen closely and respond positively to the direction and guidance of staff. As a result, they develop and display high levels of self-control and cooperation. Children learn quickly by accepting responsibility such as self-registering, getting dressed without help to go outdoors, and tidying away and taking proper care of toys and equipment. Their high levels of attendance for their age reflects the school's success promoting the value of regular attendance in preparation for their move to primary school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding. This work is bolstered by trusting, highly positive relationships with staff. Children run into school happily and go home happily.
- The children show an exceptional awareness for their age of how to keep themselves safe. They are quick to identify risk and danger in potentially tricky situations, such as when using the tyre swing, climbing a tree or pouring themselves a cup of warm chocolate in the outdoor cabin. Children learn crucial skills of balance, coordination and providing a helping hand to a friend quickly.
- When indoors, children learn to use equipment safely and work hygienically, such as when mixing ingredients to bake a gingerbread man. They are well aware of the dangers of an oven when their gingerbread man is baking.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching and the quality of learning support is outstanding. This is because all the staff have a deep insight into each child's abilities, interests, needs and preferred way of learning. As a result, tasks are carefully designed to constantly build upon children's previous learning, both in adult-led activities and those chosen by children; for example, when firstly recognising numbers, putting them in order, then counting to five, then to 10 and finally to 20.
- Staff interact highly effectively with children to create opportunities which reward their curiosity. Staff are particularly adept in following children's thinking and responding to their imaginative thoughts and solutions. For example, one boy was observed totally engrossed constructing and vividly describing a story of a 'loon', his version of a kangaroo which was about to hop off through the willow tunnel in the wilderness area.
- Progress is rapid and sustained because:
 - staff use available assessment information and knowledge of each child to design and shape activities which inspire their imagination and hold their interest for lengthy periods
 - excellent relationships create an extremely motivating climate for children of all abilities to learn and play with a purpose
 - knowledge and understanding is constantly extended through questions which challenge children to think hard
 - opportunities are successfully created which allow children to develop problem-solving, critical thinking and reasoning skills
 - high expectations are set for children to use language and number accurately when explaining their intentions and ideas.
- Children's early reading, writing and mathematical skills are developed exceptionally well because frequent practise of these essential skills is firmly embedded through everyday activities. For example, staff skilfully develop children's grasp of number, counting and measuring in the mud kitchen, counting out pieces of pasta and measuring quantities of split peas and sand to form their mixture.
- Speaking and listening skills are developed rapidly. Staff successfully give confidence to children to express their feelings, emotions and thoughts. For example, after composing and acting out a story outdoors, such as building a rocket with tyres to fly into space to recover a jewel, children are encouraged to write some of the key words from the story when they return indoors to the studio.
- Children's progress and achievement are recorded and accurate assessments made. These are used to inform and decide the next steps of their learning and whether or not children need additional individual support. Evidence of their learning is well documented, with each child's progress over time easily identified by their allocated individual coloured pencil. However, occasionally opportunities are missed to document even more evidence, particularly of early writing and number work.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children enter the nursery with skills below those typical for their age. Their speech, language, social and emotional skills are sometimes a weakness. Children get off to a rapid start developing essential confidence, independence and self-control. All make rapid progress and achieve highly. This ensures that they are well prepared for the Reception Year in a primary school.
- Those children who have special educational needs also make rapid progress because their needs are

precisely pinpointed, and extremely effective intervention and support put in place. This includes partnership working with specialist agencies, such as with speech and language therapists, to make certain that any barriers to children's learning and development are fully met.

- The learning of the most-able children is extended particularly effectively. They are expected to complete challenging tasks which incorporate higher-order language and number skills. For example, providing the correct positional language in an activity which required plastic crates to be stood on end next to, and to the left, of crates lying on the ground.
- Those children who join the nursery with weaker communication and language skills are extremely well supported. Early intervention to boost their speech and language skills is very effective and enables children to participate fully in all tasks and activities. Consequently, these children quickly start to catch up from their lower starting points.
- Staff successfully foster a love and enjoyment of books and stories. Dressed up as their favourite characters to celebrate World Book Day, children displayed a keen interest when listening to stories and answering questions about key characters. They eagerly and happily joined in repeating phrases and rhymes. The initial letters and sounds of key words from stories were systematically sounded and practised. After the story, children made marks and formed letters in their large books. Older children made rapid strides writing simple words, including their name.
- An excellent range of opportunities is provided for children to develop their physical and coordination skills, for example when trimming the bark from a willow stick with a bladed tool or using a pastry cutter. When sketching, children use fine line pens so that they can draw the delicate detail, such as the small black specks they spotted in the white breast feathers of an owl.
- The school's determination to ensure that all children achieve highly is reflected in the consistently high expectations regardless of starting points. This includes for those potentially vulnerable and those with complex needs.
- The imaginative and extremely stimulating environments both inside and outdoors, and the inventive match of activities to capture and hold interest, enable children to make rapid progress and achieve exceptionally well. This was evident when birds of prey were brought into school. When questioned, children described essential features of the barn owl, such as their size, feather colour and shape, in detail. They of course recognised the barn owl from some of their favourite stories, such as those involving the adventures of the Gruffalo.

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	108665
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	449537

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	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bryan Chapman
Headteacher	Susan Stokoe
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2011
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