

Inspection of an outstanding school: Hampden Way Nursery School

Hampden Way, Southgate, London N14 5DJ

Inspection date:

26 January 2023

Outcome

Hampden Way Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a place where children thrive. Staff develop warm and nurturing relationships with children. They are really good at helping children settle in, especially those who find it a bit harder to wave goodbye to their parents and carers.

Children arrive excitedly each day. It is easy to see why. From the moment they hang their coats up, children are fully immersed in high-quality play and learning experiences. They have lots of fun, make new friends and show high levels of confidence and creativity in their play.

Staff have high expectations. They have created an environment where, in the children's eyes, everything is possible. No limits are put on children's ideas and imaginations. Staff know when and how to join children as they play. Children enjoy going between the indoor areas and the extensive garden. They cook exciting meals in the mud kitchen and dig deep holes in the planting area. Children particularly enjoy the 'together times' when they come together for a familiar story or song.

Children's behaviour is excellent. Staff help children to understand how to play cooperatively with others. Even though bullying is extremely rare with this age group, staff sort out any problems well. They teach children how to share and take turns.

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

Leaders have established a curriculum which is highly effective at identifying and meeting each child's learning and development needs. When the time comes, children are very well prepared for the move to primary school.

Children have the time and space they need to play, explore and find things out. Staff are skilled at adapting and enhancing the learning environment. This keeps it interesting and responsive to what children need. It makes play exciting and fun.

Children's imaginations flourish here. For example, children came up with the idea of creating an extra-long train track which ran from one classroom to the other. Staff enabled children to access whatever they needed to make this happen. Other children joined in as the track took shape. They played together brilliantly, comparing the train engines and negotiating who should do what.

Staff make sure that children's language develops very well. Children have plenty of opportunities to hear and join in with stories. They become familiar with the school's 'core books'. These are always available. Children enjoy retelling and creating their own versions. For example, children relished the chance to hear again 'Owl Babies'. They remembered key phrases. Others explored 'The Colour Monster'. Staff helped them to correctly use words such as 'angry' and 'worried'. As children watched the flames and the smoke at the fire pit, staff encouraged children to explore what was making the smoke blow in different directions. Staff reinforced words and concepts such as 'sizzling water' and 'popping popcorn'.

Staff develop children's drawing and writing skills in carefully planned and logical steps. They make sure that children get plenty of practice in the building blocks they will need to read and write successfully later on. For example, children enjoyed making shapes on the ground using brooms and paint. Children created registers to check which of their friends were in school. Staff are skilled at identifying when children need extra help. They make sure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are included in everything that happens. Staff lead well-planned nurture groups to support these children's communication and social skills.

Children quickly understand the school's simple but effective behaviour rules. For example, they look after their friends when they feel sad. Staff teach children about being healthy. For example, children enjoyed a workshop about brushing their teeth. Afterwards, children remembered what they had learned and practised brushing on the dolls and pretend teeth.

Staff help to build children's self-esteem and resilience. For example, once children had built the confidence to step up onto low platforms, they climbed up the rope ladder and balanced on blocks as they crossed the 'river'.

Staff feel valued by leaders. Leaders are mindful of workload. For example, leaders have removed unnecessary paperwork related to observations and assessments. Staff spend their time and expertise doing what makes the biggest difference to children's development. They know that by being part of children's play, they can find out lots about what children know and can do. Staff readily share their wealth of expertise with others, including the school's apprentices.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that all the required checks are completed to ensure that staff are suitable. Staff meet regularly to discuss all aspects of children's learning and welfare.

These meetings, together with a well-planned programme of training, enable staff to identify and report any concerns. Leaders respond appropriately to any referrals. They make sure that children are safe and well cared for.

Children learn about how to stay safe. For example, staff remind them how to use knives safely when they cut the fruit. Children learn how to take risks in their play. Staff teach them how to use tools and equipment safely.

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 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 outstanding in March 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.

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	101252
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10268652
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	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gerald Mehrtens
Headteacher	Kelly Brooker (Executive Headteacher) Caron Rudge (Executive Headteacher)
Website	https://hampdenway.barnet.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	21 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of a hard federation of three maintained nursery schools. The executive headteachers oversee all three schools.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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 carried out deep dives in these areas of learning: literacy, communication and language, and personal, social and emotional development. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders. Inspectors visited each classroom and joined a range of sessions throughout the day. Inspectors talked to staff and children. They looked at documentation, including records of children's learning. Inspectors also spoke with leaders about other areas of learning, including children's physical development.

- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors checked the record of staff suitability checks.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff. They considered the responses to the online questionnaire for staff.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body. He spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start and end of the day. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rebecca Iles-Smith

His Majesty's Inspector

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