

Usworth Colliery Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108749
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	337139
Inspection dates	20–21 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Moira Fitzpatrick

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	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Genett Nightingale
Headteacher	Miss Angela Graham
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors spent 50% of inspection time looking at learning, and visited eight lessons and observed all teachers and assistants who work directly with the children. They observed all children learning independently for both morning and afternoon sessions. They visited the before- and after-school clubs and inspected the day care provision for younger children. They held meetings with governors and staff, and talked to parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at school planning, tracking information, children's learning journals and the school improvement plan. They examined the school's documentation relating to safeguarding and children's welfare. They scrutinised 42 questionnaires returned by parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress of all groups of children from their different starting points
- the consistency of provision indoors and out
- the impact of the changing roles of staff on the development of the school.

Information about the school

Usworth Colliery Nursery is above-average size. It serves a socially mixed community and the majority of children are of White British heritage. There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The nursery provides morning or afternoon education for children aged three to four. It also provides extended day care for young children between two and three years of age, and a before- and after-school club for school age children. It has close links with the neighbouring school and the local children's centre.

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

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Usworth Colliery Nursery is a good school. The extended day care provision offers good quality care for children from both the nursery and the neighbouring primary school. Children attending the day care provision benefit from shared resources as they play and work alongside those children in the nursery. The nursery and day care provision provide well for the different needs of all of its children so that they all thrive. Good procedures help the children to settle in quickly. Their confidence grows at a brisk pace because they feel safe and secure. Children are very happy at school; they soon become engrossed in the many interesting and exciting activities that surround them. They quickly learn the good routines that help the nursery run so smoothly. Most attend well, and those that do not are well supported and encouraged to come more often and follow the example of Spike, their puppet friend at school. Children achieve well and make good progress. By the end of the Nursery Year, nearly all reach the expected level for their age and many exceed it. They make particularly good gains in their personal and social skills, and these prepare them successfully for the next stage of education. Recently introduced daily observations by nursery staff are a developing strength and help staff to see how quickly children learn. This information is used very effectively to create learning journals which record children's progress and development. These documents provide a vivid picture for parents of how their child is progressing. The information is not yet being used as fully as it could be in teachers' planning. The school is aware of this and is developing the practice. Indoor provision for learning makes good use of the school's excellent resources, so that children are constantly tempted to explore and follow their natural curiosity. Outdoor learning is not so well developed, mainly because of the need to improve children's access and to organise the site so that it is more easily supervised. The school's improvement plan shows that this is a main priority for the coming year.

The recently appointed headteacher has moved quickly to expand staff roles and give them more responsibility. Consequently, staff have welcomed recent changes and share the headteacher's ambitions for the children and the school. Self-evaluation is widely shared and the school has an accurate picture of its strengths and what needs improvement. Since the last inspection the school has sustained many strengths and is moving forward, enhancing other areas. Given these improvements, especially the increased involvement of staff to monitor and evaluate its work accurately, the school has good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Embed the use of information from observations of children's learning into staff planning so that the level of challenge is continually raised.
- Improve the provision and organisation for outdoor learning, especially making this area easier to access.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children**2**

Children arrive promptly at school and are eager to learn. They lose no time in beginning work and very quickly become absorbed in activities. Indeed, it was clear to inspectors that they sometimes arrive at nursery with a fixed idea of what they want to do first and go directly to a particular area with a clear plan in mind. Most children start the day care provision and nursery with skills and attainment that are broadly typical for their age. Each year a proportion join with notable weaknesses in speech and language. Nevertheless, all children quickly become confident talkers who are well able to express their interests and ask questions about their learning. Children across the age range and of all abilities make good progress in all areas of learning because activities are purposeful and adapted to meet individual needs. For example, a group of the youngest children visited the local shops to buy vegetables which they then made into soup. Those children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are well assessed and they are very well supported. The school has responded to identified weaknesses in children's knowledge of letters and sounds with regular teaching which is giving all children an awareness of sound and rhythm. Average and higher attaining children know that letters and sounds are linked. Most are able to count how many spoonfuls when measuring drinking chocolate with the teacher. Higher attainers can copy complex patterns by counting and matching. By the end of their time in nursery, children's attainment is above that expected for their age in all areas of learning, except in early reading and writing skills, where attainment is about the expected level. Children have good social and moral awareness, they are kind and supportive, accept and respect each other's needs and differences and show great delight at what is on offer each day.

Children enjoy nursery. Behaviour is good because children follow well thought out routines and they respond promptly to changes in activity. They behave sensibly when outdoors and have a care for each other, for example, when moving around quickly on wheeled toys. Staff use praise effectively to motivate the children to follow rules and to be seen doing the right things. This spurs children on and they show a willingness to act responsibly and take on simple tidying up tasks. Children enjoy snack time and know that fruit and vegetables are healthy foods. They love the opportunities outdoors to take vigorous exercise and follow the good hygiene routines set by the staff. Children's self-reliance and independence are strengths of their development and ensure that they are prepared well for the next stage of learning.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

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Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Children's attainment ¹	2
The quality of children's learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
Children's behaviour	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Children's attendance ¹	3
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The welfare of children is promoted well and the good teaching consists of extensive child-led activities alongside short adult-led activities. Teachers and assistants are skilled at adapting activities to ensure that the all children are purposefully involved and develop independence. Simple, effective routines ensure children know what to expect. Staff interact positively with children and each other. Their excellent teamwork ensures that they are alert and responsive to the different needs and responses of children. The key person system works very well, because staff expertly give support when needed and know when to step back and allow a child to exercise independence. A few staff have particularly good questioning skills and encourage children to devise new ways of doing things. The school is developing this good practice so that all staff draw out the best from children. Indoor provision is the strength of the curriculum, with an excellent range of good quality resources that are deployed effectively to provide activities that stimulate children's curiosity. Provision for outdoor learning is less well developed. The large space gives ample scope for all areas of learning to be accommodated but its use cannot be fully exploited because of difficulties in access and supervision. The school rightly has the improvement of outdoor provision as one of the main priorities for the coming year.

The school has introduced new methods of assessing children's learning through direct observations this year. This is undoubtedly making staff more aware of the speed at

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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which children progress and is providing a sharper insight into what the next steps should be. As yet, information from these assessments is not feeding into teachers' future plans, although staff are starting to use it well to make some child-led activities more challenging. Staff confidence with the new methods is growing, as seen in the comments made in the children's learning journals. Some aspects of the curriculum are already being tailored to meet the specific needs of groups of children. For example, the Chit Chat programme is helping children with poor speech, or those lacking confidence, by providing opportunities to talk through small group games.

Children are looked after very well in the nursery. Staff are deployed effectively to meet their needs and they have a good knowledge of the children and their families. The nursery looks after vulnerable children very well. Their needs are quickly and carefully assessed and they and their families are given practical, sensitive and caring support.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The recently appointed headteacher is ambitious for both children and staff to achieve their best. Comprehensive policies and procedures underpin effective day-to-day running of the nursery and day care provision and ensure all children are well supported. All specific requirements of registration are met.

An initial audit has ascertained the correct priorities for improvement and a good start has been made in sharpening staff awareness of how quickly children are learning. The development of roles and responsibilities for staff has built well on existing strengths. The establishment of a staff team, which gives all groups of staff the opportunity to recommend areas for improvement, is firing their enthusiasm and creating a strong, cohesive team. Staff morale is high and all are committed to securing further improvement through careful evaluation of practice and management of change.

The governing body provides good support and challenge for the school, especially through times of change. Governors have played a full part in the strategic development of the nursery within the community. They are fully committed to the school's ethos of inclusion of all children and high quality provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is a school where all children are equally valued. The school has good quality safeguarding practices, which fully meet current safeguarding requirements. Procedures are fully implemented by staff and the school responds quickly

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to any perceived weaknesses. The ethos of mutual respect is effective in tackling discrimination.

The school has positive relationships with parents and carers. It keeps them well informed about what is happening in nursery, the day care provision and their children's progress. This good partnership with parents reinforces children's sense of safety and security, and the school successfully involves parents in their children's learning. For example, a parents' workshop day was popular because it gave parents good insights into how their children learn and how to extend play at home. Parents say they feel welcome in school and that staff are approachable and always ready to give advice and support. The successful engagement of parents makes a good contribution to children's learning.

The school's actions have a beneficial effect on local community cohesion through its good links with neighbouring schools and child care provision, and through its own extended services provision. Careful planning ensures the children learn about their own locality and also the wider world through the school's links with a playgroup in Bangladesh.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents are fully supportive of the school. They are pleased with the high levels of care and appreciate the regular communication about school activities and events. One

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parent expressed the views of many with the comment, 'We are delighted with our daughter's progress since she started Nursery.' Inspectors agree, the school does have good links with parents and the children do make good progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Usworth Colliery Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 105 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	83	7	17	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	83	7	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	60	16	38	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	74	12	29	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	74	12	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	64	15	36	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	74	11	26	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	20	48	20	48	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	64	14	33	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	52	17	40	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	48	19	45	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	57	13	31	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	76	10	24	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
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 children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

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.



22 January 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Usworth Colliery Nursery School, Washington, NE37 3BL

Thank you all for making my visit to your lovely nursery so enjoyable. It was very good to see how eager you are to learn about all kinds of new things. I was amazed at how much you can do by yourselves – without any help from adults. You have lots of confidence and are very good at helping and looking after each other. You are all learning many new things each day and have some very clever things that you take home to show to your families. No wonder they and your teachers are so proud of you. I think you are kind and friendly with each other and this helps you to learn very well. Your teachers make learning exciting and they care for you so well that you do not notice the time going by and sometimes think it is too early to go home.

Your nursery is a good one, as I'm sure you already know. The teachers give plenty of information to your parents and carers, and even let them add lovely pictures to your learning journals. These show how well you learn at home as well as in nursery and help everyone decide how they can help you to learn even more. Your teachers are going to take more notice of what you can do and what you need to do next to help you learn even faster in the future. They are also going to make learning outside even more interesting and exciting.

You can help by working as hard as you do now and keep on choosing what you would like to learn about each day.

With very best wishes to you and your teachers.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

Lead inspector

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