

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Slade Nursery School

Titup Hall Drive, Headington, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX3 8QQ

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Inspection date: 18 May 2021

## **Outcome**

Slade Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Children are thriving at this happy nursery school. They cannot wait to begin their day and arrive eager and ready to learn. They thoroughly enjoy playing together and are active, busy learners. The very well-appointed outdoor area is a hive of activity. Children love exploring out here, whatever the weather. They relish solving problems, such as finding the best way to climb the slope to cross the bridge.

Leaders have high ambition for every child to develop a love of learning and achieve exceptionally well. They make sure that all children, irrespective of their starting points, are very well prepared for starting school. Those children who missed part of the school year because of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic have readily adjusted to being back in nursery and are flourishing.

Children behave extremely well. Staff model kindness and care deeply about every child. They quickly settle any minor upsets and do not accept any unkind behaviour. Children feel safe and secure in the strong, nurturing relationships that they have with staff. The school's partnership with parents and carers is commendable. Parents are full of praise for the school. One parent, typical of many, commented, 'I love this nursery.'

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The curriculum is particularly well planned. Leaders have put in place a curriculum that inspires children to learn. Plans set out in detail what children will learn and the small steps along the way to help them achieve highly ambitious learning goals. Teachers are experts in early childhood development. They use their detailed knowledge of the children in their care to plan their next learning steps with precision. This ensures that children make very strong progress and achieve exceptionally well.

The curriculum for communication and language is highly effective. Teachers place great emphasis on developing children's speaking and listening. They continually model clear language. Staff provide commentaries during play, repeating and building on children's responses. Stories are shared and enjoyed together. Staff are skilled in using props and a

narrative structure to help children create their own stories. Children learn about the conventions of traditional tales. For example, they know these often end with 'and they all lived happily ever after'. Staff use, and expect children to use, ambitious vocabulary. One child delighted in explaining the life cycle of a butterfly, using words such as 'chrysalis'.

The school caters very well for children's physical development. Children love navigating their way over and around the various outdoor equipment. They learn to play safely and understand risks, such as when climbing and jumping. Children become increasingly independent with everyday routines, such as using the toilet, putting on coats and tidying up after snack time.

Children play happily together and are kind and considerate. Staff listen attentively to children. They help them to manage their feelings and to understand how others may be feeling. Staff support children to express themselves clearly, for instance by teaching them words or phrases and supporting some with visual prompts, such as pictures and signs.

Staff are highly attuned to the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They provide excellent support for these vulnerable young children. Leaders work in close partnership with health and other services to ensure that children and their families get the support they need.

Through stories, songs and celebrations, children learn about other cultures and faiths. Before the pandemic, the school had well-established visits to places such as the Oxford Science Museum. These experiences helped to enrich children's lives and broaden their horizons. Until such visits can resume, leaders have adapted their plans appropriately. They have strengthened further the opportunities for children to learn about the world around them.

Staff are proud to belong to this vibrant nursery. They work together as a tight-knit team where 'everyone looks after each other'. Strong teamwork and shared high aspirations for the children in this community are pivotal to the success of this school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding and children's well-being constitute the top priority for everyone at this nursery. There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff and leaders know children and families very well and are alert to any concerns.

Leaders have put effective systems in place to identify any children or families who may need early help or support. They work closely with a raft of other services, including social care professionals, to help keep children safe. Regular training ensures that all staff and governors are knowledgeable and confident in fulfilling their responsibilities.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding on 21 February 2013.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122970
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10192876
<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	102
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Hugh Turner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carol Lister
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sladenurseryschool-headington.org.uk">www.sladenurseryschool-headington.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 July 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Slade Nursery School is a maintained nursery school with provision for two- to five-year-old children. Children are currently being taught in two classes and attend either part- or full-time.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has federated with Wood Farm Primary School. Following the federation, the headteacher of Wood Farm Primary School was appointed as the executive headteacher of the nursery school. The primary school shares the same site as the nursery school.
- Slade Nursery School also runs a day nursery, which operates on the school site. The day nursery is registered separately and caters for young children from the age of one. The day nursery also provides wraparound care for children attending Slade Nursery School and Wood Farm Primary School.
- The school has a higher than average proportion of children whose first language is not English.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the 2020–21 COVID-19 pandemic. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- We met with the headteacher, other leaders and teachers. We held a separate meeting with the leader with responsibility for SEND.
- We did deep dives in the three prime areas of learning: communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and physical development. We met with leaders and teachers, visited classrooms and outdoor learning areas and talked with children.
- The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the chair and the vice-chair of governors.
- An inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- We reviewed a wide range of school information, including the school's record of recruitment checks, policies and other safeguarding documents. We also reviewed the school's curriculum plans.
- An inspector spoke to parents at the start of the morning and afternoon nursery sessions. There were too few responses from parents from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, to be considered. We considered the views of staff during meetings with them and took into account the five responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

## Inspection team

Sue Cox, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Louise Walker

Her Majesty's Inspector

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