

# Usworth Colliery Nursery School

Usworth Colliery, Washington, Tyne and Wear, NE37 3BL

**Inspection dates** 30–31 January 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The safety and welfare of children is of paramount importance in this school. Staff form very caring relationships with children which successfully foster children's personal, social and emotional development.
- Children make good progress, achieve well and show confidence as they play and explore the attractive indoor and outdoor areas.
- The school prepares children well for their next stage of education.
- Staff understand and plan for children's individual needs. Teaching is usually good and sometimes outstanding.
- Staff manage children's differing behaviour expertly. Most of the time behaviour is excellent and children show positive attitudes to learning.
- The partnership with parents is strong and the school engages them in their child's learning well. Guidance on how to best support their child's language skills is yet to be fully developed.
- The headteacher sets high expectations for staff performance and effectively leads the improvement of teaching and raising achievement. She has a precise understanding of what needs to develop further and how to achieve it. She is supported well by the dedicated governing body.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching in group sessions does not always ensure a high enough level of engagement and learning for every child.
- The clarity of the sounds letters make is not always modelled well by all adults when promoting children's speaking and listening skills.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning across morning and afternoon sessions on both days, including a joint observation with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke with children and had discussions with the headteacher, staff, parents, four governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents including those relating to safeguarding, attendance, self-evaluation, the monitoring of staff performance and the school's development plan.
- The inspector took account of six responses to Parent View letters received from parents and eight staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Karen Ling, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average size nursery school. It is staffed by three qualified teachers and seven qualified assistant practitioners.
- The large majority of children are from a White British background.
- A small number of children are from minority ethnic backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The school has identified a small number of children as being disabled or having special educational needs, including those being supported at Early Action Plus.
- The headteacher and governing body are responsible for all aspects of Usworth Colliery Nursery School, including childcare for children from two to three years of age, and before- and after-school care for school-age children. This provision is subject to a separate inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act.
- The school has close links with the neighbouring primary school and children's centre.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in group sessions to ensure that there is always a high level of engagement and learning for every child.
- Remain focused on and continue to raise children's communication skills by:
  - ensuring that the clarity of the sounds letters make is always modelled well by all adults when promoting children's speaking, listening and early literacy skills
  - building on the strong partnership with parents to engage them in supporting their child's language development.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Some children enter nursery with skills that are typical for their age although for the large majority, skills are below or well below.
- During their time at nursery, children make at least expected progress and most make more than expected progress. This includes children who speak English as an additional language, disabled children and those identified as having special educational needs. All children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Focus groups such as 'Chit Chat' and the 'Nurture Group' provide targeted and intense support specifically for language and emotional development and children benefit greatly.
- By the time children leave nursery, attainment for many is broadly similar to that of other children of a similar age, although communication and language skills remain low.
- The curriculum appeals to boys and girls and engages them well in the good balance of adult-led and self-chosen activity. This is because it is carefully organised and follows children's interests. Children learn very clear boundaries for behaviour, which at times requires focused and intense support from staff, and they display positive attitudes to learning.
- Children enjoy books and show care as they turn pages and return them to shelves. They love listening to familiar stories and some are quick to recall what happened when asked. Some have developed correct pencil control and use marks to 'write' what is happening beside their pictures. However, adults do not always support early reading and writing skills well enough by ensuring that the speed and clarity of their diction enables children to hear, recognise and link sounds to letters in simple text.
- Children benefit tremendously from the daily play sessions outdoors. They show excitement in the freedom they have as they run, climb and jump energetically. They use language to express what they know about the world around them, or explain what they are doing. They understand the need to take turns and co-operate very well with each other and staff.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Staff have high expectations and continually develop their teaching skills through training and reflective practice.
- They organise an attractive and inviting environment which promotes children's independence. Staff build trusting relationships with children, work directly with them for much of the time and successfully encourage them to try new experiences and develop their own ideas. For example, children who have been at the nursery for only two weeks are already very happy in their surroundings and confidently follow routines and make their own choices.
- Indoor and outdoor activities cover all areas of learning and provide good opportunities to explore and experiment. Staff use routines to encourage counting skills and problem-solving, such as how many children are present or missing, and support personal and social development particularly well.
- Staff use observations of children's achievements to help move them to the next stage in their learning. Planning takes into account each child's particular needs to ensure that activities are fully inclusive and support children's different levels of attainment.
- Staff use varied and suitable teaching methods, which include joining in children's play to extend knowledge, give generally clear explanations and offer challenging questions. This proves successful for example, when encouraging children's own story ideas and designs which are supported well with a wealth of resources.
- Teaching and learning is most effective when staff use resources to good effect and ensure that all children are actively engaged to a high level. However, this does not always happen well enough in small-group sessions. For example, when every child is given the opportunity to use the resources or objects needed to explore new concepts, this helps to reinforce learning more

effectively than watching what the adult is doing.

- Staff work diligently to support children's speaking and listening skills. This continues to be a focus for the whole school as cohorts reflect an increase in low attainment in these skills year on year. Homework activities build on this aspect of development although the headteacher recognises the need for this to begin at the start of the child's time at nursery rather than later in the year.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- The excellent team work and relationships developed with children and parents enables children to feel secure at nursery and develop confidence and independence.
- The key person system is well-developed, including an initial home visit, and ensures that each child forms a special caring relationship with a member of staff and knows who to go to if they need reassurance. Parents feel confident to approach their child's key person to exchange information or seek reassurance or guidance. Consequently, children settle quickly into the routine, are secure within the nursery and feel safe. They show confidence and growing levels of independence as they explore their indoor and outdoor environments and learn.
- Staff's very good focus on personal, social and emotional development and high expectations of behaviour, foster the positive attitudes required for successful learning.
- Children's behaviour is excellent. Parents and staff overwhelmingly support this view. As one parent explained, 'I have adopted the 'Kind Hands' approach at home as I feel it gives children a very positive message about how we treat each other.'
- All children join in activities and are attentive to staff requests and instructions. They develop the ability to sit, listen and concentrate for increasing periods of time which prepares them well for the next stage in their education. They co-operate very well with friends, for example, when building construction models, and are keen to show staff their achievements. They all recognise the signal for tidy-up time and remind each other of what needs to be done.
- Racial harmony and equality and diversity are promoted effectively as staff encourage children to recognise, respect and celebrate one another's differences. This leads to friendships being formed and a tolerance for children who have specific needs and require support.
- Staff have a very good knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Robust policies and procedures for safeguarding and welfare underpin the day-to-day running of the nursery and are met to a high standard.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher has a precise and accurate picture of the school. She provides strong leadership, has high ambitions for the school and is successfully driving improvements forward.
- The school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance are robust and feed into clear and challenging targets within the school development plan. Leaders have tackled the recommendations set at the last inspection although the outdoor curriculum and assessment systems remain school targets for further improvement. This is because of recent changes to the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, and the vision for an excellent outdoor curriculum.
- Since the last inspection the school and childcare staff teams have merged to become one team. Roles and responsibilities including ownership for aspects of school work have developed well and resulted in a stronger, more skilful workforce and consequently, stronger teaching.
- Staff speak positively about the impact their professional development has on improving the quality of provision and teaching. The recently introduced assessment system is working well. However, staff are not complacent and have regular opportunities to discuss its effectiveness and amend the process and documentation as necessary.
- The very good partnership with parents is a strength of the school and all those spoken to during the inspection were exceptionally complimentary about the effectiveness of the school's

leadership and staff on their child's achievements. Parent View and written responses also support this view.

- The school provides a range of activities which help parents support their child's learning and assessment. For example, parents particularly enjoyed spending time in the nursery contributing to the Learning Journal with their child. Guidance on how to best support their child's language skills is yet to be fully developed.
- The school's fully inclusive ethos and commitment to equality of opportunity ensures that all groups of children make at least good progress. This includes children who speak English as an additional language, disabled children and those with special educational needs.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body are dedicated, proactively encourage new members, and fully support the strategic direction of the school. They recognise the school's strengths and provide appropriate challenge in respect of staffing arrangements and budgeting issues. The performance management of the headteacher is managed well and governors have a clear overview of the quality of teaching. Data of children's progress and an evaluative report of performance are shared with them. The presentation of data analysis is being developed by the headteacher to provide the governing body with a clearer understanding of how much progress all children make over time to ensure that the governing body is better placed to offer more challenge. The governing body meets responsibilities well and ensures that safeguarding requirements are reviewed regularly and met fully.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	108749
<b>Local authority</b>	Sunderland
<b>Inspection number</b>	401007

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	108
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Janette Nightingale
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela Graham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 January 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 219 3620
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