

# Inspection of a good school: Dulwich Wood Nursery School

Lyall Avenue, Dulwich, London SE21 8QS

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Inspection date: 10 June 2021

## **Outcome**

Dulwich Wood Nursery School continues to be a good school.

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

Children attend school with enthusiasm. They enjoy playing and discovering in the woods within the school grounds. Children flourish in the extensive outdoor spaces. This is because the curriculum provides a wealth of well-planned activities to support their wider development.

Children play together happily and are well looked after. Adults create a caring and nurturing environment. They make sure that children are safe and teach them to be considerate of each other.

Children behave well and are typically absorbed in their learning. Children know the rules and expectations because adults model behaviour very well. Adults deal quickly with any disagreements. They encourage children to say sorry and empathise with each other's feelings. This contributes to the calm and orderly environment.

Staff plan the curriculum to ensure that all children achieve well. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff's extensive training and knowledge of the children contribute effectively to children's achievement. Staff thoroughly enjoy working at the school. They share leaders' high ambition for all children. As a result, children leave the school ready for the Reception Year.

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

The curriculum is well planned and ambitious. It prepares children well for their future learning. Leaders and staff know what they expect all children to learn and remember. They plan learning to build children's understanding logically. Staff meet together every day to talk about children's interests and how they can use these to teach important

knowledge and skills. Staff understand the statutory requirements for children in the early years. They know the needs of each child well.

Early mathematics is central to the planned curriculum. Children develop their understanding of number in small, manageable steps. Staff repeat activities such as songs and counting to help children secure their knowledge. Day-to-day activities, such as lunchtimes and outdoor play, also include opportunities for children to rehearse and further develop their mathematical understanding. Staff regularly check children's learning and development. They use these checks to adapt their plans.

The curriculum also prioritises communication and language development. Staff introduce new words deliberately. They go over these words to help children understand what they mean. In the provision for two-year-olds, staff use language carefully to encourage children to use words to communicate their needs and feelings. A speech and language therapist trains all staff. As a result, staff confidently use inclusive approaches, such as signing alongside speech, to communicate and sing songs. This also helps to promote children's early language development.

Leaders expect all children to achieve well whatever their needs. Staff are trained to provide appropriate and targeted support for children with SEND, based on individual needs. Staff work closely with Reception teachers in the federated primary school. As a result, transition to the Reception Year is smooth and carefully planned.

Children enjoy hearing stories and creating their own. The curriculum includes books and stories in all areas of learning. Staff demonstrate an enthusiasm and love of books. Before the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, children took books home to share with their parents and carers. Parents also read with their child in school. This work has been put on hold. Leaders have not fully considered how they might continue to support parents to help their children with reading at home.

Children behave very well. Children's personal, social and emotional development is catered for effectively. Staff receive training on supporting children who are experiencing trauma and attachment issues. Staff are caring and respond consistently to children's needs. They teach children how to share their feelings. Children learn about ways they can show kindness and consideration towards adults and their peers.

Leaders arrange for staff to work collaboratively with other schools. This helps leaders to reflect on and improve the quality of education provided. This work paused due to COVID-19 but will resume next term. Governors regularly discuss curriculum development with school leaders. Governors support leaders. They trust that leaders are making the right decisions. However, governors' understanding of some areas of the early years is still developing. As a result, they do not challenge leaders as well as they could.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff create an environment where children feel safe and can share any concerns. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. As a result, staff know how to identify children who may need extra support and how to report concerns.

Leaders are committed to safeguarding. They work well alongside leaders within the federation to safeguard children. Leaders build positive relationships with parents. They provide additional support, such as parenting classes, if appropriate. Leaders work with the local authority and other agencies effectively, so that children and families get the right support they need.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Early reading and language development are promoted well. However, since the start of the pandemic, leaders have reduced the help they provide to parents to support their children with reading at home. Leaders have not found alternative ways for children to share books and stories with their families. Leaders should support parents to continue the work the school does to promote reading.
- Governors have high expectations. They make sure that leaders keep them informed about the curriculum on offer. Sometimes, however, governors do not offer rigorous support and challenge to leaders. Governors need to strengthen their knowledge of the early years so they can hold leaders to account fully.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school. 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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2016.

## 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 information from Parent View 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 [here](#).

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>	100769
<b>Local authority</b>	Southwark
<b>Inspection number</b>	10192439
<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>	105
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sandra Potter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Rowe
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.dulwichwood.com">www.dulwichwood.com</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	10 and 11 May 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up her post after the previous inspection. She is also the headteacher of Dulwich Wood Primary School and Dulwich Wood Children's Centre.
- There are two chairs of the governing body, who currently share the role. They took up their posts in March 2021.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. Inspectors also spoke with the chairs of governors and a school improvement adviser from the local authority.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these areas: communication and language, literacy, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development. This involved meeting with leaders, talking to staff and looking at children's work. Inspectors also visited lessons, spoke to children and watched them learning and playing.

- Inspectors checked safeguarding arrangements in the school. They spoke to leaders and staff about what they do to safeguard children’s welfare. They also checked that leaders undertake the necessary pre-employment checks on staff and looked at documentation.
- Inspectors looked at the nine responses to the Ofsted parent survey, Parent View, and spoke to some parents to find out their views. They also considered 13 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Andrea Bedeau, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Bryony Freeman

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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