

# Cookham Nursery School

Station Hill, Cookham, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 9BT

**Inspection dates** 3–4 October 2013

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

- This school is a highly valued part of the community. Parents are very appreciative of all that the Nursery does for their children.
- Achievement is outstanding and children's attainment at the end of Nursery is securely above expectations for their age.
- Children make rapid progress in all areas of learning. They make excellent gains in their communication, early reading, writing and mathematics skills.
- Teaching is outstanding. Staff expectations are high. Very imaginative approaches inspire children and extend their experiences of the world around them.
- Children's ideas are valued and staff develop children's imagination and creativity extremely well.
- Staff are extremely adept when developing children's learning through play as well as teaching directly to small groups.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. They become absorbed in activities that they have chosen themselves as well as those led by adults. Children feel very secure and are kept very safe.
- The school has successfully sustained all aspects of excellence identified at the previous inspection, when it was also judged outstanding.
- High-quality leadership, monitoring, management and governance ensure excellent teamwork and consistent approaches to teaching and care practised by all staff. This strongly enhances children's learning and development.
- The school has quickly developed systems for staff from schools across the federation to share their expertise but is aware that this is still an evolving area.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 12 learning sessions provided by teachers as well as Early Years support staff assisting children in their learning. Some of these sessions were joint observations with one of the headteachers.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior leaders, teachers and a local authority representative.
- Some of the Nursery school's documentation was scrutinised. This included teachers' planning and safeguarding procedures, along with children's work and data on children's attainment and progress.
- The inspector considered the 32 responses to the online Parent View survey, the Nursery school's own most recent parents' questionnaire and a few letters from parents. She also held informal conversations with several parents.
- The inspector considered responses to the eight questionnaires returned by staff.

## Inspection team

Eileen Chadwick, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized nursery school. Children enter in the term after their third birthday and leave in July following their fourth birthday. Consequently, some spend five terms in the Nursery and others attend for three or four terms. Each child attends in the morning or afternoon for five days each week.
- Some parents pay for extended hours and a few children attend for one or more additional sessions. Children are also able to attend the lunch club.
- Most children are of White British heritage. A few children come from minority ethnic backgrounds and a few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- Very few children are known to be eligible for free school meals but at the time of the inspection children of nursery age are not supported by pupil premium funding (additional funding provided for looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families).
- In May 2012, the school became federated with The Lawns Nursery School and Maidenhead Nursery School. Since then the three schools have been led by two co-headteachers and share the same governing body.
- The assistant headteacher leads Cookham Nursery School when the headteachers are working in their other schools.
- Cookham Nursery is a 'Schools Direct' school which provides a school-led training path for graduates to gain qualified teacher status.
- The school is working towards National Teaching School status and has received a government grant for this purpose. (National Teaching Schools are outstanding schools which play a leading role in training and professional development of teachers, support staff and headteachers.)

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

- Widen the use of staff's particular curricular expertise from across the federated schools so staff play a fuller part in enhancing children's learning across this and other schools in the federation.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Children join the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are broadly as expected for their age, although a small minority have advanced communication skills. Rapid progress leads to most leaving the Nursery with skills that exceed the expectations for their age.
- Children are all very well prepared for entry to their Reception classes because they gain high levels of independence and well-developed communication, early literacy and numeracy skills. All groups of children make exceptional progress because staff provide an exciting range of activities and are extremely skilled at building on children's interests and previous learning.
- The learning of the most able children is extended through more demanding activities and tasks. They have a thirst for learning and rise to the challenges set.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs make excellent progress. Early assessments ensure that staff know which children need extra support so that work begins immediately on helping them to become successful learners. These children are quickly identified. Children at early stages of learning English receive very effective support, make rapid gains in acquiring English and achieve as well as their peers.
- Children make great strides in their personal development. They settle very quickly because of the high-quality, sensitive support given by staff to help each child to adjust to the Nursery. Children develop the social skills to work cooperatively and deepen their understanding of the needs of others. They learn to persevere with tasks and to make some decisions for themselves.
- Language and communication skills quickly develop because there is a wealth of real experiences to talk about. Adults seize every opportunity to further children's speaking and understanding through discussion, by joining in children's role play and by providing interesting practical tasks, stimulating stories, rhymes and songs.
- Children's great fondness for stories is consistently developed through the day and they are beginning to understand the differences between story and information books. Children make an excellent start in understanding that letters represent sounds and, by the time they leave the Nursery, many learn to combine sounds to read simple words.
- Children have excellent opportunities for mark-making using paint, felts tips and pencils. They record their ideas using notepads and clipboards as well as when drawing on large sheets of paper. Children have already started to use sounds and letters in their early writing as they recognise plastic letters placed on writing tables, which they then copy or draw around.
- Mathematical skills develop rapidly. Children use a good range of resources to develop counting skills. More able children work with large numbers and are beginning to add and take away, such as when a group solved problems with numbers beyond ten, using conkers.
- Children make exceptional progress in their physical development as they practise balancing, climbing, riding wheeled vehicles or loading and pulling trailers during their imaginary 'camping trip'. Children develop their throwing skills very well and find out how far they can throw soft balls or bean bags by counting how many of their strides certain objects have travelled.
- Promoting creativity underpins all the school does. Children are extremely imaginative because adults value their ideas and skilfully help them to put ideas into action. For example, when children wished to create crowns for dolls or make backpacks for role play, staff helped them with practical skills and provided an excellent range of materials for children to choose from.
- The rich curriculum supports children's understanding of the world extremely well, for example for arousing children's curiosity about changes in everyday materials such as when blocks of ice melt when placed in the water tray. Local walks, and visits to shops and by train further afield to another Nursery in the federation, also extend children's understanding exceptionally well. Children greatly enjoy using computers to help them learn, including counting.

**The quality of teaching is outstanding**

- Parents correctly consider that teaching is of a high quality and that their children make excellent progress. All staff are extremely knowledgeable about the most effective ways that children of this age learn and develop. They provide very stimulating activities superbly matched to children's different needs.
- Excellent relationships between adults and children help the children make the most of their time in the Nursery. There is something new to learn every day and adults promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. As a result, children develop a sense of wonder in the world around them, love learning, grow in confidence and relate extremely well to others.
- Staff listen to children, understand their interests extremely well and enable them to develop and extend their ideas, such as when children created an outdoor toy shop and sold toys to others. Questions and conversations during an activity are tailored exceptionally well to individual children's needs.
- A perfect balance of adult-led and child-selected activities ensures children are able to learn just as successfully through listening to and watching adults as by learning through play. For example, adult-led group sessions successfully introduce phonics (knowledge of sounds and their letters) and then children are helped to apply their learning during play. For example, children are encouraged to spot letters and well-chosen objects representing sounds, as they engage in water-play activities.
- Throughout the day, adults are interacting, talking, questioning, developing language and guiding children's learning as children explore and investigate for themselves. Adults are very adept when joining in children's play and extending their learning. For example, when a group of children played with the puppet theatre, staff ensured 'the audience of teddies' were carefully numbered so they could be counted and recognised.
- Adults have high expectations of what each child can achieve. Observations of children's learning are used exceptionally well to support individual children, including disabled children, those with special educational needs, and those who are learning English as an additional language, as well as more able children.

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

- Children's behaviour is outstanding because they are fully occupied and interested, playing and learning from the first time they arrive.
- There are excellent settling-in arrangements. Opportunities for parents to spend time with their children at the start of morning and afternoon sessions ensure children feel safe and secure.
- Children love the Nursery and attend regularly. They thrive in the safe and secure atmosphere and parents are unanimous that their children are safe while there. No evidence of bullying or racist incidents was seen during the inspection, and school records confirm that there are none.
- The wide range of activities in the very well organised and attractive indoor and outdoor areas has a very positive impact on engendering the development of both boys' and girls' love of learning. The calm and purposeful atmosphere is the result of excellent relationships and the right levels of challenge for all children. Children are confident there is always someone to help them.
- Children are very well cared for and pull on their boots and waterproof clothes when playing in the outside area in wet weather. They know routines very well and quickly respond to adults' requests for 'quieter indoor voice, please' if they become overexcited.
- Children learn how to judge what is safe for them, having learned about safety in their work and play both indoors and outside. They carefully use scissors to cut paper and tape, and use toy hammers to hammer plastic nails into materials including vegetables, such as cucumbers and potatoes, when creating their imaginary rockets.
- Children flourish in the lunch club because staff ensure this is an enjoyable, relaxed social

occasion where good manners and conversation are encouraged.

## **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The school has maintained its momentum since the previous inspection. Under the outstanding leadership of the headteachers, the considerable strengths noted previously have been built upon. The school has adapted extremely well to adjusting its provision to provide for younger children entering the Nursery while ensuring older children's needs are fully met.
- The co-headteachers' drive, clarity of vision and commitment are fully recognised and shared by staff and governors. Leaders and governors have already developed strong systems for the three Nursery schools in the federation to work cohesively while preserving the identity of each one. The headteachers and other senior leaders share their expertise extremely well and this is already having an excellent impact on staff training and development.
- The leadership of teaching is outstanding. Senior leaders keep a very close eye on the effectiveness of the Nursery and are continually challenging themselves to do better.
- The performance of teachers and other staff is excellently managed for all staff and they respond very positively to opportunities to further develop their skills. Senior leaders use information from checks on teaching to ensure that staff pay is linked to the quality of teaching and contributions to improvements in children's achievement.
- Staff appreciate that the same systems are used in the other federated schools and also benefit from opportunities to learn from the wider range of expertise available across the federation. The leadership structure is very well thought through and has started to empower leaders at all levels across the federation to bring a broader range of curriculum expertise.
- This has already had an excellent impact on developing phonics teaching. Senior leaders and governors recognise the need to now capitalise further on staff's strengths and use a similar approach in other curriculum areas.
- Partnerships are excellent and enable parents to be very successfully involved in their children's development. The staff use children's work in their 'Learning Stories' as a tool to show how children are learning and they also provide excellent information and resources for helping parents to continue their child's learning at home.
- The school has excellent links with other schools outside the federation. It shares its practice with them and staff also visit outstanding nurseries to learn from their expertise.
- While the local authority's support has been 'light touch' because of the school's high level of effectiveness, its support has been exemplary. It supports and advises the school in its constant drive for improvement. The school values this and has acted immediately on any recommendations. The local authority has also had a particularly good impact on helping to promote the excellent links with other nurseries and feeder schools.
- Central to the school's success is the staff's ability to ensure that every child has an equal chance to shine and succeed. The backgrounds and different abilities of the children are respected, celebrated and valued. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body fulfils its duties exceptionally well. This governing body is ambitious and accomplished. It has already developed excellent systems for governing this nursery school within the context of the federation. Members of the governing body bring a broad range of expertise and provide strong support and challenge. They are very well trained and understand data exceptionally well. They ask searching questions and regularly check the progress and attainment of individual children and groups, fully understanding the school's exemplary assessment systems and the high quality of teaching. They make excellent use of finances by ensuring systems are not duplicated; for example, there is one school business manager for the federation, and the costs of professional training are reduced when shared between the three schools. They are very active in ensuring that staff expertise from across the federation is used for the benefit of Cookham Nursery and are aware that, in curriculum matters, this is an area for further development. They make sure spending decisions have a

positive impact on children's progress and decide whether teachers and staff should be rewarded with pay increases. Governors ensure that all safeguarding requirements are fully met.

## 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>	109754
<b>Local authority</b>	Windsor and Maidenhead
<b>Inspection number</b>	426411

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	63
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paula Shephard
<b>Headteachers</b>	Sarah Cottle and Helen McHale
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01628 520002
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