

Inspection of an outstanding school: Ludwick Nursery School

Holwell Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL7 3RP

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2023

Outcome

Ludwick Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Ludwick Nursery School is a happy and highly nurturing community. Children learn exceptionally well together. They participate enthusiastically in the exciting learning activities from the moment they arrive. These develop their talents and their interests. Children understand how to choose and complete activities with a well-developed sense of independence.

Through skilful teaching, children learn to communicate their wants and needs very well. They understand how to share and take turns. Children learn to take care of each other, and they are kind and polite.

Children enjoy the wide range of learning tasks provided, for instance using binoculars to 'birdwatch' or making a boat in the woodwork area. They show high levels of confidence and enjoyment when completing learning activities. Children play well together both inside and outside in well-equipped spaces. They understand and follow the school routines. Children's behaviour is exemplary. They do not experience bullying. Adults make sure children are happy and safe.

Children learn about and care for the natural world. They take care of all their resources and tidy away neatly. Children are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.

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

Leaders have thought carefully about what they would like all children to learn. Leaders' curriculum plans are ambitious. They have clearly identified the knowledge, skills and attributes that children need to develop and learn as they get older. Leaders prioritise the importance of children being active members of a community. Staff develop this daily through activities that make children feel welcomed and included.

Developing children's communication and language underpins the whole curriculum. Children learn new words through a very well-thought-through series of activities. Staff are highly expert in supporting pupils to develop their language and communication. They use a range of ways to communicate with children, including those who are not yet using spoken language. Early mathematics is planned across many learning activities, for example through pattern making with sticks and within songs and rhymes.

Books, stories, songs and rhymes are at the core of introducing children to reading. Adults chose high-quality texts that interest and enthuse children. Children readily choose their favourite books to read repeatedly. This means that children have an excellent start in developing their reading skills.

Children learn to write and represent their ideas in various ways. They develop their skills, so they become good writers. Children make books and write their own story maps. They learn to recognise and write their names, and that letters have sounds.

Adults know each child's needs very well. They build strong relationships with families. Some children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) cannot communicate using words when they join the school. Staff help them to communicate effectively by using symbols and signing. They also use the child's interest to help them learn words. All children with SEND are supported to become independent learners and they achieve well.

Staff check what children know and can do regularly. They understand the children's developmental needs well. This information is shared regularly between staff and leaders. Leaders have detailed knowledge of child development and change plans to fill gaps in understanding when needed. Staff make sure that all children's achievements are celebrated and developed from whatever their starting points are.

Leaders promote children's personal and social development highly effectively. Children settle into school life quickly. They learn about a variety of cultures. At other times, families are welcomed to the school to teach the children about various cultural celebrations.

Children respond well to adults' high expectations for behaviour. They learn and play well together. Children have highly positive attitudes to learning.

Leaders have developed a strong sense of belonging in the school. They ensure the school's vision and values are understood well by all. As a result, parents and staff are highly supportive of leaders' work. Leaders prioritise staff development and well-being. Staff appreciate this and feel valued.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff receive regular and relevant safeguarding training. Staff are alert to any signs that a child may be at risk of harm. They act quickly and the safeguarding systems

in place are rigorous. Leaders work well with external agencies to ensure children are kept safe from harm.

Children build close relationships with their key adults and know they will help them. Children understand how to keep themselves safe and recognise risks in an age-appropriate way.

Leaders ensure that children are well supervised and cared for. Children learn in a safe and nurturing environment.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in June 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.

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	117079
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10255258
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	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stefanie Murphy
Headteacher	Helen Ackerman
Website	www.ludwick.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not currently use any alternative provision to meet the needs of the children.
- The school has provision for two-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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, senior teachers and the special educational needs coordinator. The inspector also spoke with a school improvement partner from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in three subjects: communication and language, literacy, and personal, social and emotional development. For each deep dive, the inspector visited lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to children and viewed children's work.
- The inspector viewed a range of documents, including governor meeting minutes and safeguarding records.

- The inspector met with representatives of the local governing body.
- The inspector considered the 54 responses and 41 free-text comments made by parents to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector took account of the 23 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. Inspectors spoke to a range of children throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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