

Blagdon Nursery School

Blagdon Road, Whitley, Reading, Berkshire, RG2 7NT

Inspection dates 15–16 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 headteacher, leaders and managers, and members of the governing body are absolutely committed to achieving the highest possible outcomes for all children. There has been a relentless focus on improving teaching through observation and training, to ensure high standards of achievement.
- Children make rapid progress in all areas of learning. Staff are very good at measuring what children can do when they arrive at the nursery, so they know exactly what to prioritise for their learning.
- Children learn exceptionally well because they are excited and motivated by stimulating and interesting learning materials and activities.
- Teachers constantly encourage children to ask questions, to talk about their learning, and to listen carefully.
- Both the children and the staff love learning. Children are thrilled by new ideas. Their behaviour is outstanding because they want to learn as much as they can.
- Children understand that respect is very important. They take turns, are kind, and work well with each other.
- The staff keep children safe at the nursery. Safeguarding procedures are extremely thorough, and children have a very good understanding of how to keep safe.
- Children settle quickly. The nursery makes sure the children are happy and confident. The staff prepare them very well for primary school.
- Staff and parents are committed to the school's vision, which places great emphasis on children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents are delighted by what the nursery offers, and are unanimous in their support of the school.
- The school works exceptionally well with parents. However, information on the school's website is difficult for parents to access. It is not easy for parents to use the website to support their children's learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector spent two days in the school and completed eight observations of lessons. The inspector was accompanied by the headteacher for three of these observations.
- The inspector observed the full range of the school's indoor and outdoor activities and talked to children at work and at play.
- The inspector analysed the responses of the 15 staff who completed the Ofsted questionnaire, took account of the 22 responses to the online survey (Parent View), and the responses to the school's own parental questionnaires.
- Discussions were held with two members of the governing body. The inspector held meetings with two representatives of the local authority, and with senior leaders and teachers.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including the school's own information on the progress of different groups of children, school improvement planning, monitoring of teaching and learning and staff appraisal papers, and records and policies relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Miranda Perry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The nursery school offers up to 140 part-time places and five full-time places for three- and four-year-old children. There are three classes. There are three children currently attending full time who meet specific criteria laid down by the Reading local authority.
- The majority of children are from White British backgrounds.
- A small number of children speak English as an additional language and are from ethnic minority groups.
- About one in every six children has a disability or special educational needs. Most of these children have speech and language difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders.
- There are no eligible children who receive pupil premium funding (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care which starts from the Reception year).
- Blagdon Nursery includes Willows Day Nursery. Until October 2013, the governing body also managed a children's centre.
- The school runs a breakfast club, afternoon childcare and an after-school club, all of which formed part of the inspection.
- The headteacher is a Local Leader in Education and provides support to a number of schools in Reading.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Review and improve the school's website so that parents can access information more easily in order to support their children's learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is a highly effective leader. She has exceptionally high expectations for her own and others' performance, and establishes a climate in which everyone strives for excellence.
- The staff and governors are totally committed to the headteacher's drive for improvement. They describe her as being supportive, but also as providing inspirational leadership.
- The headteacher and other leaders and managers have implemented a highly focused programme of lesson observations and scrutiny of children's work. As a result, they have successfully addressed the key issues identified at the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be good.
- Leaders and managers ensure that members of staff apply policies consistently. For example, all the staff make sure that children regularly behave in a way that means they can learn without distraction.
- Leaders and managers track the progress of children in a systematic way. As a result, they know exactly how well children are doing, and can immediately take action if there is a risk of any child falling behind.
- Middle leaders, such as the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the member of staff responsible for disabled children and those with special educational needs, undertake research and share ideas to bring about outstanding learning. This helps to maintain high standards.
- The priorities for staff training arise out of findings from the lesson observations, work scrutiny, and progress tracking which leaders undertake. This means that staff have up-to-date judgements about the school's provision, enabling them to address any problems that children might have with their learning.
- High expectations are evident in the very ambitious targets set annually for staff. All members of staff are clear that school improvement is a shared responsibility.
- The headteacher's vision focuses on equality of opportunity for all children and the absence of any discrimination. This is central to the work of the school. Parents comment on how positive relationships are, and how they know the school does its best for all children and their families.
- The school offers children a broad and exciting range of activities. For example, during the inspection they visited a farm, sang at an old people's home, and really enjoyed participating in a music project.
- The school runs a range of clubs and activities beyond the school day. The breakfast and after-school clubs are excellent at getting children ready for learning. Once parents have secured a place at the school, they and their children can attend a course which prepares them extremely well for the nursery.
- The local authority has advised the school on improvements to the outdoor play area so it is an inspiring place for children. The headteacher, in her role as a Local Leader in Education, has worked closely with the local authority to support other schools.
- The school helps children to understand how to be effective citizens in modern Britain, and globally. There is an exceptionally good programme to support children in the transition from nursery to primary school.
- Parents are extremely positive about the school and the communication they receive regarding their children. However, the school's website does not currently provide accessible information for parents to help them to support their children's learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have an excellent understanding of the quality of teaching and have worked closely with the headteacher to monitor improvements.
 - They appreciate and understand the headteacher's regular and thorough updates, including information on children's progress. They are highly ambitious for the children's achievement.
 - Governors make sure that the annual targets set for teachers are closely linked to children's progress. They apply a pay policy which recognises good performance by teachers.
 - Members of the governing body appreciate the support that they receive from the local authority. They have benefited from the training provided. This has helped them to ensure that arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
 - Governors keep themselves up to date with relevant national changes in education.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Children are extremely eager to learn. They love it when they have new materials to explore, or when staff are talking about new ideas. They are excited to show visitors things they have made and to discuss their achievements.

- All staff apply the behaviour policy consistently. This means that there are high expectations of children's behaviour, whether they are in class, outside or around the school.
- Many of the children arrive at the school without previous experience of an educational setting. The school is very good at helping them to learn quickly how to behave well. The children flourish because of the school's very clear routines. For example, children say they like to know when they can play, where they put things away, and when they will eat their dinner.
- At the time of the inspection, the majority of the children had only been at the nursery for five weeks. Nevertheless, they consistently took turns, shared equipment, and remembered to say 'please' and 'thank you'.
- During the preparatory course for parents and children who have a place at the nursery school, the staff clarify the expectations for outstanding behaviour. The school then supports the parents to get children ready for the nursery's routines. Parents commented that their children behaved better on the course than they did at home.
- The children behave very well in all circumstances. The staff at the farm which the children visited during the inspection said they had never had such a well-behaved group of children. The children got the most out of their special music sessions, because they were enthusiastic and polite, and committed to learning as much as they could about songs from different countries.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Children do many exciting things at the school, and teachers always make them aware of how to keep safe. For example, before their visit to the farm, children talked about why washing their hands after stroking the animals is so important.
- Parents feel the school is an extremely safe place for their children. They appreciate the nursery's work in making sure the children feel safe and confident when they transfer to primary schooling.
- Children know how important it is to respect, and to be kind to each other. They also support each other to learn. For instance, children asked the inspector to talk to their friends as well as to them, so it would be fair.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Children learn extremely well because they get to work with so many materials and equipment which help them to be imaginative and creative. For example, during a morning session they talked on the phone, made their friends tea, built a tower, rode scooters, cut out playdough biscuits, and did some ironing in the role-play corner.
- Children are eager to develop the skills of learning to read, because the school celebrates reading. The children are delighted to be able to take a book home. They feel comfortable in the book corners, and love sharing books with each other.
- Teachers give children every opportunity to practise their writing. For example, children carry clipboards around with them, write with different materials, using pencils, chalk, paint and pens, and develop a good understanding of the purpose of writing. Children wanted to write the inspector a letter to tell her about the school.
- Children quickly establish good learning habits, so they readily apply their knowledge of counting. In the classrooms and in the outside area, numbers are on display. So, for example, when the children see groups of any kind the first thing they do is count them. Staff consistently challenge children to count on further.
- Disabled children and children with special educational needs benefit particularly from the support of their key workers. The key workers understand very well how each child learns, what they have learnt already, and know their likes and dislikes. They then provide materials and activities that rapidly develop children's knowledge and skills.
- The nursery staff encourage children to explain what they are doing, and to take nothing for granted. The result is that children spontaneously tell adults about their current activity. They constantly ask questions, and learn to speak more clearly and to use more complex words.
- Activities help children to learn to listen well. For example, the children had to listen carefully to the words of a song and act out the story of Goldilocks. The more the children listened, the better they understood the story, and they growled excitedly as the bears.
- Children benefit from the staff's detailed planning. Because staff are very good at observing how well the children are learning, they reshape tasks to ensure continued challenge.
- The nursery staff teach children very quickly how to look after themselves. For example, children who

have attended for only five weeks put their coats on and take them off unaided, tidy up, go to the toilet, and wash their hands, without adult prompting or assistance.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Overall, children enter the nursery with skills and knowledge in all areas of learning that are below those typical for their age. They settle quickly and make rapid and sustained progress. When they leave the school, the majority of children securely meet the expectations for their age. One in every three exceeds these expectations. Their progress is outstanding because the teachers are very good at building on children's knowledge and skills on first arrival in school.
- When they arrive for the day, all children pick out their own name label and the more-able children pick out the name label of their friends.
- Although the majority of children on roll during the inspection had only attended the school for five weeks, they already made marks to look like letters. The minority of children who had attended school for longer formed letters with greater accuracy.
- Children select books from the book corner independently and ask adults to read with them. They like discussing stories while looking at the illustrations. Because teachers label every activity that children undertake, the more able can match some of the letters to sounds.
- The majority of children can count up to ten. They are able to talk about numbers. Teachers give them every opportunity to do so during imaginative play.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs, some of whom attend full time, make excellent progress, especially any who have difficulties with speaking. Some of them get one-to-one tuition, which means that very quickly they move from communication through gesture to good use of speech.
- Children who speak English as an additional language achieve exceptionally well. When these children attend the sessions which prepare families for the nursery, teachers quickly assess the level of their knowledge and skills before they even start in the school.
- Children from ethnic minorities make as good progress as their peers. These children work with texts and materials which reflect their different backgrounds.
- The most-able children excel in the nursery. Teachers give them extra work that challenges them. For example, work to do at home, which builds on the learning they have done in class.
- Disadvantaged children make excellent progress given their starting points. They attain well, compared to their peers, because the school measures their progress frequently to make sure they do not fall behind in their learning.
- Children know how to learn. They learn quickly how to persevere. For instance, during the inspection, children who were practising rolling a hoop said, 'Can you do this? We keep trying here so we can do things.'

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	109748
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	448119

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Emma Jackson
Headteacher	Sarah Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2011
Telephone number	01189 375425
Fax number	01189 868305
Email address	head@blagdonnursery.reading.sch.uk

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