

Inspection of an outstanding school: Blagrove Nursery School

Recreation Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG30 4UA

Inspection date:

8 March 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Blagrove Nursery is a small and friendly school. The nursery is a safe, well-organised place for children to learn. Children thrive here because staff care about them and provide interesting learning experiences for them to explore. Staff want the very best for the children.

Staff get to know each child and their family individually so that everyone feels that they belong. Parents are full of praise for the school. One parent summed up the views of many saying, 'I couldn't ask for more, Blagrove is one big happy family.' Another parent added, 'The school is a labour of love.'

Positive relationships are a hallmark of this happy school. Children behave exceptionally well. They learn to understand their emotions and think about the feelings of others. Any unkindness or bullying is very swiftly resolved.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken its toll on this small supportive team. During this period, staff's absence has hampered the development of curriculum planning. Staff are still refining their curriculum and reviewing their assessment of children's learning. This is to ensure that practice is in line with the requirements of the newly revised statutory framework for the early years.

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

Dedicated leaders and staff want every child to enjoy learning and achieve well. The nursery is thoughtfully organised to promote children's learning, language and independence. Consequently, children flourish. They are curious, highly motivated and genuinely eager to explore and learn. The disruption to education during the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on children. Staff have identified that children's

communication skills are now typically at an earlier stage of development than was seen before. Rightly, speaking and listening are a top priority. Adults skilfully encourage children to talk, listen and explain their ideas. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive helpful individualised support so that they achieve well.

Staff observe children's learning closely. They meet regularly, and carefully adjust the curriculum to reflect children's learning needs and interests. For example, staff noticed that children were not using a dedicated mathematics area, so they changed their approach. Mathematics activities are now included in all areas of the setting, indoors and outdoors. During the inspection, children were busily counting bowls of porridge, filling and emptying bowls and comparing sizes linked to their work on 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'.

Since the introduction of the revised early years framework in September 2021, the small staff team has not yet been able to adapt its curriculum to reflect the changes. The headteacher has firm strategic plans in place to tackle this as a matter of urgency. She knows that assessment needs to be adapted to match the school's revised curriculum.

Literacy is taught exceptionally well. Children show a deep love of reading. They listened attentively to an alternative version of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' being read aloud and were completely engrossed. Children get a superb introduction to early phonics; listening to sounds, rhyme and repetition. Children often choose to make marks to represent writing. They enjoy telling their stories, showing they understand the conventions of the language of stories. Parents value being invited into school to observe story time and story sack sessions.

Well-trained staff expertly promote children's positive behaviour. Children make excellent use of the 'self-regulation areas' to explore and understand their feelings. Inspectors saw several examples of children happily sharing and cooperating with each other.

Leaders provide many opportunities for children's wider development. In November, children visited the town's war memorial to introduce them to remembrance. Recently, children got involved in watching the refurbishment of the local park and visited it when complete.

The school is led and managed extremely well. Governors are well informed about the quality of education for children. They support leaders and hold them to account successfully. Staff appreciate the way that leaders care about their workload and well-being. Leaders have effectively created an open and supportive team culture.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Parents and staff agree that children are safe at Blagrove. Staff are well trained and use this knowledge effectively to spot the early signs that children might need help. Leaders follow up on any concerns quickly and thoroughly so that children get any help they need.

Leaders ensure that all the necessary checks are made on staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Record-keeping is well organised, and systems are rigorous.

Leaders know that children's attendance is important. Efficient procedures are in place to follow up on children's absence to check they are safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not reflect the recent changes in the early years statutory framework well enough. Currently, leaders have not identified clearly enough the progression of knowledge and skills that children need to learn. Leaders should ensure that they identify clearly what they want children to know, remember and be able to do within the revised early years framework. Leaders should also identify the order in which children will learn this curriculum content.
- Leaders have not yet aligned their assessment practice to the new curriculum. Typically, assessment is not yet precise enough. As a result, this does not provide staff with the information they need about what children have learned and enable them to identify precisely any gaps in their learning. Leaders should ensure that assessment practice is refined, aligned to the new curriculum and pinpoints precisely what children know, remember and can do so that this information can be used effectively to inform future planning.

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 evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in 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 information from Ofsted 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.

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

Unique reference number	109749
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10211095
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alice Brown and Pamela McColl (Co-chairs)
Headteacher	Emma Payne
Website	www.blagravenurseryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The nursery caters for three- to four-year-old children. Most children attend part time.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a reduction in the number of children on roll, reflecting a falling birth rate in the local area.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the school bursar. They met with members of the teaching staff and support staff. The lead inspector held a telephone call with one of the co-chairs of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors undertook deep dives into the following subjects: literacy, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development. For each deep dive, inspectors

discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited classrooms and outdoor learning areas and talked with children and staff.

- Inspectors observed lunchtime and spoke to children throughout the inspection.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector reviewed the school's record of recruitment checks and met with the headteacher to discuss and review safeguarding arrangements. Inspectors spoke with staff and children. They also reviewed safeguarding procedures, policies and other documents.
- Inspectors met with staff to discuss the training they have received, how leaders support them and how workload is managed. They also took account of the eight responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of the 18 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the 10 free-text comments.

Inspection team

Claire Prince, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Alan Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

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, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022