

Inspection of an outstanding school: Rye Park Nursery School

Walton Road, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire EN11 0LN

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 February 2023

Outcome

Rye Park Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children at Rye Park thrive in their learning every day. They are genuinely listened to and given breathtaking opportunities to succeed. They are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their learning. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), rise to the very high expectations of the adults who care for them.

Children are safe and happy in their play. They learn how to be kind, take turns and communicate their needs. If there are any incidents perceived as bullying, they are dealt with quickly and sensitively. Children learn to recognise and talk about different emotions. They listen to adults talking through tricky situations.

Within the school, some children are at a very early stage of spoken communication. These children use signs, pictures and gestures so that highly skilled staff understand them. All children are ready to learn. Children trust the adults to meet their emotional needs.

Key workers and other staff know all children extremely well. Children are given space and time to reflect and improve their learning. They move from using basic cutting and moulding tools to baking their own biscuit or cake by the time they leave the school.

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

Leaders and staff have designed a curriculum that builds over time on what children already know and can do. The curriculum has ambitious end points, such as retelling stories, building structures and knowing how to care for a living animal. Highly skilled staff understand and deliver the curriculum exceptionally well. Leaders have well-developed systems in place to ensure that newer members of staff know how and what to teach.

Staff's meticulous work to understand every child's starting points is key to the continued success of the curriculum and children's outcomes. Communication and language alongside children's personal development is the root of the whole curriculum. Children develop into confident, independent learners ready for the next stage of their education.

Children are immersed in an environment that is full of language. This ranges from songs, rhymes, poetry, stories and sign. All children, including the very youngest and those with complex SEND, choose their favourite to rehearse and share. Adults skilfully weave vocabulary linked to number, size, seasons or festivals into children's play. Children know how to handle books and turn the pages with care. As children develop, they are confident to act, draw and write their own and familiar traditional stories, such as the three-billy goats gruff.

Each child has a key worker who plans the curriculum opportunities during session and groups times. Children with complex needs are given a clearly structured environment so they are able to make simple choices and be successful. The overall individual assessment approach used enables key workers to provide targeted and specific opportunities for each child. Staff and leaders check on all children's progress regularly. Where children are identified as not making progress, additional support, such as speech and language therapy, is quickly started.

Leaders' system for identifying and meeting the needs of children with SEND is clearly understood and extremely effective. Staff and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) know each child extremely well. Children are firstly observed, played with and understood before strategies and external advice are used to check for gaps or needs. As this unfolds, parents and agencies are involved. Parents of pupils with SEND wholeheartedly value this approach. One parent reported that the support from staff was a 'lifeline' for any parent of a child with additional needs.

Highly skilled staff support children to behave well in order to learn. Staff know when to step back and when to intervene. Children learn to be independent but know adults are always on hand for comfort.

The wider development opportunities for children are extensive. Real-life opportunities throughout the curriculum give children a chance to watch eggs hatching, caterpillars cocooning and goats bleating. Weekly home activities for parents help build the skills at home for children to be successful members of the community.

Leaders and staff show a never-ending ambition to improve further. Staff are highly skilled in the areas they lead. The quality of the interactions and teachable moments by key workers is of the same high standard as qualified teachers. Staff unanimously feel respected and valued.

The governing body have been instrumental in ensuring the quality of education and care at Rye Park remains outstanding. They carry out their monitoring roles with determination and rigour. Holding leaders to account for continued school improvement and children's safety are their top priorities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained to notice any small changes in children's behaviour that could suggest they are at risk of harm. Leaders have robust systems in place to check all actions are followed up. Leaders and staff are quick to make sure families receive the right support.

Children learn about staying safe and understanding risks. They have close and trusting relationships with adults in school. Daily communication between home and school ensures that parental engagement is strong.

All necessary checks and training are in place to ensure that the adults in school are suitably vetted and qualified.

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 December 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.

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	117072
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10211438
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	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Wendy Wright
Headteacher	Debbie Penwill
Website	www.ryepark.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher joined the school in September 2020.
- The school admits children from the term after their second birthday.
- Leaders do 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding leader, the SENCo and other senior leaders. 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, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development. For each deep dive, the inspector spoke to leaders, visited lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to children and viewed children's work.

- The inspector viewed a range of documents, including the minutes of governors' meetings and safeguarding records.
- The inspector met with the chair and representatives of the local governing body.
- The inspector spoke to parents before and during the school day. They also considered the 66 responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 62 responses to Ofsted's free-text facility.
- The inspector took account of the 16 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. The inspector spoke to a range of children throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Isabel Davis, lead inspector

His Majesty's 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 2023