

Cherry Trees Nursery School

Hawkins Road, Bedford, MK42 9LS

Inspection dates

6–7 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children make good progress and achieve well in all areas of learning including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Good teaching helps children to develop important skills.
- Children enjoy taking part in a wide range of activities so they soon become enthusiastic learners.
- Parents think highly of the nursery and comment positively on the progress their children make.
- Children who are at a very early stage of learning English are supported well by all practitioners who together speak several languages. This helps children to play a full part in school life.
- The support and guidance for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and their families are strong, enabling full inclusion in school life.
- Children known to be eligible for free school meals perform as well as other children in the school.
- The behaviour of children is good. They are familiar with the routines in the nursery.
- Safety is outstanding. Children receive extremely high quality care. Very good relationships enable children to feel confident and safe.
- The school promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Children enjoy learning about other people's cultures and religions.
- The executive headteacher is a real driving force for success. She has a clear vision for improvement. During a period of rapid change she has ensured that staff teamwork and morale have remained high.
- Leaders at all levels are focused on improvement. They use their accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas of development to improve all aspects of provision for the children.
- Leaders and governors work effectively to ensure good links with the local community. They are ambitious to improve teaching and children's achievement still further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Information about how well children are doing is not always used precisely enough when staff plan tasks for children of different abilities.
- Sometimes adults do not ask children enough questions to encourage them to think deeply and extend their learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed children learning in a wide range of activities, including those they had chosen for themselves, and others led by adults, including small group work. Nine learning sessions were observed, several of these jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. The inspector spoke with children about their learning and also looked at lunch-time arrangements. Displays and records of children's work were examined.
- The inspector looked at progress and attainment data, the school's development plan, curriculum plans, documentation from the governing body, notes on the checks made on the quality of teaching, arrangements for safeguarding and the promotion of attendance, as well as some of the children's learning journeys.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of staff with specific responsibilities and representatives of the governing body. The inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses to the online survey (Parent View) to be able to view the results. The 44 responses from parents on a survey held by the school during the inspection were considered. The inspector spoke to a number of parents who stayed to see their children settle into the nursery, as well as holding a meeting with a group of parents and carers who contributed their views.
- Questionnaires, completed by 12 members of the school staff, were also considered.

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cherry Trees Nursery school is an average sized nursery and is one of three providers in the Bedford Nursery Schools Federation.
- Most children attend part time, though in the first few weeks they are allowed to come for a few hours each day until they are settled. A small number of children attend for extended hours.
- There are 19 ethnic groups. The largest groups are Eastern European and Asian.
- A total of 19 languages are spoken by different children in the school. Nearly two thirds of the children on roll speak English as an additional language, which is an above-average proportion.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- Before and after school care is provided on site by Cherry Trees Day Care This is subject to its own inspection.
- Children leave the nursery to continue their education at 17 different settings.
- The school is not eligible to receive pupil premium funding or funding for sports provision.
- There have been significant changes to the leadership and management of the nursery since the previous inspection. After the previous headteacher left, in February 2014, there was a consultation regarding the future management of the nursery. The school entered into a federation with Peter Pan and Southway Nursery schools.
- The three nursery schools share one executive headteacher and deputy headteacher. The nurseries work together on most policies and documentation including shared development and self-evaluation plans. Currently Cherry Trees has its own governing body. In April 2015 the school will be part of a hard federation under one governing body.
- The executive headteacher is a National Leader in Education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the overall quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - making better use of staff knowledge of children’s abilities to ensure that activities and daily structured teaching opportunities extend learning, especially for those who are most able
 - developing adults’ questioning skills so they ask children questions that make them think even harder.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher knows the strengths of the school well and accurately identifies actions to secure continuous improvements. All staff with leadership roles play a good part in checking on the quality of provision and helping their colleagues to improve their teaching. Leaders, managers and governors are ambitious to improve the school even further.
- The federation of the three nursery schools under the executive leadership of the headteacher has enabled staff and resources to be shared between the settings. This includes the sharing of expertise by those who have particular skills, through informal discussion and opportunities to observe each other and learn from each other's strengths.
- The headteacher has made accurate evaluations of teaching and learning over time and has provided staff with ambitious targets for improvement. Staff performance is managed rigorously and staff are supported well through good-quality training. Lesson observations focus effectively on how and what the children are learning.
- Senior leaders track children's progress carefully. As a result, almost all groups of children make good or better progress. They provide extra support to the children, where necessary, ensuring that nobody falls behind. Leaders ensure that all have an equal opportunity to succeed and that there is no discrimination. However, although the more-able children make good progress, occasionally they are given activities that are too easy.
- The learning environment provides well-planned, exciting opportunities for children to follow their own interests and develop their own ideas. It is based on the needs of the children and reflects the multi-cultural nature of the community. It contributes very well to children's personal development. Staff organise themselves flexibly so that, whatever activities children choose, they will get extra help and support from adults as they learn. When children learn in small groups with adults, a strong focus on speaking, listening and early literacy and mathematics skills leads to good progress in these areas.
- Children learn a wide variety of skills, all of which contribute effectively to their rounded development. For example, good use is made of learning through song. The words and rhythms help children to learn the songs by heart and also to cooperate in a social activity. An example of this was the singing of the 'Firework Song' which enabled children to learn about time, money and letter sounds. Children were very excited by this activity.
- Literacy is promoted well through attractively illustrated and well-written books. Numeracy is promoted through well-planned opportunities for counting and using shapes. Physical skills are promoted effectively through opportunities for climbing, balancing and running.
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are skilfully developed through carefully planned activities. The opportunities provided contribute effectively to children's strong self-esteem. Reflecting the many different cultures within the school, a high emphasis is placed upon learning about different traditions. Consequently, children learn to be interested in the faiths and cultures of others.
- Children are taught British values of tolerance, respect, equality and why rules are important. As a result, children play happily together, share toys and equipment, and look after one another.
- Safeguarding arrangements are thorough, and children are safe and secure at school. Parents are confident that their children are safe, happy and relaxed in the setting.
- Parents speak very highly of the nursery. They value the clear information they are given about their children's progress through 'learning journal' books and regular reports. One told the inspector 'my son has come on in leaps and bounds'.

- The local authority only has to provide limited support for this successful school.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their school and are kept well informed through governor meetings and regular headteacher reports.
- Governors have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching. They keep a watchful eye on the link between teachers' pay and the progress made by children.
- Governors have a clear and detailed understanding of the achievement of different groups because they receive good-quality information and they visit classes to see for themselves how well the children are learning.
- Governors monitor the school's finances carefully and carry out their statutory duties effectively. They ensure, for example, that procedures for safeguarding children fully meet national requirements.
- Governors entered into a federation with two local nursery schools once they reassured themselves that this would bring immense benefit to the education of the children.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Children love coming to school, they learn to follow routines well and respond quickly to adult instructions. Adult supervision and guidance are excellent.
- There are carefully thought-out procedures to prepare children for life at school. As a result, children arrive happily and quickly develop positive attitudes to learning. Parents appreciate the time that staff dedicate to home visits.
- There is a good focus on children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and children play well together, share toys and treat all resources with respect. Adults are skilled in managing the children's behaviour to ensure they make good progress.
- Behaviour at the 'lunchtime club' is exemplary. Children who stay for lunch are taught good manners. For example, they sit at family-type tables, with a tablecloth, eating as well as they can with a knife and fork. They take responsibility to clear their used plates and cutlery. At the end of each session, the children cooperate in tidying up.
- Children are active learners who delight in finding things out for themselves, for example by experimenting to make cardboard rockets without the help of their teacher. Children like and trust the adults. They are confident to ask for help and advice if they need it.
- Very few incidents of poor behaviour have been recorded over the past two years and there have been no exclusions. Children from all heritages and backgrounds get on well together. Occasionally, the more-able children get a bit restless because they want to try something more challenging.
- Although attendance is not statutory for children of this age, staff work effectively with parents to ensure children attend regularly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. All staff and governors have received appropriate training and regular, planned staff discussions ensure that they know how to support families and protect children from harm. Leaders and managers are stringent in safety procedures. Procedures for checking adults who work with children are very tight. Risk assessments are thorough.
- Children's understanding of risk and how to keep themselves and their friends safe is exceptionally well promoted. They are helped to have the confidence to try out new activities safely and they know they have to be careful when climbing and balancing outdoors.

- Children with dietary or medical needs are carefully watched. Information about their conditions is available to all members of staff.
- Children relate to a particular member of staff which helps parents to feel confident when exchanging information or seeking guidance.
- Parents have no concerns regarding behaviour or the safety of their children.

The quality of teaching is good

- Consistently good teaching ensures that children make good progress in all areas of learning. Each child is valued as unique and special and, as a result, they love coming to nursery.
- School leaders regularly check the on-going effectiveness of the teaching. Through rigorous observation and coaching they raise staff expectations to ensure that disadvantages of some children do not get in the way of learning.
- Well-targeted support is closely matched to the needs all children, including disabled children and those who have special educational needs, resulting in them making consistently good progress. This is often through small group activities or individual guidance. Children who speak English as an additional language also make good progress as a result of skilful teaching.
- The outdoor area provides children with opportunities to develop their physical skills through climbing, water and sand play and the forest school. Children have good opportunities to ride tricycles and other wheeled vehicles and this helps them develop their balance and coordination.
- The teaching of early reading, writing and mathematics is good. Children are given good opportunities to make marks and learn to control paintbrushes, pencils and pens. They listen to stories and join in counting activities with enthusiasm. Adults take every opportunity to help children learn to count, such as counting their fingers as they put on their gloves or working out how many boys or girls there are in the group.
- All practitioners are involved in checking children’s progress, contribute to the learning and attend meetings with parents. Children’s learning is assessed accurately and children’s progress is recorded in their ‘learning journal’ books.
- Activities are carefully planned to meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Although most activities are planned around what children know, understand and can do, this is not always the case. A few activities and tasks do not always extend learning, particularly for the most-able children.
- Teachers listen to all that children have to say. This has a very positive impact on children’s self-esteem and confidence in learning. Although teachers sometimes ask challenging questions, which make children think harder, they do not do this regularly enough to extend children’s learning and help them to make outstanding progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start nursery with skills and abilities below the levels expected for their age. The wide range of inviting activities stimulates children’s interest and help them make good progress in developing such important skills as reading, writing and understanding numbers. By the time they leave the school children are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. This is due to the care shown for individuals and the opportunities provided for children to work together, make choices, follow their interests and talk about their feelings.

- The school tracks each pupil's progress closely and works with the children and their parents to plan the next steps for learning. Children's progress is recorded in learning journeys which chart progress across their time at nursery. A careful watch is kept on the progress children make to ensure that no individuals or groups fall behind. If there is any risk of this, then the children are given support to help them catch up.
- The children who are learning English as an additional language receive skilful support to develop their language. Consequently, they make similar progress to their peers.
- Children known to be eligible for free school meals achieve better than the other children in the school. Staff ensure that all children have equal opportunities to good experiences which support good learning.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points. This is because the school provides specific input to help them overcome their individual difficulties, drawing extremely well on the help of outside agencies as well as its own expertise. Although standards are lower than those of their classmates, they are higher than would be expected from their starting points.
- Children make a good start in learning to read. They are enthusiastic about stories and many will sit together and share a book. Specific teaching of early phonics (how sounds in words are represented by different letters) is carried out on a daily basis and children are already starting to recognise some initial sounds, such as that of their name. Practitioners take every opportunity to help children to develop these areas.
- Although the most-able children generally achieve well, they are not always given activities that challenge them and so they do not always make as much progress as they could. This is an area which has already been picked up by the headteacher's accurate self-evaluation.
- The school makes every child and their families welcome. Parents say that the home visit before their child starts in the Nursery is particularly effective because it establishes the link with the child's key person and enables children to settle very quickly when they start school. Parents' comments show they are very pleased with the progress their children are making.

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	109413
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	447939

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	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Woodward
Headteacher	Isabel Davis
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2011
Telephone number	01234 354788
Fax number	01234 401331
Email address	ct1@schools.bedfordshire.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

