

# Lydalls Nursery School

Lydalls Road, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 7HX

**Inspection dates** 19–20 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Children make outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional skills and good progress in other areas of learning.
- Children are well prepared for their Reception classes because of the consistently good and sometimes outstanding teaching they receive.
- The school is led effectively. The headteacher has a very clear vision and good plans for the future. Since her arrival, improvements in tracking children's learning have given staff a very clear picture of children's achievements.
- The governing body gives good support and challenge to the school. Governors keep a close eye on the quality of teaching and children's achievement.
- Relationships with parents and carers are excellent. Parents and carers are extremely happy with the nursery. They are particularly pleased with how quickly their children settle and with the high-quality individual care provided by all staff.
- Disabled children, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language often make outstanding progress during their time at the nursery.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. They are safe, secure and very happy.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There is not enough outstanding teaching. Staff vary in how effectively they challenge and extend more-able children in their learning and play.
- The outdoor learning area requires updating and refurbishment.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a wide range of activities in the nursery over the two days, including activities the children had chosen themselves, others led by adults, and small-group sessions led by staff members. All teaching and learning activities were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions took place with the headteacher, governors, staff, parents and carers, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at key inspection documents, including data on children's progress produced by the school, procedures for safeguarding, self-evaluation work, governing body minutes, coordinators' action plans and the school improvement plan.
- Samples of children's work and their record folders and scrapbooks showing their learning were scrutinised.
- The inspector analysed and took account of the views expressed in the 14 completed staff questionnaires, and the 26 parental responses to the online survey (Parent View).

## Inspection team

Joyce Cox, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This average-sized nursery school provides morning and afternoon sessions, and admits children following their third birthday.
- Most children are of White British heritage and very few children are at an early stage of acquiring English.
- Ten per cent of children have special educational needs. The main areas of need are speech and language difficulties and autism.
- The nursery provides extended day care in its 'Chameleon Club' base. Evaluating this aspect of the provision was not part of this inspection.
- Because of their age, no children are eligible for the pupil premium funding.
- The school has seen several staffing changes since the last inspection. Two teachers and the headteacher are relatively new to their roles and there is a completely new senior leadership team.

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

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching and further improve children's progress by ensuring that all staff consistently seek ways to challenge more-able children in their learning and play activities.
- Put into practice all of the current plans to update and improve the outdoor learning environment to support and enhance children's learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children start the nursery with skills and abilities at below the levels expected for their age. They are particularly low in communication and language and personal and social skills. By the time they leave, the data show that the majority of children's skills and abilities are in line with expectations for their age, indicating good progress.
- Children make outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional development. This is because of the emphasis adults place on developing these skills, and the high-quality relationships staff develop with the children and parents and carers. Adults know all the children really well and parents and carers appreciate the high-quality individual attention and care their children receive.
- Those children who have special educational needs make excellent progress and achieve really well because their needs are quickly identified and they receive outstanding support from all staff and other professionals to help them succeed. Small group work, where children learn to manage their feelings and control their behaviour, take turns, listen to each other and collaborate together, develops their social skills quickly. All children, including those who speak English as an additional language or have speech and language difficulties, learn to communicate very effectively. Staff skilfully use signing and pictures and objects as prompts for talking to the children.
- Children are becoming confident at recognising the sounds and letters at the start of words. Some staff are very good at ensuring that more-able children are challenged in all their learning and play activities by using their developing mathematical and literacy skills. For example, a nursery nurse skilfully encouraged a group of girls to write about their imaginative play involving dens and crocodiles. However, this is not yet consistent practice across the nursery and there are occasions when more-able children repeat learning and play activities without being challenged to extend their achievement.
- Many children enjoy sharing books and love taking books home to read with their parents and carers. A group of children made outstanding progress in developing their early reading skills when they shared and acted out Jill Murphy's book, *Whatever Next*. They thoroughly enjoyed looking at their own copy of the book, carefully turning the pages, distinguishing between pictures and print and telling the story using appropriate 'story language'.
- Children make good progress when learning and playing outdoors. They excitedly explore and investigate the large working water pump and successfully extend their physical skills by competently carrying large buckets of water to the sunken sand pit, where they dig for diamonds and hidden treasure. The headteacher has correctly identified the need to develop and improve the outdoor learning area as it has been established for some time and requires refurbishment. The climbing frame is too large and has been declared not fit for use.
- Children learn to count effectively because they regularly gather together in small groups to enjoy mathematical activities such as counting the number of children in their group or counting how many balls they can throw into a bucket. All staff have valuable lists of identified children who require support or challenge in their learning and play. There is highly effective support provided to children with special educational needs but challenge to more-able children is variable in all areas of their learning and play.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Staff have a considerable range of experience and expertise and work together very well. Parents and carers think very highly of them and appreciate their good teaching, endless patience and caring approach. All parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire or spoke to the inspector said that their child is taught well.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is particularly well promoted. Staff are

very skilled at establishing warm and secure relationships with children. Consequently children are treated equally, feel safe and are confident to try new activities and select their own resources.

- Teaching is never less than good with some examples of high-quality practice. For example, a group of children, some of whom have special educational needs, made outstanding progress when suggesting story settings for their fictional character, 'Mr Bonkers', because of the teacher's skilful questioning, calm approach and excellent behaviour management skills.
- Adults model good use of language for children, introducing them to an ever widening vocabulary which effectively supports their good language and communication development. Staff interaction in small-group work and when acting as play partners in child-initiated learning activities is used very well to support children with special educational needs. However, not all staff take full advantage of the opportunities to extend more-able children's play, language and learning.
- Adults organise an attractive and inviting indoor learning environment complete with interesting resources, which encourages children's independence and enthusiasm for learning. The outdoor environment provides chances for children to develop their physical skills through climbing, using wheeled toys, digging and construction play. The new headteacher swiftly and correctly identified that this area requires updating and refurbishment. Good plans are in place for future development.
- All staff are involved in assessing children's progress which is recorded in attractive scrapbooks. These provide parents and carers with a valuable record of their child's experience at nursery.

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

- The close teamwork between staff and positive relationships with children and parents and carers mean that children feel very secure and show confidence and independence. The key person system, where children relate to a particular staff member who oversees their progress and well-being, works extremely well. Parents and carers feel confident to exchange information or seek guidance from their child's key person which means that new children settle very quickly and feel safe and happy.
- Children have a very well-developed awareness of safety. They confidently and safely use the climbing apparatus in the forest school area and quickly remind each other not to go on the very large climbing frame in the outdoor area as it has been sealed off and declared unsafe for younger children.
- Children behave very well in nursery. They cheerfully help tidy up and patiently take turns when playing games and cooperate well to build castles and dens in the large block play area. Staff manage children's behaviour exceptionally well, thereby promoting an atmosphere of positive praise and encouragement.
- Staff encourage children to recognise, tolerate and respect one another's differences. As a result relationships are very harmonious and all children, including those with special educational needs, are effectively included. The vast majority of children attend regularly and are on time each day.
- Children develop good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They treat each other well, and learn to share and take turns amicably. There is no bullying of any kind and no racist incidents have been recorded. Children learn to look carefully at and enjoy the world around them. For example, during the inspection, they took great delight in finding ladybirds, spiders and snails in their forest school and were very excited when they spotted that their carrot seeds had begun to grow.

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

- Exceptionally strong leadership from the new headteacher has already resulted in improvements to the indoor learning environment and to the way children’s progress is recorded. The headteacher has rapidly built a strong team of staff, all of whom understand their individual roles as leaders of learning and share her strong ambition for continuing improvement. The headteacher is currently the only senior leader monitoring the quality of teaching, although there are plans to enable the senior teacher to assist with monitoring from September.
  - The headteacher has rigorously monitored the quality of teaching in the short time she has been at the school and has also introduced performance management observations for the teaching assistants. The findings from this monitoring are used to set clear targets for improvement where necessary. A broad programme of training ensures that staff skills are updated regularly and improved.
  - The school’s excellent partnership with parents and carers is a significant strength. Parents and carers are extremely positive about all aspects of the nursery and say they feel valued and included.
  - Staff have a great enthusiasm and commitment to the education and welfare of the children in the nursery. The school works very productively with other professionals and so children often benefit from the knowledge of specialists, such as speech and language therapists. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and have a very high profile in the school.
  - In recent years the local authority has had limited involvement with the nursery because of its high-level effectiveness.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors visit regularly and actively seek out information. This not only gives them a good understanding of the school’s strengths and areas for improvement but enables them to ask searching questions. They make sure spending decisions always have a positive impact on children’s progress. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and take positive decisions to maintain its good quality. Effective systems to check on the performance of all staff, including the headteacher, are in place. Governors ensure that staff performance management and pay link well with school priorities. Governors are vigilant in making sure that safeguarding systems meet requirements. All checks on the suitability of staff are thorough. Training to ensure effective support and protection for children is regular and up to date.
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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122972
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	402123

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>	104
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kevin Griffin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rebecca Saunders
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16–17 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01235 813137
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