

# Inspection of a good school: King's Hedges Nursery School

Northfield Avenue, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB4 2HU

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Inspection date: 14 March 2023

## Outcome

King's Hedges Nursery School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Children like coming to school. They enjoy the exciting range of opportunities to learn. For instance, the 'question of the day' encourages children to be inquisitive, and they listened keenly to find out what plants need to grow and how best to look after them.

Children are safe. They know who to talk to if they need help or have any worries. Children are taught to listen and concentrate for extended periods of time. They behave well and have trusting relationships with the adults who care for them. Expectations are high for all children, and they respond very positively. Bullying incidents are very rare. Pupils are skilfully helped by staff to behave kindly and understand each other's feelings

Emotional and social needs are met well. Personal, social and emotional development is a main feature of children's curriculum. Children are taught to wash their hands, sit in a small group and try new and healthy food. They are supported well to understand differences, and celebrate equally what makes families the same and what makes them different. Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that prioritises developing children's communication and language. Each area of learning is broken down into small steps, setting out what needs to be taught and when. However, some staff follow this guidance without considering what they already know about a child. When this happens, staff do not give enough opportunities for some children to master basic skills or knowledge before moving them on to more complex learning. On occasion, this leads to gaps in some children's learning.

Mostly, staff are confident in their subject knowledge and understanding of how young children learn. Staff provide many additional opportunities for children to develop their physical skills through sensory activities. Staff recap and comment on previous learning so

that new language becomes familiar. Adults check that pupils can remember their learning by posing questions as part of day-to-day conversations.

Many children enter the school with very low levels of spoken language. Staff are highly skilled at modelling and helping children learn vocabulary linked to their learning. Children enjoy having books read to them. They talk about the pictures and the sounds some letters make, drawing upon what adults have taught them. Children practise their learning by having real-life opportunities as part of their learning experiences.

Leaders are skilled at identifying children with SEND. They work closely with staff to ensure targets for children are specific and time-focused to help children progress well. Additional support for children is well considered. Leaders' implement strategies that are used well to support children to improve their attention and to help support them to be ready for lessons in primary school.

Staff model how they want children to behave. This ensures expectations are clear and children soon become familiar with the daily routines. Children behave well and respond to each other and their teachers positively. They learn to share and take turns, demonstrating kindness. Children are starting to use words that explain how they are feeling.

Extra opportunities such as walking to the shops, having a visit from a farm and seeing a flu vaccination clinic add to the children's understanding of the world around them. Children are starting to build up their understanding of different faiths through learning about religious celebrations and festivals, including opportunities to dress up and try foods from other cultures.

Leaders work well to foster a happy school community. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the opportunities children receive. Staff unanimously feel well supported by leaders with their workload and well-being.

The governing body has a range of expertise that it uses to good effect. Governors are well informed about the priorities for the school and ensure leaders are both supported and held to account.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure all staff have a strong understanding of the potential signs and risks to the children in their care. Staff report any concerns they have and check that these have been followed up. Leaders secure additional support for families and are persistent and timely in their approach.

Children are taught to stay safe in person and online. For example, they learn about what constitutes 'safe touching' and how to use the internet when a trusted adult is present.

Leaders make sure all necessary pre-employment checks are in place for adults working in the school.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have put in place a suitably well-designed curriculum. However, some staff do not always use their knowledge of children to inform their teaching and the activities children complete. As a result, children are occasionally expected to demonstrate knowledge or skills for which they need more practise and support. Leaders should support staff in how to use their assessments of children, including those with SEND, to inform their teaching and the activities they plan. This will allow all children to develop their knowledge and skills more securely.

## **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 June 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136931
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255157
<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	63
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Roger Salmon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Merritt
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.kingshedgesprimary.org.uk">www.kingshedgesprimary.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Kings Hedges Nursery School is part of the Kings Hedges Educational Federation.
- The headteacher and leadership team are also leaders in Kings Hedges Primary School.
- There has been a decline in pupil numbers attending the school.
- The school admits pupils from the age of two who are eligible for two-year-funding.
- Leaders do not use 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the designated safeguarding leader, the special educational needs coordinator and other senior leaders. The inspector also spoke with a school improvement partner from the local authority.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in three subjects: communication and language, mathematics and physical development. For each deep dive, the inspectors spoke to leaders, visited lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to children and viewed children's work.
- The inspectors viewed a range of documents, including curriculum plans and safeguarding records.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and representatives of the local governing body.
- The inspectors considered the 17 responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including two responses to Ofsted's free-text facility.
- The inspector took account of the 18 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

Sharon Waldron

His Majesty's Inspector

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