

Inspection of a good school: Knowles Nursery School

Queensway, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK2 2HB

Inspection date:

19 July 2022

Outcome

Knowles Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children are happy and safe. They form close bonds with staff. Key workers know the children very well and are aware of their specific needs. One parent expressed the views of others when they said, 'The school always has the children's best interests and care at heart.'

The school is welcoming. At the beginning of the day, children quickly settle. They enjoy exploring the exciting range of activities on offer. Routines are well established. Children behave well and they are kind to each other. The school deals with any rare incidents of bullying well. Children play happily together and share equipment fairly. They understand about rules. For example, they know that they need to put litter in the bin.

Staff have high expectations for children's learning. They help children to gain confidence in a wide range of situations, such as when they are out around the town in the school's 'buggy buses'.

The school helps children learn about the natural world. They talk with delight about how eggs hatched into chicks. Others shared their amazement when they had seen caterpillars change into butterflies. Children move to primary school well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

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

The curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced across all seven areas of early learning. This means that children develop their knowledge and understanding well. Leaders organise children's learning to ensure that areas are explored in greater detail, for example during World Space Week. The school has a clear approach to assessing children's skills and understanding. Staff are very responsive when answering children's initial questions. However, sometimes they do not structure conversations to fully explore children's understanding or address any misconceptions.

Many children start school with limited communication skills. School leaders ensure that children quickly learn to communicate through speech, sign language or a combination of the two. This ensures that most children can express how they are feeling and what they need. Parents find this very useful. By the time they are ready to transition to the Reception Year, many children can talk well.

Leaders are determined that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities will have their needs quickly addressed. For example, the school works well with a speech and language therapist. They have trained both staff and parents on how to improve speaking skills.

Two-year-old children are happy and secure. They enjoy learning in the mixed-age key groups. They often watch older children completing activities, which gives them the confidence to have a go. Children gain a good understanding of time by following the visual schedule of each session.

Leaders plan many opportunities for children to develop a love of books. Younger children enjoy sharing a book with staff and pointing at the pictures. They become familiar with certain books through the daily story time sessions. Leaders ensure that children who can, progress on to recognising the sounds that some letters make or learn how to blend a few letters together. Leaders also ensure that mathematical skills are well developed. By the time they leave, many children are able to count a few objects.

Leaders and governors have an ambitious vision to continue to improve the school. For example, they have identified that they want to improve attendance, so that all children can take full advantage of the curriculum on offer. Staff are deeply committed to their roles. They are supportive of leaders. They say that leaders are always mindful of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained. They are vigilant and quickly report any concerns they may have about a child. Records are detailed. They show that there is good communication with a range of external agencies.

Children learn how to stay safe. For example, they know how important it is to hold an adult's hand when crossing the road. Children learn that not all plants are edible. Children know about stranger danger in both the physical and online world. Leaders provide a range of information to families to help them keep their children safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes children do not learn all they could. Leaders need to ensure that staff take every opportunity to promote discussions with children that check their understanding and address any misconceptions.

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 April 2017.

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	110197
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10227661
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	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kat Sanders-Wray
Headteacher	Natalie Fowler
Website	knowlesnursery.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school includes provision for two-year-olds.
- Currently, the school does not use any alternative provision.
- The site is shared with The Saplings Children's Centre.

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.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other staff. There was a remote meeting with two members of the governing body, including the chair. There was also a remote meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- Parents were spoken to informally at the end of the morning session. There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and there were four parents' free-text comments.

- Deep dives were conducted in three areas of learning: communication and language, mathematics, and personal, social and emotional development. For each deep dive, there were discussions with senior leaders and teachers, and visits were made to both adult-directed sessions and free-flow activities. Inspectors talked to children and looked at children's journals and other examples of their work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors viewed the school's website and policies, met with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke with children, parents, staff and governors. The school records of safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school were also examined.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Clare Morgan

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