

Inspection of a good school: The Wharf Nursery School

The Wharf, Woolsack Way, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1JG

Inspection date: 3 March 2022

Outcome

The Wharf Nursery School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children thoroughly enjoy playing and learning in this friendly and welcoming nursery. On the day of the inspection, they arrived proudly dressed as a character from a book, to celebrate World Book Day. Children quickly become engrossed in the nursery's extensive range of activities. They enthuse about learning because adults choose activities with great care. During the inspection, for example, children watched with complete focus and huge anticipation as they waited for a pop-up alien to spring into action: 'Ready, steady, GO!' The activity's success in developing children's concentration skills was clear, and the subsequent giggles and squeals of delight said it all.

Adults combine high expectations of all children with good humour and sensitivity. They have a deep understanding of children's developmental needs. Warm and trusting relationships with adults help children to feel safe and secure. Children are eager to learn, and behave exceptionally well. They feel comfortable talking to adults because they know their views will be valued. Adults respond quickly if a child is frustrated or upset. Occasional disagreements are sorted out with gentle explanation and kindness. Bullying is not a concern. Adults are always alert to any signs of anxiety and speak with parents if worried.

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

The nursery's rich, stimulating curriculum supports children's learning and development extremely well. It sets out clearly what pupils should learn in each age and stage of their development. Adults continuously check how well children are learning, skilfully adjusting what they teach in response to children's needs. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are highly valued members of the school community. These children make the same exceptional progress as others, both academically and personally.

The rapid progress children make in the development of personal and social skills prepares them exceptionally well for school. Children move freely between the different areas of the nursery when choosing activities. They do so calmly and sensibly. This is because they know how the nursery works and they are excited about all it has to offer. Adults are always on hand to encourage, reassure and support.

The nursery gives the development of children's speaking and language skills a very high priority. Staff use every opportunity to model speaking skills and good manners. They are experts in knowing precisely when to encourage, ask a question or start a conversation. The routine use of Makaton supports all children with vocabulary and communication skills very effectively, including those with SEND.

Adults have created an environment rich in opportunities for children to explore language. During the inspection, children talked excitedly about photographs taken during a recent farm visit. Adults read to children often. Children love to browse and choose from the nursery's wide range of books. For example, during the inspection two of the youngest children curled up with an adult to enjoy looking at a book about tractors.

Effective and well-established procedures for teaching early phonics skills mean that children make rapid progress in reading. Adults routinely draw attention to the sounds children can hear in words and rhymes, and in the world around them. Leaders are in the process of moving to a new phonics programme as part of the nursery's continuous drive for improvement. They are managing this process thoughtfully and carefully. Staff training has begun, with more scheduled for the coming months.

The curriculum equips children with secure early mathematical skills and an enjoyment of number. Numerous mathematical activities feature throughout the nursery, and everyday tasks, such as counting fruit portions during snack time, are used very well to support number skills.

Activities such as teddy bears' picnics, visits to a local care home and farm visits help children to learn about the world around them. Leaders have begun to reinstate such activities, as the pandemic eases.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide regular training and updates for staff, who are knowledgeable about safeguarding as a result. All adults follow the school's safeguarding procedures consistently. Leaders are alert to potential risks to children. Children are encouraged to tell an adult if they are worried or anxious, and their views are taken seriously. Governors give children's safety a very high priority. They complete a wide range of activities to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. All parents who responded to Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View, feel that their children are safe and happy.

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, 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 good in September 2012.

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	124913
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10200408
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lisa Seeley
Headteacher	Christine Willmott
Website	www.wharf.surrey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been no significant changes since the last inspection.

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, the lead teacher, the special educational needs coordinator and other members of staff. They also spoke with four governors, including the chair of governors. Inspectors spoke with parents informally at the start of the day. They also considered the views expressed by parents and staff via Ofsted's surveys.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited the learning areas, spoke with staff and looked at samples of children's work. They talked with children informally during their visits to the learning areas.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of safeguarding records and documents, including the single central record. They also met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed the school's safeguarding records.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Laurie Anderson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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