

Cookham Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109754
Local Authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	356617
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Marshall

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	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Curry
Headteacher	Sarah Cottle
Date of previous school inspection	13 December 2007
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Age group	3–5
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, observed four teachers, talked with children and held meetings with staff, school leaders and governors. They evaluated 47 parental questionnaires. They looked at documents including school policies, children's progress data, attendance figures, school development planning and a range of children's work.

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

- To what extent staff use assessment to support and challenge pupils' learning and secure outstanding achievement.
- How effective are leaders in checking, reviewing and taking actions to raise standards, particularly in writing and reading?
- What are the consequences of the recent change of headteacher on the school's effectiveness?

Information about the school

Cookham Nursery serves the village and surrounding area. Currently the majority of children are admitted at the start of the term closest to their fourth birthday and move to primary school when they reach five. As a result of a change in admissions across the local authority, children are now beginning to join at the start of the term closest to their third birthday and move to primary school when they reach four. They attend either a morning or afternoon session with an option of a lunchtime place. The school has recently appointed a new headteacher.

Almost all children come from White British families. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. They have a range of needs which include speech, language and communication issues and behavioural, emotional and social needs. The school has gained a number of awards, for example the Healthy School Award and the Eco School Green Flag as well as renewing its Investors in People this term.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Since the last inspection, staff and governors have worked hard to maintain the tremendously high levels of care, guidance and support provided for pupils. There is a very strong focus on every aspect of the school's pastoral care which ensures that pupils and their families are extremely well supported. All staff work effectively to ensure that children achieve very well in their learning and develop exceptionally as mature and caring individuals. Children benefit from very supportive relationships with all staff and display a great deal of enthusiasm for learning. Because of the school's exceptionally strong focus on its pastoral care, children contribute extremely effectively to the school and wider community. This is demonstrated well through their readiness, from the very youngest age, to be involved in looking after the school and their environment. They participate enthusiastically in school campaigns, successfully lobbying for a lollipop lady, as well as caring for the gardens and school guinea pigs.

Children's achievement is excellent because the school adapts its extremely well-enriched curriculum particularly well, to ensure that every individual's needs are met and all children fulfil their potential. This, along with outstanding teaching, enables pupils to make excellent progress from their starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage to when they leave to join primary school. All staff know the children's abilities extremely well. This is because of the highly effective checks regularly made on their progress and the considerable skill with which the school adapts and targets the well-focused support it gives individual children. Adults are skilled at moving on children's learning through extremely good quality interventions as they play. They talk to the children about their learning and discuss their next steps regularly. As a result, children have a very good understanding of what they are learning and how to get better.

The whole staff work together extremely effectively, supported particularly well by the governing body, constantly looking for ways to improve children's attainment and personal development even further. Consequently, they have already started to plan for the changes in provision that will be needed as the admission policy is revised and the school accepts younger children. This constant striving to reflect on outstanding practice and still look for ways to improve, together with leaders' accurate self-evaluation, shows the school has an excellent capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the best practice already seen to ensure the school maintains its effectiveness as admissions criteria change and younger children join.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

Throughout the school, children achieve extremely well in their personal, social and emotional development. Their behaviour is exemplary, both when working with an adult or playing independently, and they show considerable support for one another regardless of age, gender or ethnicity. Children have exceptional moral and social skills, and their spiritual and cultural awareness is excellent. They are extremely considerate of each other, valuing and celebrating each other's differences. This helps to make the school very safe and welcoming. Outstanding attendance reflects the children's enormous enthusiasm for school and learning, with one parent stating their child 'wants to know why they can't go on a Saturday and Sunday'. Their keenness to attend school, along with their ability to work really well together from an early age, are key factors in pupils' particularly strong development of workplace skills. Their understanding of how to stay safe and lead a healthy lifestyle is excellent. This is demonstrated particularly well by the enthusiasm and knowledge children show as they make very good use of the extensive outdoor learning environment to exercise and enjoy their healthy snacks daily. Children in the Lunch Club, as well as during each session, talk confidently about the healthy choices they make in what they eat and the benefits provided.

Children also achieve extremely well academically. They are clear about their learning and frequently talk with confidence about this, sharing their ideas willingly. During a group session discovering vegetables, children were keen to talk and describe the different smells, textures and tastes to each other. They confidently discussed the sizes of their drawings from the previous day's learning when describing the pumpkins on display as 'big', 'small', 'medium' and even 'ginormous'. Their enthusiasm was fuelled by the knowledge that they would soon be turning all these vegetables into soup to taste. Attainment by the time children leave to join primary school is consistently above average in all areas of learning. It is particularly strong in their personal, social and emotional and physical development as well as their knowledge and understanding of the world. Over time, children make outstanding progress from starting points that are at expected levels as they enter the school. The school ensures different groups and individuals, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are very well targeted, enabling them to learn effectively. Consequently, all children make the same excellent progress.

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These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Children's attainment ¹	1
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	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children's behaviour	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Children's attendance ¹	1
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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

How effective is the provision?

Children's tremendous keenness to learn is due in a large part to the exceptionally wide and varied curriculum and consistently high quality teaching. The learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, is outstanding. Children freely move between the two as they take ownership of their own learning, keen to explore and investigate all that is on offer. The extremely creative links planned between subjects help to stimulate and foster children's considerable interest, and provide further opportunities to challenge and stretch their learning. Following several days of camp making, children suggested making a list of things they might need. The excitement the next day was electric as the children ticked off the items they had suggested, including a pop-up tent and sleeping bag. Children, including a previously difficult-to-engage group of boys, were hooked and showed considerable concentration, the group of boys becoming dinosaur hunters on an expedition. Keen to capture this enthusiasm, the next addition to the camp became another tent full of soft cushions and books which was then constantly occupied by children reading. Opportunities for developing all areas of learning were provided from this one simple starting point. This approach is exceedingly successful and valued extremely highly by children, parents and carers alike. All staff play their part in delivering this rich, stimulating and engaging curriculum. Some of the key features of the outstanding teaching seen are the very good relationships adults have with children, the considerable

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subject knowledge of the highly trained staff, and the particularly effective questioning adults use to extend and challenge children's learning. Boys and girls alike are fully engaged. Since the last inspection the school has been successful in raising standards in writing and reading, and basic skills of numeracy and information and communication technology are also very effectively developed.

Children's welfare and personal, social and health needs are catered for tremendously well because the school works exceptionally closely with parents and carers as well as outside agencies where needed. Key workers build up an extremely close relationship with children and their families, regularly sharing children's progress as well as being there to support when needed. This really is a school where 'every child matters' and staff at all levels go the extra mile to make a difference.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and highly effective Governing Body, supported exceptionally well by the whole school team, provide a clear vision for how the school can move forward. There is a tremendously positive spirit and a real team atmosphere of 'can do'. Because of the school's meticulous planning and this extremely strong team ethos, the transition between headteachers has been seamless and parents have expressed their considerable confidence in the school's effectiveness being maintained. As part of the school's very effective development planning, staff at all levels, along with the Governing Body, take on responsibilities. They are highly involved in analysing the school's effectiveness in order to share good practice and identify where improvements are needed. As a result, leaders have an exceptionally clear understanding of the school's overall strengths and weaknesses. Considerable efforts are made by the school to involve parents and carers in every aspect of the school's work. These extremely strong links are another of the contributory factors to the school's outstanding success. The expertise of leaders and staff is shared with other schools to help improve their effectiveness.

All staff play their part in ensuring that safeguarding procedures are rigorous, constantly checking to ensure exemplary practice is maintained across all areas. The school's promotion of equality and diversity is excellent. Staff ensure that there is no discrimination between groups so that all children have opportunities to flourish individually and achieve exceptionally well. Leaders have been particularly effective in promoting community cohesion at school and local levels, developing close contact with other nursery schools

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within the United Kingdom as well as establishing links with other cultures, ensuring that children can also engage well with others from different countries and backgrounds.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

An exceptionally strong response from parents and carers resulted in all parental questionnaires being positive, and the overwhelming majority of the written comments expressed considerable satisfaction with the school. They commended the caring attitude of the school, the quality of teaching, how well the school promotes healthy lifestyles and how much their children enjoy school. Typical comments included: 'a fantastic nursery with amazingly dedicated teachers', 'genuinely passionate about children and learning', 'a fantastic place for young children to learn through play' and 'everyone is so welcoming'.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Cookham 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 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 75 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	89	5	11	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	89	5	11	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	35	74	12	26	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	79	10	21	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	85	7	15	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	74	12	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	91	4	9	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)	30	64	14	30	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	85	7	15	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	70	12	26	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	72	10	21	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	37	79	9	19	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	89	5	11	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



16 October 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Cookham Nursery School, Maidenhead, SL6 9BT

Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work when we visited. We were pleased to hear how much you enjoy coming to school and that your teachers plan such a lot of interesting things for you to do. You get on extremely well with one another and your behaviour around school is first rate. You have an excellent understanding of how to be safe and lead a healthy lifestyle. We agree that there are lots of interesting visitors to your school and activities to get involved in, and were especially impressed with how well you look after all the plants in your gardens and the guinea pigs in your care. We understand why you think the adults are very good at helping to make you feel really safe and cared for.

Your school is outstanding. The curriculum planned for you meets your needs extremely well. Teachers and other adults are very good at helping you to make excellent progress in everything you do. The leaders in your school run it particularly well. They know just what needs to be done to make it even better.

In order to help make your school become even better we have asked the adults at your school to work on one thing.

- Make sure they have as many exciting ways for younger children to learn when they join your school as you do.

You can help by coming to school regularly and continuing to respect each other's values, both in this school and in later life. Thank you for helping us with our work.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Marshall

Lead inspector

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