

Inspection of an outstanding school: Brookhill Nursery School

Brookhill Road, East Barnet, Hertfordshire EN4 8SD

Inspection date: 16 May 2023

Outcome

Brookhill Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children arrive happily to school each day. The start of each session is filled with smiles and excitement. They waste no time getting stuck into the things they enjoy. Staff bring out the best in each and every child. They are really good at using what they know about children's interests to engage them in meaningful activities through play.

Throughout the school, in all rooms and outside, children have endless opportunities to explore for themselves and find things out. For example, children have recently been learning about the different birds that come to visit their garden area. They delighted in the chance to go birdwatching outside, using picture cards to help them spot the differences.

Staff make sure that children achieve highly. They know what each child needs next in their learning. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are extremely well supported. Staff are particularly strong at supporting children's speech, language and communication development. Well-planned nurture and language groups, for example, make a significant difference to children's learning.

The school is a haven where children are safe. They play and learn so well together. Their behaviour is exemplary. Staff ensure that children achieve highly. They are very well prepared for primary school.

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

There is always something fun or interesting going on at Brookhill. It is no surprise to see how much children love learning here. This is a place where children's imaginations flourish. Staff provide children with opportunities to understand the world beyond their immediate community. For example, children learned about the problem of plastic pollution. Outside, children were determined to scoop out all the pieces of plastic carrier bag from the water tray. They could see, first hand, that the toy sea creatures were getting stuck in the plastic. Children linked this to the story they had been reading called,

'Something Swallowed Stanley'. Children showed such empathy for the animals and could say why recycling is so important.

Staff are highly trained in supporting children's learning and development. Procedures for identifying children with SEND are rigorous and well established. Staff know how to give children the time to think for themselves and explore. But they are equally skilled at knowing how to step in, interact and extend children's learning. For example, children were interested in measuring the length of the table. They quickly challenged themselves to find things that were longer and longer still. Eventually, children wondered how big a whale might be. Children were amazed to learn that it could be up to thirty-three metres long. They came up with the idea of showing this measurement by sticking masking tape to the floor. Together as a group, and with the skilful support of staff, children created a life-size outline of a whale on their classroom floor.

Staff are great at extending children's vocabulary. The school is enriched with things to talk about. For example, as children filled different containers with sand, staff encouraged them to use words, such as 'half, full' and 'empty'. Out in the garden, some two-year-old boys were bathing the baby dolls. Staff emphasised words such as 'arms, face', and 'nose'. They supported children to put things in the right order. For example, after they washed the babies, they needed to find towels to keep them dry.

Children relish the quiet time when they come together in small groups for a story, rhyme or song. Staff give children the chance to learn stories 'inside out and back to front'. Children feel a great sense of pride when they remember what happens next in the story or when they know all the words to the rhyme.

Staff support children's behaviour exceptionally well. Children learn about the importance of looking after themselves. For example, children learned about personal hygiene as they brushed the model teeth with toothpaste. Children learn to consider the feelings of others, such as by sharing their things. In the mud kitchen, children prepared chicken soup and cupcakes for the toy animals. They shared the utensils fairly and worked out who would be responsible for the stirring, the cooking and the washing up.

Leaders and governors have maintained the high standards since the previous inspection. They have developed an ambitious curriculum, which puts play and high-quality early education at the heart. Staff feel very well supported by leaders. The local authority benefits from the expertise in this school. For example, leaders have shared more widely their assessment approaches. Staff from other schools and settings often come to visit.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained to identify any concerns about children's welfare. Staff meet regularly, including through 'child awareness meetings', to talk about children's well-being. Leaders identify children and families in need of help. Leaders work with different professionals, including children's centre staff, to help signpost parents to a range of

services. Leaders have established very effective procedures for getting families the help they need.

Leaders ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. They make sure that the required checks are undertaken. Children are taught about how to keep safe, including on local walks to the shops and to the post box. Staff help children to play safely and to understand how their behaviour might affect others.

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 November 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

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| Unique reference number | 101251 |
| Local authority | Barnet |
| Inspection number | 10269030 |
| 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 | 119 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Gerald Mehrtens |
| Headteacher | Kelly Brooker (executive headteacher) Caron Rudge (executive headteacher) |
| Website | www.brookhillnursery.barnet.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 6 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- This school is part of a federation with two other maintained nursery schools in Barnet. The executive headteachers lead the three schools.

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 executive headteacher, assistant headteacher and other members of staff. Inspectors carried out deep dives in these areas of learning: understanding the world, communication and language, and personal, social and emotional development. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders. They visited each classroom and joined different sessions throughout the day. Inspectors talked with staff about children's learning and development. They looked at documentation, including records of children's learning. Inspectors sampled other areas of learning, including literacy.

- The lead inspector met with those responsible for safeguarding. He met with a group of governors, including the chair of governors. He spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the day. They considered the responses to the staff surveys and to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tom Canning

Ofsted Inspector

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