

Croyland Nursery School

Croyland Road, Wellingborough, NN8 2AX

Inspection dates 29–30 January 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 executive headteacher’s excellent leadership and high expectations have enabled the school to build on the many strengths found at the last inspection.
- Other leaders have supported the executive headteacher extremely well in maintaining outstanding teaching and achievement through a period of much change. The executive headteacher also receives good support from the governing body.
- There are outstanding systems for checking on teachers’ work, and frequent training for all the staff means that their skills are continuously developing.
- The school works very closely in partnership with parents and other agencies.
- Much of the teaching is outstanding, and there is exemplary practice in the way staff promote children’s communication and language development.
- The staff are extremely thorough in the way they observe children’s learning, and record what the children are able to do and what they need to learn next.
- Achievement is outstanding and all the children make excellent progress in their communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development.
- The very large majority of children also make outstanding progress in the other areas of learning. This is also the case for disabled children and those who have special educational needs.
- The specially resourced provision for children with speech and language impairment is led and managed exceptionally well. Specialist support programmes ensure that these children make outstanding progress.
- The achievement of the very few most-able children is good overall rather than outstanding. This is because teachers do not always challenge them enough in literacy and numeracy.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed many learning activities for two-year-olds and for three- and four-year olds, for disabled children and those who have special educational needs, and sessions indoors and outdoors. This enabled her to gather evidence about different aspects of teaching and learning.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the assistant executive headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, and the speech and language therapist. A meeting was held with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and a telephone discussion took place with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector considered the 17 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. She also took into account the 28 completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation and development plan; records of children's attainment, progress and behaviour; and evidence of systems for protecting and safeguarding children.

Inspection team

Margaret Goodchild, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- All children in this school are in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school makes part-time provision for 88 children aged three to four years, and offers 36 funded places for two-year olds. Children attend the nursery for four half-day sessions each week for 48 weeks of the year.
- The school also provides childcare for two- to four-year olds from 8am to 6pm each day for 50 weeks of the year, and this is fully integrated with the nursery. The provision is separately registered, however, and so it is inspected separately.
- The school has specially resourced provision for up to 10 three- to four-year olds who have communication, speech and language impairments. At present, there are nine children in the specially resourced provision.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs in the school as a whole is high, at 44%. Many of these children have speech and language difficulties and are supported through the school's language facilitation group. Some also have a high level of medical needs.
- The large majority of children are White British. The proportion of children who are of minority ethnic heritage, at 23%, is a little below average. The proportion who speak English as an additional language, at 17%, is broadly average.
- A new headteacher took up post in September 2013, having previously been a senior leader in the school. The previous deputy headteacher is now the part-time special educational needs coordinator and a new assistant executive headteacher has been appointed to deputise for the executive headteacher.
- In September 2014, a partnership was established between Croyland Nursery and Highfield Nursery School in Wellingborough when the headteacher of Croyland became executive headteacher of both schools. The executive headteacher and assistant executive headteacher divide their time equally between the two schools. In addition, Croyland takes a lead role in training other nursery staff in the local authority.
- There have been changes to the governing body since the last inspection, and the Chair of the Governing Body at Highfield is now Chair at Croyland Nursery also, in preparation for the possible federation of the two schools.
- The children's centre on the same site, which was previously run by the school, was commissioned out to Action for Children in July 2014, which led to staff restructuring in the nursery.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that staff always provide enough challenge for the most-able children in literacy and mathematics so that they make outstanding progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The executive headteacher has shown exceptional drive and determination in maintaining high-quality provision through the many changes that have taken place since she took up post. She has a clear vision and high expectations and, together with other leaders, has created an atmosphere where teachers can succeed and children are expected to behave well. Staff are extremely dedicated and supportive of the executive headteacher. They express a sense of pride in working at the school.
- There are a number of key features that make the school outstanding and lead to a high proportion of teaching being excellent. The executive headteacher and other senior staff model best practice by teaching for part of their time in the nursery, and all the staff have weekly training sessions to develop their skills. Staff new to their roles since the last inspection have all received coaching and all the adults have frequent opportunities to observe one another's teaching.
- The leadership of teaching and systems for checking teachers' work are exceptionally rigorous. Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and learning, and communicate clear messages about what is working well and what could be improved. All staff receive regular supervision and their progress towards their appraisal targets is reviewed in detail in half-termly interviews with a senior leader.
- The recent staff restructuring has ensured that those with leadership roles have well-defined responsibilities. The leadership of provision for two-year olds and three- to four-year olds is of high quality. The specially resourced provision is led and managed extremely well, as is provision for disabled children and those who have special educational needs throughout the school.
- Senior leaders gather a wide range of data on children's attainment and progress. They analyse this closely and use the resulting information exceptionally well to judge the school's effectiveness, identify areas for development and to check whether all children are receiving equal opportunities. The school ensures that there is no discrimination and that positive relationships are promoted.
- The nursery is always a hive of purposeful activity, and the curriculum is broad and varied. Staff plan activities very carefully to reflect children's interests and to promote their achievement, regularly evaluating how well things have gone. The rooms used by two-year olds and three- to four-year olds are rich with toys, books and equipment to stimulate their interest. The covered outdoor classroom and the two gardens provide children with a wealth of learning opportunities, and are used extremely well to support children's development.
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Staff create an environment where children quickly grow in confidence and know that they are valued as individuals. They develop curiosity about the world around them, and show respect and care for one another. The school promotes British values very well: all the children learn the importance of tolerance for people who are different from themselves and join in celebrating a wide range of cultures. The school is a unifying force in the local neighbourhood and is equally welcoming to children and families from all backgrounds.
- The school works in very close partnership with parents. Parents are fully involved in their children's assessment and they have opportunities to attend workshops to find out how to contribute to their children's learning. The school involves the parents of disabled children and those who have special educational needs in supporting their learning at home. For example, parents of children in the specially resourced provision take home 'chatter sacks', filled with resources to support their children's speaking and communication skills.
- The school has exceptionally thorough methods for safeguarding and protecting the children. Rigorous checks make sure children are kept safe, and staff work in close partnership with other agencies and families where children are at possible risk.
- The local authority provides effective support and has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. An adviser conducts an annual visit to look at data and discuss developments, and the school is used by the

local authority as an example of best practice.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is effective and its members make a good contribution to school development.
- Governors are well informed about the school's work, including what data reveal and about the quality of teaching. The governing body asks challenging questions of senior leaders. It makes sure that the appraisal of teachers rewards the most effective practice and that any underperformance is tackled.
- Governors make sure that financial management is strong and that all statutory requirements are met.
- Having a joint Chair of the Governing Body for Croyland and Highfield has helped to facilitate the possible federation of the two schools. Meetings between other governors at the two schools are helping to forge closer links and productive partnership working.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Children are highly motivated and engage fully in the activities provided. They greatly enjoy the varied opportunities and exciting toys and equipment available.
- Throughout the school, children are significantly ahead of expectations for their age in their ability to persist at activities for lengthy periods of time. They try very hard and develop a belief in their ability to succeed as learners. Even the youngest children become totally absorbed and show consistently high levels of concentration.
- Children play happily together. Because they are listened to by adults, they learn to listen to one another. In their play, there are plenty of opportunities for them to learn to take turns, share and help one another. In the dining room, staff sit with the children, encouraging polite conversation and good table manners.
- Staff are skilled in managing children's behaviour and they provide excellent role models. Children are generally so deeply involved with their learning that they do not have time to think about behaving inappropriately. Most children attend regularly and the school does its best to make parents aware of the importance of their children not missing any time.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Home visits by staff before children join the school and well-established routines help children to feel very safe and to settle quickly. Children develop very positive and trusting relationships with the staff, and almost all parents who expressed an opinion said that their children feel safe at school.
- The parents of disabled children and those who have special educational needs are delighted with how well the staff meet their children's needs. Staff undertake training, where necessary, to keep those with a high level of medical needs safe.
- Staff thoroughly assess the risks associated with activities and children learn to judge for themselves what is safe; for instance, when using the climbing frame in the outdoor area or building with the large wooden blocks.
- Children develop very positive relationships with one another and records show that the school is quick to act if a child behaves inappropriately to another. Children know that it is important to treat one another with kindness, and this ensures that they are kept safe from bullying. As an adult put it when a child became over excited at the water tray, 'We don't splash our friends.' This simple reminder was enough for the child to play carefully for the rest of the time.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The school has maintained the high-quality teaching found at the last inspection. Adults work alongside

small groups of children throughout the day to develop their communication and language skills. In combination with extremely well chosen resources, this leads to children's rapid skill development and outstanding personal, social and emotional growth.

- The staff are tireless in the way they communicate in detail with the children about what they are doing and hold their attention. This extends children's vocabulary, stimulates their imagination and encourages them to explore and investigate the materials at their disposal.
- In one example, a teacher provided excellent support and direction for children's learning, as a group of three- and four-year olds arranged a collection of wooden blocks to form a large and complex structure. The teacher's carefully chosen questions kept them totally focused so that they thought deeply about how to combine and balance the different shapes. Further questions ensured that the activity was rich with counting and language about size and quantity, and the purposeful atmosphere meant that all the children took great care to prevent the structure collapsing.
- Equally effective learning was evident when groups of two-year olds played for extended periods of time at the water tray with the guidance and encouragement of an adult. A range of containers and other equipment provided a wealth of opportunity for tipping and pouring, finding out about capacity and developing hand-to-eye coordination. The adult continuously increased the children's awareness of the possibilities, showing them new skills and introducing new vocabulary to describe what was happening.
- Children in the specially resourced provision are fully integrated with the other children for most of their time, and have equal access to all activities. In addition, they receive intensive support from the speech and language therapist. Their individual learning needs are precisely assessed and they all work towards very specific targets.
- The teaching of other disabled children and those who have special educational needs is also outstanding. The staff are thoroughly trained in how to support these children's learning and how to care for those children with a high level of medical need. Children have very detailed individual support plans, which staff frequently review.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is outstanding for two-year olds, and provides the right amount of challenge for most of the three- to four-year olds. Children have plenty of opportunity to draw and make marks, to explore letters of the alphabet, to become familiar with fiction and non-fiction books, and to listen to stories. Counting and learning to measure are included in many activities, and children have excellent daily opportunities to solve problems for themselves and to learn mathematical vocabulary.
- The detailed observations and records of children's learning, and the use of assessment information to match activities to children's interests, are outstanding aspects of teaching throughout the school. Children's learning records are extremely rich with evidence of their development. Staff regularly discuss children's progress with them and they encourage parents to contribute photographs and information for the family learning pages in their children's records.
- Children's learning records show that the most-able three- to four-year olds have many experiences that are suitably challenging. For instance, writing a shopping list enabled the most able to use their knowledge of the sounds that letters make and to come up with a range of ideas. However, the staff do not consistently provide activities that extend these children's learning, particularly in teaching them about letters and the sounds that they make or in getting them to apply their knowledge of numbers.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- When they join the nursery, the ability of about half the children is broadly typical for their age but the skills of the remainder are less well developed in communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, and mathematics. In addition, a high proportion of the children are disabled or have special educational needs.
- Most of the children make outstanding progress in all areas of learning and the school prepares them very

well for the next stage of their education. By the time they leave, the large majority of children are in line or ahead of the attainment typically found for their age in all areas of learning.

- The achievement of disabled children and those who have special educational needs, including those in the specially resourced provision, is excellent. The speech and language therapist, who is in school for half the week, and a language facilitation practitioner, work very closely together devising and running specialist programmes for the children. As a result of support that precisely targets their individual learning needs, children make a substantial amount of progress in their speaking and listening, and in their pronunciation of sounds.
- Throughout the school, all the children's achievement is outstanding in communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, and in their physical development. Children's vocabulary, and their ability to understand and to make themselves understood progress at a rapid pace. They develop a wide range of skills in socialising with others and in their sense of themselves as learners. They develop increasing physical control when building, climbing and balancing, and improved coordination when using pens, paintbrushes and other tools.
- Children who speak English as an additional language quickly expand their knowledge of English because they benefit from good opportunities for speaking and listening, and they practise their new language very regularly.
- Most children make outstanding progress in literacy and mathematics. They develop a love of books and listen carefully to stories, sometimes acting out part of what they have heard. They make a range of marks that increasingly resemble letters of the alphabet, and many talk in detail about the meaning of their drawings. They learn to count and recognise numbers, match colours, sequence shapes, and develop a wide vocabulary to describe the position of objects and to compare different sizes.
- The very few most-able children make outstanding progress in communication and language, in their personal, social and emotional development, and their physical development. Their learning records show that they are able to count far beyond expectations for their age and solve problems for themselves. They write their names and some other words confidently, and greatly enjoy finding things out from books. However, their progress in learning about letters and the sounds that they make, or in using their knowledge of numbers and other aspects of mathematics, is not always as rapid as it could be.

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	121783
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	449522

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Dunkley
Headteacher	Lyndsey Barnett (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2012
Telephone number	01933 279681
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