

Bowerdean Nursery School

Gordon Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP13 6HR

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher encourages staff to find new and exciting ways to make learning meaningful.
- The highly effective management of teachers' performance ensures outstanding teaching.
- All children make exceptional progress because staff are highly skilled at planning interesting activities which intrigue and motivate children to find out more.
- Teaching challenges children to solve problems for themselves and gives them the confidence to try out new things.
- Children thrive in the homely atmosphere because they are happy and feel safe.
- Members of the governing body know the school well because they care about the school and want to become involved.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. They show considerable care and respect for each other, and have extremely positive attitudes towards their learning.
- The school is held in high regard within the community. All of those who responded to 'Parent View' said, that they would recommend the school to another parent.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed activities in 21 sessions led by teachers and nursery nurses.
- Nine joint observations were carried out with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the senior staff, five members of the governing body and a local authority representative. The inspector talked to children informally during the observation times.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation, including improvement plans and self-evaluation, as well as assessment data from the monitoring of children's progress. Documents detailing the school's arrangements for safeguarding children were scrutinised.
- The inspector took into account the 35 responses on Parent View, one letter from a parent and eight questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Barbara Atcheson Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to other nursery schools.
- Children usually attend for three to five terms. The great majority of children leave the nursery to enter the Reception classes of local primary schools at the start of the autumn term.
- One third of the children come from White British backgrounds, one third come from Pakistani backgrounds and the remainder come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Half of the children are learning to speak English as an additional language. A few are at the early stages of learning English.
- A lower than average proportion of children are supported through school action. A higher than average proportion of children are supported through school action plus. One child has a statement of special educational needs.
- The school runs clubs to care for children before and after their nursery session and also runs a holiday club.
- The school runs a 'Dads' Diner' club on a Saturday once a month, so that fathers can spend time with their children and it also runs a 'Toddler Group'.
- The school has a 'Rights Respecting' schools award, Level 1, for Early Years settings.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Seek ways to promote the school's outstanding practice more widely through a range of initiatives involving other schools and organisations.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Most children enter the nursery with skills that are below those expected for their age. By the time they leave, the majority of children have reached the expected levels for their age, and some exceed those levels.
- All groups of children make exceptional progress because they thoroughly enjoy learning. Their ability to work well together, take responsibility for their own learning and work independently underpins their extremely positive attitudes to learning.
- There is no difference in the progress made or the levels reached by either boys or girls. Staff are very skilled in planning problem solving activities. Building somewhere for the 'Three Little Pigs' to live and adventures in the 'Forest School' captivate all children, particularly boys whose language skills develop and flourish through these practical activities.
- Highly individualised learning programmes based on accurate checks on children's learning quickly close any gaps. Pictures and sign language help children who are learning to speak English as an additional language to make rapid progress. Disabled children and those who have special educational needs benefit from accurately targeted support to achieve as well as other children.
- Younger children who join the nursery in January settle quickly and thrive in the quiet atmosphere of a smaller group where they can make their own contribution and grow in confidence.
- Children's learning is secure because early reading, writing and mathematics skills are repeated continuously throughout the day. Estimating how many names are left out of the self-registration basket, accurate daily use of term such as 'the long line, the short line' and reading the names of other children turns even registration into a high quality learning exercise.
- 'Challenge' and 'solving the problem' are part of the everyday language of the nursery. Children are challenged to think things out for themselves. They experiment and are confident to suggest an answer because they know that it will be respected.
- Children learn new words and become confident listeners, talkers, readers and writers because staff have high expectations and are very good role models, showing children how to listen and how language is used and letters are written.
- Children delight in sounding out letters and quickly become very accurate in drawing letters in the air because teachers make it fun. Children love making 'Silly Soup' with items that begin with the same sound. Opportunities to practise and perfect their letter writing skills with brightly coloured pens on the interactive whiteboard help to secure new learning.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Inspirational teaching is evident throughout the nursery. Sessions are very well planned and organised, with exciting experiences and different, new approaches to learning.
- Teachers work exceptionally well as a team so that, for example, when the whole nursery gathers for circle time, one teacher leads the session but all of the other staff work with, support and extend the learning of the small group around them – at the right level for those children.
- Learning moves at a fast rate because children know, understand and enjoy the routines. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and are skilled at moving children on to the next steps in their learning.
- Questioning to check the depth of children's understanding is a key strength. For example, when children discovered a selection of building tools and materials in a bag they were given, in-depth discussions helped them organise their thoughts and puzzle things out.
- Skilled teaching in small groups or one-to-one gives children confidence and accelerates their progress. For example, in a group of four, no child could name the missing item from a tray of

objects. Gentle coaxing enabled them all to join in the game, so that by the end of the session, they were all using and enjoying their new-found language skills.

- Teachers generate a high level of enjoyment for learning. For example, in a highly inclusive circle time, children were entranced with the way the teacher told the story of 'The Three Little Pigs' and stunned to a 'pin drop' silence as she dropped her voice and produced a letter containing a 'challenge' from the pigs – to build a house. This fired the children to work as 'architects' designing houses or use real building materials to solve the problem.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children behave exceptionally well because they know what is expected of them and outstanding teaching ensures they are vitally interested in all that they do.
- Excellent opportunities to cultivate children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development help children to form a clear set of personal values. They work and play harmoniously, are always polite and have very positive attitudes towards learning.
- Children are confident to undertake independent learning because the staff give them the skills and strategies that they need.
- Children are able to calculate risks and take good care of themselves. For example, children skilfully negotiated a steep slope at speed when pedalling their vehicles and those using building tools and material did so knowledgeably and with great care.
- Children are kind and look out for each other. They know that theirs is a 'caring, sharing' nursery. They happily make room for others to sit beside them, learn to take turns and willingly help to sweep and tidy the nursery.
- The nursery's work to become a 'Rights Respecting' school has done much to promote children's understanding about how other people live. The culture of respect which is evident throughout the nursery ensures that children feel safe and are not afraid to speak in a large group or to try new things.
- Parents appreciate that the school works hard to help their children achieve so well. They appreciate the benefits of clubs in the holidays and for those children who need care before and after nursery.
- Fathers value the opportunity to share time with their children in 'Dads' Diner' and mothers and toddlers enjoy the benefits of an introduction to nursery through the 'Toddler Group'. An overwhelming majority of those parents who responded to 'Parent View' said that their children were happy and behaved well.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leaders and staff have successfully built on previous outstanding provision and outcomes to increase the exciting and innovative environment in which children thrive and feel valued.
- Staff also feel valued; they develop and grow with the headteacher's encouragement. Focused staff development, especially for newly qualified staff, has sustained the outstanding teaching found in the previous two inspections. All staff are keen to refine their practice and seek out even more effective ways to meet children's needs.
- Teachers' performance is managed very effectively. School and personal targets are set following an audit against the 'Teachers Standards'. Reviews of performance tackle weaknesses and recognise and reward improvements in teaching.
- The local authority has an appropriately light touch approach to this excellent school. Staff and senior leaders share the headteacher's passion for improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate. All staff undertake their responsibilities in a highly effective way and continuously check performance and discuss priorities.

- A strong emphasis on supporting children’s individual needs means that all children, including those who are disabled and those with special educational needs, can overcome barriers to their learning. All have equal opportunities and there is no discrimination.
 - Fun-laden, meaningful activities are planned to ensure that all areas of learning are covered and take full account of children’s interests. The outstanding range of opportunities for learning inside and outside hold children’s attention, promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively and successfully encourage them to learn.
 - The nursery takes full advantage of all that ‘Forest School’ trips have to offer, but day-to-day outdoor activities are limited by the size of the site and the small undercover area for bad weather.
 - Although many other schools come to see the nursery’s outstanding work in the school, it has yet to fully promote this work outside, in other schools and settings.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body play an active part in the strategic direction of the school. They have an accurate view of the nursery’s performance, including the quality of teaching and how well children perform, because they care and they visit regularly. Courses and training help governors understand where the nursery’s strengths and weaknesses lie and to challenge and support where necessary. They fulfil their responsibility in rewarding teachers’ performance when justified by children’s achievement. Governors are fully involved with setting targets for the school, ensuring that statutory duties such as safeguarding are met and that financial resources are managed well.
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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	110119
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	401107

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	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Bates
Headteacher	Tara Wright
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 January 2010
Telephone number	01494 521941
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Email address	head@bowerdean.bucks.sch.uk

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