

The Lawns Nursery School

Imperial Road, Windsor, Berkshire, SL4 3RU

Inspection dates 2–3 October 2014

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 nursery provides a model of excellence as a nationally recognised Teaching School.
- This very successful federation of three outstanding nurseries has built an extremely strong partnership. It is fully committed to helping other settings achieve the same high standards.
- Since the last inspection, the exceptional leadership of the two co-headteachers has continued to secure high quality teaching, outstanding care and excellent achievement for all children at The Lawns.
- Their experienced and inspirational leadership has developed a highly motivated and accomplished team of staff. All adults ably support the headteachers in the unrelenting drive to sustain excellent provision.
- Skilled and supportive governors rigorously check the work of the nursery and challenge it to remain outstanding.
- Partnerships with parents are excellent. All parents who completed the questionnaire fully recommend the nursery. Many sought out the inspector to speak of how highly they value it. A few wrote complimentary letters.
- Attendance is very good because children feel very safe and secure in this extremely warm and caring setting. As a result they quickly become confident learners and acquire skills swiftly.
- Children behave exceptionally well, learning and playing happily together because of the very strong relationships with adults who set an excellent example.
- Children's interests and individual needs are very skillfully planned and met. Imaginative and exciting activities engage children, enabling them to sustain considerable periods of concentration. Because of challenging learning opportunities they make rapid progress.
- Adult expertise in sensitively joining in children's play and developing their communication and language is very strong. This supports children's thinking skills especially well.
- Strong provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the school's motto of 'Discover Grow Learn' underpins children's very good personal development and achievement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed children playing and learning in a wide range of activities, including those led by adults and some chosen by the children. All practitioners were observed during morning and afternoon sessions including lunchtime. The inspector was sometimes accompanied by the headteachers.
- The inspector talked with children about their activities and looked at displays and records of their work.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised including systems for checking children's progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the nursery school's analysis of how well it is doing and how it plans to improve. Records of checks made on the quality of teaching and the minutes of the governing body meetings were also examined.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body and the nursery school staff and a meeting took place with a school adviser from the local authority.
- The inspector spoke to many parents when they brought their children to the nursery in the morning and afternoon and took account of 23 responses to the online survey, Parent View, as well as three letters from parents. Questionnaires completed by 13 members of staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Anna Sketchley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Lawns is a larger than average-sized Nursery. It shares its site with a privately run pre-school and a children's centre.
- The nursery is federated with two other local nurseries. There are two headteachers who share the leadership role for all three nurseries.
- Children start when the term after their third birthday and stay until they transfer to the Reception class in their chosen primary school.
- Children attend for either five mornings or five afternoons each week during term time. The nursery offers the opportunity for some parents to extend their child's day with an extra session. On such days children bring a packed lunch.
- The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs is broadly average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop even further the role of the curriculum teams in the sharing of excellent practice in literacy, mathematics, science and creativity so that the current high performance of the school is nurtured and sustained.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- At the heart of the school's success is the considerable experience and uncompromising commitment of the two co-headteachers. They are determined to seek out the best possible practice in understanding how young children learn best, not least to sustain the school's current high performance.
- All leaders are committed to high quality training. This is producing an extremely effective team of staff. As a result the nursery has achieved national recognition as a 'Teaching School'. Within the federation, it works very successfully in partnership with the local authority, playing a leading role in improving practice in other early years settings. The nursery demonstrates exceptional strength in its capacity to continue to secure outstanding provision and outcomes. All staff, including middle leaders, are very reflective and continually engage in professional dialogue and questioning, driving forward their own development. They have challenging individual targets to meet to support both their own development and that of the nursery. This information has previously been used robustly to tackle underperformance and is used currently to make decisions about pay and progression. Where training needs are identified they are provided for rapidly.
- Regular checks on children's progress and the quality of teaching mean that there is accurate information on what the nursery needs to do next. Priorities are supported by comprehensive action plans.
- All areas of learning and development for the early years child are very well considered and carefully planned. This ensures the curriculum is relevant and exciting. There has been exceptionally good improvement since the last inspection when the teaching of letters and sounds was an area for improvement. It is now outstanding.
- During the inspection a significant number of parents sought out the inspector because they were very keen to give, in person, their views about the work of the nursery. They value it highly and were overwhelmingly positive about its work. They made such comments as 'The happiness of each child is visible from the minute they enter to the minute they leave' and 'I am always impressed with the amount of learning opportunities I see'.
- Equal opportunities for different groups of children are promoted exceptionally well. The nursery is very inclusive and does not tolerate any form of discrimination. It very actively ensures that the children grow in an awareness of the values expected of those who will grow into fully fledged citizens.
- Children are exceptionally well cared for and the school staff make sure that safeguarding procedures are followed rigorously to meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very committed to their role and well organised.
 - They are very supportive of the school but also monitor its work very carefully using reports and regular visits.
 - They have extremely useful skills from the world of work and also take up specific governor training where necessary.
 - As a result, they have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses including about the quality of teaching. This enables them to ask challenging and searching questions of leaders about how well the nursery is performing.
 - They ensure that funding is used to maximum benefit. Staff pay and children's progress are carefully compared and considered to ensure good value for money. They set challenging objectives for the co-headteachers and review them regularly.
 - Governors carry out all their duties, including safeguarding requirements, diligently.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is outstanding. School records over time, views expressed in the online parent questionnaire and informal discussions with parents confirm this view. No child has been prevented from attending the nursery because of poor behaviour.
- Direct teaching about how to behave towards one another fully supports children's social development. They play happily together because they are taught explicitly to take turns, share resources and help one another. A good example of this was when a large group of children worked very cooperatively together

while rolling a ball in the large parachute.

- Adults listen carefully to children, building trusting and respectful relationships. As a consequence, children listen attentively to instructions and respond sensibly, especially when it is time to tidy away.
- Excellent provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development strongly supports their personal and emotional development. A fine example of this was seen during the inspection when children handled the newly hatched chicks with great gentleness, awe and wonder. They all knew the importance of washing their hands after handling the chicks.
- No opportunities are missed for children to develop their personal and self-help skills. Snack times and lunchtimes are excellent social occasions where children are encouraged to sit politely at the table, choosing their drink and fruit and learning to say 'please' and 'thank you'. When eating their packed lunch they know which foods are best eaten first and that healthy foods such as fruit and milk are good for them.

Safety

- The nursery's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding. There are no recorded incidents of racism or bullying. Children say they feel very safe and demonstrate this by the way they move confidently about the setting. Parents signalled their unanimous agreement in the parent questionnaire and informal discussions.
- Many opportunities exist for children to assess and manage risks while engaged in adventurous activities, for example when sitting around the fire bowl on a Forest School visit or on the climbing equipment in the nursery garden. Their role play as firemen was another example of how activities make a significant contribution to children's awareness of how to keep safe.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- An excellent balance exists of activities led by adults and those chosen by children. Children make significant progress during the short, small group learning times because of the excellent relationships and high expectations of adults. During the longer periods of uninterrupted time they are encouraged to try new experiences and praised for their efforts as they play and explore their surroundings together.
- Children choose from an extensive range of exciting but very carefully planned activities across all areas of learning. Adults gather together around the 'learning board' on the wall at the end of each day to discuss the day's events, enabling them to make very good use of their knowledge about each child. Detailed information is collected, noted and used to adjust the activities for the next day. This specifically takes into consideration children's needs and interests. Parents are encouraged to make important contributions to this process by posting notes about their children on the board.
- Children learn rapidly because adults join in their play sensitively, following children's ideas, posing questions and extending their language. An excellent example was seen during the inspection when children were rolling balls down a long length of guttering. The adult took the children on in their thinking by posing searching questions.
- Children master new skills quickly because adults work alongside them, coaching them and offering them just the right amount of support. During the inspection children were observed making fruit kebabs. They learned to cut pieces of apple by turning the fruit over so that the peel was uppermost. Using a sawing motion they were soon cutting the fruit expertly with a child specific knife.
- Children are encouraged to have a go and persevere because adult-led activities are stimulating, challenging and active. During an adult-led session learning their letters and sounds children listened intently and were entirely captivated by having to keep time together when using claves to tap out the syllables in their names.
- Regular dedicated time spent with each child checking on their progress enables adults to record important milestones in children's development. These 'Learning Stories' and photographs help adults to accurately plan the next steps in each individual child's learning and development.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children join the nursery with various levels of knowledge, skills and understanding.

- Vibrant, challenging learning and development opportunities for young children prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage in their education. They make rapid progress because of outstanding provision.
- Nursery information shows that during children's time in the nursery, gaps in attainment close in almost all areas and for all groups of children. By the time they leave the nursery the vast majority are well on track to reach a good level of development in all areas of learning and a very high proportion exceed the level expected for their age.
- Children and their parents are warmly welcomed by adults at the beginning of each session. They separate easily from their parents, quickly identifying their name, its initial sound and their photograph. Because of exceptionally inviting and well-prepared creative activities children settle readily.
- They enjoy daily uninterrupted time to play and explore, quickly becoming self-assured and independent. They develop the characteristics of effective learning rapidly as they move purposefully between the different areas.
- They engage enthusiastically in, for example, making play-dough cakes, constructing a marble run and slicing fruit ready for making fruit kebabs. Number skills are learned rapidly as they match shiny conkers to numbers on a number line or join in the song 'Ten Green Bottles', working out how many are left as the song progresses.
- Many well-considered opportunities are offered for children to develop their dexterity and control and pre-writing skills. High quality resources absorb children and they demonstrate excellent concentration skills as they thread coloured string through a hollow pencil. Their fingers are strengthened in readiness for writing as they push the pencil into a special rubber mat to make a picture of their choice.
- The outdoor area provides many similar exciting opportunities across all areas of learning. Children strengthen their muscles and develop their control and balance as they climb and swing on the wooden structure. Opportunities to be creative abound. Children thoroughly enjoy waking the dragon with the drums in the music area, and calming him to sleep to the sound of bells. They display a high level of fascination with equipment in the sandpit, maintaining their interest for a considerable period of time.
- During all these activities adults talk to children helpfully, explaining, making suggestions, asking questions and joining in their play. This significantly develops children's language and their ability to communicate clearly.
- Very carefully planned small group activities mean that the needs of all children are fully met. Children develop very good attitudes to learning in these small groups. This improves their listening and concentration skills and prepares them very well for the future.
- More able children demonstrated this as they listened very carefully while learning the sounds that letters make. They showed how they could blend and write sounds to make such words as 'hen', 'pig' and 'dog', acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding beyond that typical for their age.
- Children with a range of complex learning needs, including the small proportion of those at an early stage of learning English, receive very effective support. Adults are exceptionally skilled at acquiring support and help from outside agencies and this is highly valued by parents. The achievement of these children is rigorously checked and they make rapid progress.

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	109758
Local authority	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	448070

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	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paula Shepheard
Headteacher	Sarah Cottle and Helen McHale
Date of previous school inspection	27–28 September 2011
Telephone number	01753 865351
Fax number	No fax
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