

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Langley Moor Nursery School

Brandon Lane, Langley Moor, Durham DH7 8LL

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Inspection date:

19 April 2023

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Langley Moor Nursery is a welcoming and inclusive school. Children arriving at nursery are warmly welcomed by staff. Adults take great care to ensure all children feel safe and well looked after. Parents and carers and grandparents are highly supportive of the school. One parent said that: 'My child is happy at the school. I feel the nursery has prepared my daughter well for Reception class.'

Leaders are ambitious for all children. The school's vision 'play, learn and grow together' shines through all areas. As a result, children develop high levels of confidence and independence. The specific needs of children are well considered. Leaders give opportunities for children to develop an appreciation of culture. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Staff help children to learn how to play and learn together. Adults teach children how to take turns and how to be kind to each other. This helps them to make good friends. They understand the rules. For example, they know that they need to tidy away equipment after using it. On the rare occasions when someone is unkind, adults quickly provide helpful support.

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

Leaders and governors want children to learn well at Langley Moor. Children's needs are identified, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All children enjoy the full range of interesting activities on offer. Children are encouraged to be curious and to widen their experiences and understanding of the world around them. The curriculum encourages children to enjoy and learn new things. It helps them to learn and practise skills for communication and language, early reading, writing and mathematics. Children with SEND are well supported. Leaders make sure that children

quickly get the help from external agencies, such as a speech and language therapist, when needed.

Recently, leaders have made some changes to the way in which they plan and deliver the curriculum. These changes reflect their high expectations for what children can achieve. However, these approaches are not firmly embedded. This is leading to some inconsistencies in how the curriculum is taught. Sometimes, this has an impact on how well children learn and build up their knowledge and understanding.

The development of communication and language sits at the heart of the curriculum. Staff put careful emphasis on developing children's vocabulary. They encourage back-and-forth interactions. As children develop their skills, it is expected that they speak in full sentences. Some of the interactions with staff are stronger than others. This is due to the lack of specificity in the planning, which is leading to an element of chance in the delivery.

Leaders understand the importance of personal, social and emotional development (PSED) in the curriculum. Children learn to care for themselves and others. They are encouraged to be independent. For example, staff encourage children to put on their own coats. Staff teach children how to stay healthy. They promote the importance of looking after their teeth. However, the progression or 'stepping stones' has more clarity in some parts of the curriculum than others. In some instances, these are not developmental.

There is a clear vision for mathematics, promoted by a knowledgeable and passionate leader. This approach is resulting in stronger outcomes for children. This is a fairly new initiative and is in the process of development. Staff need time to develop their skills to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the delivery of the curriculum.

Developing a love of reading is a priority for leaders. Staff are skilled at involving children in reading. They use stories and songs with lots of rhyme and encourage children to use beat and rhythm. This helps children to begin to learn how letters and words sound. Teachers use stories and rhymes to encourage the youngest children to talk about their ideas and model writing a sentence. However, leaders are not clear about their expectations for this approach, which results in an inconsistent experience for children. While the experience is generally positive for all, there are some missed opportunities for learning.

Leaders work hard to build strong partnerships with families. Parents are an important part of the school community. Family sessions, including how to be a glaciologist, are an example of a valuable experience that involves parents in their child's learning. Leaders ensure that pupils develop an understanding of the world. The woodland school enables pupils to explore the natural world. Enrichment opportunities enable children to learn about religious festivals, such as Diwali, and cultural celebrations, such as Chinese New Year. These experiences help children to develop an awareness of people who are different to themselves.

Staff are very positive about working at the school. They feel well supported by leaders. Leaders consider staff well-being and take steps to reduce their workload. Staff receive

regular training and support. They develop their expertise through a carefully planned programme of professional development.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that everyone working in school understands the important part they play in keeping children safe. The regular training and updates which staff receive mean that they are aware of the different ways in which young children may display signs of concern. Staff are confident to report any worry, no matter how small.

Leaders build strong relationships with parents. They know the children and families very well. Families are willing to share information with leaders and value the support that they give. One family, who suffered a bereavement, said it's 'like going from one family to another family'.

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

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

- Leaders have made changes to the way in which children's learning is designed. These changes are new and not fully embedded, for example, in mathematics and reading. This leads to some inconsistencies in staff practice. Leaders should ensure that any changes to the curriculum are embedded. When this happens, leaders should evaluate the impact of these changes on children's learning.
- In some of the early years curriculum areas, leaders do not communicate their expectations for children's learning as effectively as they might. This means that some staff do not have enough guidance about what to teach or emphasise when working with children. Leaders should ensure that all staff understand the important knowledge children need to learn, so that their understanding builds cumulatively over time.
- The progression or 'stepping stones' in some of the PSED curriculum strands lack clarity. In some instances, these are not developmental. This leads to gaps in children's understanding. Leaders should ensure that curriculum content is constructed in a well sequenced approach moving from each stepping stone, systematically and logically.

## **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 good/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 20–21 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113977
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240447
<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	48
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Julia Millard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Simon
<b>Website</b>	langleymoornursery.durham.sch.uk
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 – 21 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Langley Moor nursery school currently provides education for three- and four-year-old children. All three- and four-year-old children have a 15-hour funded place. Where parents are entitled, the school offers a 30-hour place.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no two-year-olds in the nursery.
- The school provides a breakfast club for children.
- The number of children on roll is lower than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Leaders do not make use of 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 met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher and the chair of the governing body. Inspectors spoke to a representative of the local authority, some

parents, staff, the special educational needs coordinator, school secretary and the designated safeguarding lead.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of group activities, spoke to teachers, spoke to some children about their learning and looked at samples of children's work.
- Inspectors scrutinised the single central record of staff suitability checks. They met with leaders responsible for safeguarding and spoke to staff about the school's safeguarding arrangements and other aspects of the school's work. Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Lucie Stephenson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Marcus Newby

His Majesty's Inspector

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