

Inspection of an outstanding school: Cookham Nursery School

Station Hill, Cookham, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 9BT

Inspection date: 4 May 2023

Outcome

Cookham Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children adore coming to this welcoming and vibrant nursery school. They flourish because of the caring and consistent approach every adult shows. Children are eager to begin their learning each day. They relish the wealth of captivating things for them to do, both inside and outside.

Leaders want the very best for every child and have the highest expectations for what children can achieve. This includes designing activities to help children develop the full range of knowledge, skills and dispositions they need to be ready for their next steps. Children find learning fun and irresistible at Cookham Nursery School.

Staff take great care to get to know every child thoroughly, even before they start, to ensure that they are fully included in what the school has to offer. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive. Like others, they benefit from the close partnerships the school crafts with parents and carers. One parent said, 'The staff are passionate, knowledgeable and nurturing.' Nearly all other parents share similar views.

Children learn how to play in positive, constructive ways, getting along very well with each other as well as developing their own independence. Children behave exceptionally well. They understand the importance of listening, taking turns and sharing. Any unkindness between children is rare and dealt with effectively.

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

Leaders, staff and governors are determined that all children develop a love of learning. Their commitment to providing every child with the best start to their education is profound. The ambitious and engaging curriculum is planned precisely. All staff are crystal clear about what children are expected to learn. When adults identify that children may not be making as much progress as they could, they explore why this might be, before providing very effective extra help. Over time, leaders have developed a close-knit

teaching team whose members are knowledgeable about child development. Consequently, children excel.

Right from the start, staff build an insight into children's interests, strengths and needs. Leaders use information precisely to help identify any children with SEND accurately. Leaders' expertise and experience mean that they intervene wisely and appropriately. Children's individual needs are carefully considered through bespoke 'play plans' and met fully by well-trained staff. Leaders proactively engage other professionals for specialist support. As a result, children with SEND achieve exceptionally well.

The promotion of children's language and vocabulary development is a particular strength of the school. Staff ensure that children hear relevant and useful words on a daily basis. Children are encouraged to use these themselves in their learning and praised when they do. Staff know the strengths and daily targets for their key children. They are skilful at adapting activities and following children's interests to help them achieve their goals. Children learn many stories and rhymes by heart to help their language and literacy development. They talk about pictures in storybooks and characters' feelings. This helps children prepare to discuss more complex reading activities and equips them to share their ideas and feelings very well.

Children's physical development is exceptionally well considered in the curriculum and within the inspiring learning environment. Children learn about the world around them, through exploration or in structured adult-led sessions. For example, in woodwork they learn how to use tools, such as hammers and saws, both safely and effectively. They learn to take calculated risks, extend their range of movements and develop confidence to try unfamiliar activities.

Learning goes beyond the school gates, helping children expand their horizons and experience. For example, through the Explorers Club, children learn about the local area and key public figures. They visit shops, the library, the theatre and cafés. This gives children the knowledge and useful reference points when talking, making up stories and playing in the role play areas.

Staff morale is high. They are proud to work in this vibrant school. There is an unmistakable sense of collaboration and teamwork. Staff know that leaders take their well-being seriously. Workload is manageable because staff receive excellent training and time to complete tasks. This means that staff can focus on working with children without distraction. Leaders and governors never stop thinking about what they can do to make the school even better. They keep up to date with developments in early years education and combine this with their expertise and instinct to keep the school improving.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding culture is very strong. Leaders and staff receive regular training. They know children and their families very well. They look for signs of when children are upset about any aspect of their lives. Staff act quickly when they have concerns about a child's

welfare or well-being. When needed, leaders make timely and appropriate referrals to other agencies. A striking feature of the school's work to keep children safe is the close relationship leaders foster with other schools attended by siblings. This allows them to build a complete picture of any risk factors. Leaders keep thorough records of all safeguarding matters.

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 January 2018.

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

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| Unique reference number | 109754 |
| Local authority | Windsor and Maidenhead |
| Inspection number | 10268848 |
| Type of school | Nursery |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 5 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 65 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Gill Cocklin |
| Headteacher | Sarah Cottle (executive headteacher) |
| Website | www.nurseryfederation.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 23 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Cookham Nursery School is federated with The Lawns Nursery School and Maidenhead Nursery School. The federation is led by an executive headteacher, under one governing body.
- The executive headteacher took up her role in September 2022, having previously been one of the co-headteachers at the time of the last inspection.
- Nursery provision at the school is currently for three-year-old and four-year-old children.
- The school does not currently 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 continuing impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff and children. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and four other

governors. An inspector had informal conversations with parents. An inspector met with a representative from the local authority.

- To understand the quality of education provided by the school, the inspection team examined certain aspects of the early years foundation stage curriculum in detail (deep dives). This inspection included a deep dive in the specific area of mathematics and in the prime areas of communication and language and physical development. To explore these areas, inspectors spoke with leaders, teachers and other adults. Inspectors observed the school in action, including watching activities and listening to interactions between adults and children.
- Inspectors also discussed and observed the school's approach to children's personal, social and emotional development.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's arrangements for safeguarding. They explored adults' knowledge and understanding of safeguarding, reviewed important records and checked procedures for vetting the suitability of adults.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' written comments.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff to gather their views about the school and took account of staff's responses to Ofsted's confidential staff survey.

Inspection team

Gareth Flemington, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Laura James

His Majesty's Inspector

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