

Inspection of a good school: Abbey Wood Nursery School

Dahlia Road, Abbey Wood, London SE2 0SX

Inspection date:

21 September 2022

Outcome

Abbey Wood Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Abbey Wood Nursery School is a special place for young children at the heart of its local community. Children love to play and learn in the well-equipped classrooms and the extensive garden. The ambitious curriculum offers them many exciting opportunities to develop their learning. Children get along happily together in this diverse and multilingual school.

Children learn how to be kind, considerate and well mannered. For example, at lunchtime children listen and talk to each other and enjoy the company of the adults who help them. Staff model turn-taking and deal with any incidents calmly and kindly. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and children respond well to these. Staff are diligent in keeping children safe.

Staff develop positive relationships with families before children join the school, including through home visits and 'stay-and-play' sessions. Staff understand that some parents and carers, as well as children, may feel anxious when they start. Children are cared for by staff and soon settle in. They begin to develop their confidence quickly. Parents are unanimously positive about what one parent typically called the 'devoted' staff team.

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

Despite recent changes in staffing and the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders have continued to refine the school's curriculum. They have thought carefully about what children learn and when. Many aspects of the curriculum have been carefully designed to meet the wide range of needs and starting points of children on roll. For example, leaders have identified effective ways of helping children to learn new words and speak in sentences. They have planned how children with delayed communication receive extra help so that these children can catch up quickly.

All children, especially those who are new to the nursery, benefit from the school's thoughtful approach to developing their confidence and communication skills. Staff

interact skilfully with children. For example, staff model ways of sharing toys which the children then follow. The provision for two-year-olds is a strength of the school. Staff are skilled at helping the youngest children to develop their personal, social and physical skills. They work closely with parents and offer valuable suggestions to support home learning.

Children love to share books with the adults in the inside spaces and in the garden. They make up their own stories during special storytelling sessions. However, only a small number of children get to share books with an adult during the day. During regular story times in large groups, many children become distracted and do not maintain interest in the story. This means that children do not all have the same opportunities to read books with the adults and to develop their love of stories.

Staff encourage children to know and use specific vocabulary. For example, when staff teach children about nature they encourage children to observe snails in the garden and to use key vocabulary like 'antenna'. They help children to learn mathematics through regular counting and by encouraging children to use words such as 'full' and 'empty' as they play with water. However, leaders have not given all staff the training they need to understand what children should learn through experiences, including observing snails and chicks hatching. Some staff do not know fully how to help children to develop their early understanding of numbers. This makes it difficult also for staff to check that all children are developing the secure foundations that they need for future learning.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. For example, leaders have ensured that staff are trained in using symbols to support children's communication. As a result, children who are not yet using words can make choices about what they want, such as for their snack. Leaders work closely with parents and external agencies to plan the individual support that each child needs.

Leaders plan opportunities to support children's personal development. For example, children enjoy visits to museums and the theatre.

The governing body supports and challenges leaders effectively. Staff enjoy working in the school. They said that leaders are considerate of their well-being and help them to manage their workload. Parents are highly appreciative of all the ways that leaders and staff help them and their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know children very well and this helps them to identify any concerns at an early stage. Leaders respond promptly to these. They work closely with external agencies and partners to safeguard the well-being of children in their care. Close collaboration with the on-site children's centre means that families can quickly receive any extra help they might need.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training in safeguarding and that they follow the school's procedures.

Leaders, including members of the governing body, ensure that the processes for checking the suitability of adults before they are employed to work at the school are robust.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of learning, professional development does not consistently enable staff to develop their knowledge about what children should learn. As a result, staff are not fully supported to keep improving the quality of their teaching to ensure that children gain the foundations they need for future learning. Leaders should ensure that professional development is aligned with the curriculum and includes sufficient detail about what children are expected to know.
- Some children do not routinely experience enjoyable story times or sharing books with an adult in the nursery. As a result, some children miss out on opportunities to develop their love of stories. Leaders need to ensure that the nursery routine includes time for all children to enjoy stories regularly, including high-quality story times.

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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2014.

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.

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	100099
Local authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	10240737
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanne Rawlings
Headteacher	Gill Crowley
Website	www.abbeywoodnurseryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 July 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to staffing. This includes the appointment of a new headteacher who took up post in 2021.
- The school provides part-time and full-time funded places for two- to four-year-old children.

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, senior teacher, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these areas of learning: communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to the headteacher and senior teacher, and observed children at different times throughout the day.

- The inspectors took account the views of parents through informal discussions at the beginning of the school day. The lead inspector also considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey, including free-text responses.
- Inspectors spoke with staff.
- A wide variety of school documents were reviewed by the inspectors. To inspect safeguarding, the inspectors considered the school’s relevant policies and records, scrutinised the record of pre-employment checks and checked the school’s procedures for the safe recruitment of staff.

Inspection team

Julian Grenier, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Lack

Ofsted Inspector

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