

# Inspection of Lea Nursery School

Wexham Road, Wexham Road, Slough, Berkshire SL2 5JW

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Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

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

Children at Lea Nursery School are well cared for. Staff ensure that every child feels welcome and valued. Staff know that starting nursery feels like a big step for children and do everything they can to help children to settle quickly.

Children enjoy and learn from the wide range of engaging activities that staff plan for them. Children are currently learning about life cycles. Prior to Easter, they watched as chicks hatched from eggs that they had been caring for. They are now observing caterpillars to learn about the lifecycle of butterflies. Leaders are in the process of redeveloping some parts of their curriculum to ensure that all children can achieve the best possible outcomes.

Leaders ensure that there are high expectations for every child's behaviour, but also that children are understood and supported with empathy when they struggle to manage. Many children have had fewer opportunities, prior to starting nursery, to meet and socialise with other children because of the pandemic. Leaders and staff recognise that these children need more help to build their confidence and learn to play together.

Parents feel very positive about the school. They say that their children go to nursery with smiles on their faces. They recognise the positive changes the new headteacher has made since her appointment in January 2022.

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

Prior to the appointment of the headteacher, standards at Lea Nursery School had declined. Staff morale was very low. Since her arrival, the headteacher has transformed the culture and ethos of the school. Together with her leadership team, she has reinvigorated many areas of the curriculum to ensure that children experience varied and engaging learning opportunities across the seven areas of learning.

Leaders have redeveloped the way staff plan for their key children to help children develop across the prime and specific areas of learning. Children have a wide range of opportunities to play and explore. Staff carefully support children as they begin to develop their creative and critical thinking. For example, when children wanted to build an outdoor den, staff helped them to think through what they would need and how they could fix a canopy in place.

Leaders are still in the process of refining some aspects of the curriculum. For example, curriculum plans do not identify precisely what leaders intend children will learn, nor do they identify the small steps of learning that build towards the ambitious goals within the school's curriculum. As a result, sometimes, staff design activities without considering carefully enough what children already know and can do, and what they need to learn next.

Leaders prioritise helping children to develop their language. They ensure that children get to know selected stories well through a daily story time. Some children take additional opportunities to hear and retell stories during their session. Children were, for example, enthusiastically joining in on a bear hunt in the outdoor area, retelling and performing the story. Staff work hard to engage children in conversation to extend and develop their ideas.

Children who struggle with their speech and language are identified and supported through an intervention programme. However, the curriculum is not clear enough about the vocabulary and syntax that leaders want children to learn. Not all staff have the knowledge and skills that they need to support those who struggle to develop their language. This means that some children do not make as much progress in this area of learning as they should.

Leaders work with children, and their families, to promote healthy food and lifestyle choices. Children learn about the importance of looking after their teeth, and how to do this. Leaders plan trips and visits carefully to broaden children's horizons and to support their developing understanding of the world. For example, children visited a farm and learned about what farmers do, and the different animals that live on the farm. Children quickly incorporated this new learning into their own role play.

Children learn to regulate their feelings with support from staff. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), get expert help to develop positive learning behaviours. Though children are not required by law to attend, leaders work with families to help them understand why it is important for their children to attend regularly.

Leaders have a very clear understanding of what the school does well, and what needs further development to fully realise their vision of an education that gives every child the very best start to their education. Leaders have re-engaged staff. Staff now understand and support leaders' vision for children. Recent appointments to the governing board have strengthened governance arrangements, and governors now have an accurate picture of the school and the quality of education it provides.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher, who is the designated safeguarding leader, is knowledgeable and tenacious. When concerns are identified, leaders refer appropriately to external safeguarding partners. When the headteacher does not feel that children, and their families, are getting the right support from external services, she is quick to challenge on children's behalf. All staff know vulnerable children and their families very well. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained to spot signs of concern. Staff are clear on how to report these. They recognise that small signs might be part of a bigger picture. Staff know what to do if they have concerns about an adult. Children

learn about road and fire safety. They learn to ask for help, and to be confident in saying that they do not like something.

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

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

- In some areas of the curriculum, leaders have not considered the small steps of learning that build towards the ambitious goals set out within the school's curriculum carefully enough. As a result, sometimes, staff design activities without fully considering what children already know and can do, and what they need to learn next. Leaders need to ensure that staff understand how knowledge builds cumulatively towards the school's curriculum goals.
- Children do not receive enough opportunities to use and embed the new words and syntax they encounter in a broad enough range of contexts. This means that children who start nursery with less well-developed speech, and a smaller vocabulary bank, do not catch up with their peers as well as they might. As leaders continue to develop the curriculum, they need to be clear about the vocabulary and syntax they want children to learn. Leaders need to identify precisely the vocabulary and syntax that they want children to learn and support staff to deliver this expertly.

## **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>	109763
<b>Local authority</b>	Slough
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241028
<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Local authority nursery school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	100
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David MacIsaac
<b>Headteacher</b>	Linda Stay
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.lea-nursery.slough.sch.uk">www.lea-nursery.slough.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in January 2022.
- The school has provision for two-year olds.
- The school operates a breakfast club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENCo).
- Inspectors met with a number of governors, including the chair of governors.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, mathematics and understanding the world. Within the deep dives, inspectors talked to leaders about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited classrooms and outdoor learning environments, spoke to staff, spoke to some children about their learning and observed children learning, playing and interacting with staff.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders and staff about children’s learning in other areas of the early years foundation stage.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record, reviewed safeguarding records and spoke to leaders, staff and governors. The inspector considered how well the school manages safer recruitment, and how it manages allegations about adults.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school’s self-evaluation and school development plans, and individual learning and behaviour support plans.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to the staff survey and responses to the parent survey, including the free-text comments. Inspectors spoke to parents on the gate on the morning of day one of the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Alice Roberts, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Lorraine Greco

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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Manchester  
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