

# Inspection of a good school: Woodcroft Nursery School

Dorset Avenue, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 9UB

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Inspection date: 24 May 2023

## Outcome

Woodcroft Nursery School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Children at Woodcroft Nursery School come to school in a setting that is engaging, nurturing and exciting. Opportunities to play and explore are carefully thought out and children come to school happy and eager to learn.

By following clear routines, children are supported to be independent and at ease. Children are kind to each other and take turns and share in a way that is modelled by adults. Children feel comfortable and safe in school. They trust adults to swiftly respond to any unsafe choices children make.

Engaging opportunities are planned across the year to help children learn about the world. These include visits from farm animals and the chance to care for small creatures, such as ducklings. Children learn to be responsible and are encouraged to contribute their ideas to make a difference. Their opinions count towards choosing the books to be read and naming the ducklings as they hatch.

Experiences support children having a sense of belonging. Every child is included in the planned activities, both in the classroom and in the outside areas. The diversity and differences between children are celebrated. Children's home languages and cultures are drawn upon to make learning richer and more meaningful.

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

Leaders, including governors, have a bold and inclusive vision to help all children to succeed. The planned curriculum in place reflects this ambition. Staff have agreed clear aims for what children will achieve before they start primary school. These high expectations set out clear social, emotional and academic aspirations. This applies regardless of children's individual starting points or backgrounds.

Leaders and staff have developed new shared approaches to planning activities. This typically helps children to explore and learn in line with the aims of the curriculum. Staff

know children very well. They skilfully shape and enhance activities to match the needs of individual children. Adults check what children can do and remember. They then adapt learning opportunities to help children take their next steps.

Learning is most effective where leaders' plans are explicit. They include detail about the specific knowledge being taught, and in what order. This ensures that children get reliable practice with key knowledge and skills. However, in a few aspects of learning, leaders' plans would benefit from further refinement. This is to ensure that activities children complete fully reflect the high expectations that leaders have. Leaders are already taking action to resolve this.

Staff share high expectations for helping every child thrive. This begins the moment children join the school, or earlier if they attend the family group. Adults have secure knowledge and expertise to know how children develop and grow. As a result, they swiftly identify children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The support and resources provided to help children with SEND are high quality. Consequently, children with SEND achieve well alongside their peers.

Adults have established effective and purposeful routines, that children follow well. Clear expectations help children feel settled and confident to engage with the environment. This leads to orderly and kind play both inside and in the garden areas. Adults model to children how to interact using spoken language in two-way conversations. Children respond and show independence as they use talk to play and share with their friends.

The wider development of children is a core priority for staff, governors and parents. This work is driven by the headteacher's commitment to create purposeful, exciting and memorable experiences for children. A calendar of planned enrichment activities reflects the aspirations adults have. These memorable experiences inspire awe and wonder. These include making apple crumble using apples they have picked from trees in the garden and observing the life cycle of butterflies. Staff use these opportunities to engage children in purposeful and interesting discussion.

Staff are proud to work in the school and work collaboratively to make the shared vision for education a reality. They focus their time and energy on the work that makes the greatest difference for children. Leaders consider the well-being of staff. They ensure that staff receive relevant, high-quality training opportunities.

Supportive governors have an accurate understanding of the quality of education in the school. This is informed by the regular visits they make to the school. They have clarity about how the experience of children can continue to improve. They hold leaders to account, making effective use of the detailed and accurate information shared with them. This supports reliable ongoing improvement in the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have effective systems for recording concerns and taking action to keep children safe. They maintain careful oversight of children who may be at risk of harm and quickly seek additional support if required. Leaders have ensured that all relevant vetting checks have been made for adults working with children in the setting.

Targeted and impactful training makes sure that all staff know how to fulfil their responsibilities. This includes understanding the behaviour changes that may indicate when young children might need help or support. Children are supported to know how to make safe choices as they begin to access devices connected to the internet.

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

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

- In a few areas of the curriculum some aspects of leaders' plans are not sufficiently precise in reflecting what leaders intend for the curriculum. As a result, there is some minor variation in how well activities and adult interactions support children to learn and deliberately revisit key knowledge and skills. Leaders should continue with their planned developments, to ensure that the ambition set out in the curriculum is fully and consistently reflected in practice.

## **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 April 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>	114699
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241559
<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>	103
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Ros McIntosh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ferliene Willis
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.woodcroft-nur.essex.sch.uk">www.woodcroft-nur.essex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There has been a change in headteacher since the previous inspection. The current headteacher took up their post in September 2021.
- The school provides breakfast and after-school clubs for wraparound childcare.
- The school does not use off-site 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 held meetings with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and a range of other staff to explore provision across the school, including curriculum design and provision for children with SEND.
- The lead inspector met with four governors, including the chair of governors. A separate discussion was held with a school effectiveness partner from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in three areas of learning: communication and language, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development. For each deep dive, inspectors met with curriculum leaders, looked at curriculum documentation, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and staff, spoke with children about their learning and looked at examples of their work.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leader, the school's office manager, governors and other staff to discuss safeguarding.
- During the inspection, inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks, curriculum plans, school development plans, and safeguarding and behaviour records.
- Inspectors also spoke with children about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a child in this school. Inspectors also observed the behaviour of children in classrooms and outside areas.
- Inspectors considered 41 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments. Inspectors also considered 21 responses to Ofsted's survey for school staff.

### **Inspection team**

Kristian Hewitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Richard Fordham

Ofsted Inspector

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