

Inspection of an outstanding school: The Gainsborough Nursery School

North Marsh Road, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire DN21 2RR

Inspection date:

18 July 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. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children who attend The Gainsborough Nursery School do well. They become confident and curious learners who are eager to find out about the world they live in. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Relationships between children and staff are consistently positive. Staff know children well and take good care of them. Children learn to behave well. Staff have consistent expectations. They quickly support any child who needs extra help. Children learn about their feelings and emotions. They learn how to take turns. Older children know to ask, 'How many minutes?' when they have to wait for a turn at something.

Children experience a wide range of activities that increase their knowledge and understanding of the world. These include woodwork and attending bonfires. Each child in the school has a birthday cake made for them by their class.

Parents and staff are unanimously positive about the school. One parent summed up the views of many, when they said: 'This is an amazing nursery school. My child is always excited and happy to see his teachers. He is always learning something new. He loves to come home and tell us all about his day and what activities he has been doing.'

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

The school's curriculum is well planned and sequenced. It makes clear the important milestones that children are expected to achieve by the end of their time at the school. It is specifically designed to prepare children for full-time school. The curriculum makes clear what children should know and be able to do, across each of the areas of learning, at each stage of their education. It builds cumulatively over time. Leaders and staff

regularly check to make sure that children are keeping up. Any who fall behind get help to catch up.

Staff teach the curriculum well. They skilfully interact with children to help guide and build their understanding. Leaders have mapped out the words that children should learn. Staff model how to use these words. Children's vocabulary increases over time.

Children develop a love of books. Staff read to children daily. They make this exciting and engaging. Children listen intently. Some books are read many times. This helps children to know and remember the characters, familiar rhymes and patterns. Books, songs and rhymes feature highly each day. Children are well prepared to begin to learn to read.

Staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. They learn the same curriculum as their peers. Children with SEND have plans that set out what they are expected to achieve and the help that should be in place. However, some of the targets in these plans are too broad. They do not make clear the precise, small steps that children are expected to master. As a result, some targets are not easily achievable.

The school's 'cultural capital' programme provides children with a wide range of experiences that contribute to their personal development. All children get the chance to carve a pumpkin, learn to ride a bike without stabilisers, learn about oral hygiene and make food with vegetables grown in the school's allotment. Children learn about democracy. They regularly vote to hear their favourite books read aloud.

Transition into and from the nursery is well thought out. Pre-start and home visits prepare children well for starting nursery. A programme of meetings and events ensure that children are confident and eager to start their journey into full-time education.

Children are taught how to get on with each other. Staff help them to recognise and learn from any poor behaviour. Poor behaviour is rare. When it does occur, it is recorded. However, leaders do not routinely evaluate records to check for trends or patterns over time.

Senior leaders and governors have created a united staff team whose members share their ambition and determination for children to be well prepared for the next stage of their education. Staff speak positively about working at the school. They say that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. The school's 'well-being overview' makes clear how leaders will support their staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a positive culture around safeguarding. Roles and responsibilities are commonly understood. There is a well-organised programme of training and support. Leaders routinely present staff with a range of scenarios to keep safeguarding knowledge fresh and up to date.

All concerns are recorded. Records are fit for purpose. Leaders check these regularly to ensure that any emerging issues are identified early. The school provides a wide range of early help services for children and their families. The school works effectively with a range of other services and agencies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some of the targets for children with SEND are too broad. They do not make clear the precise, small steps that children are expected to master. As a result, some targets are not easily achievable. Leaders should ensure that the targets set for children with SEND are clear, precise and achievable.
- Poor behaviour is rare. When it does occur, it is recorded. However, leaders do not routinely evaluate records to check for trends or patterns over time. This means that they may miss any emerging patterns that could be addressed early. Equally, governors cannot use this information to check on the effectiveness of the school's behaviour policy. Leaders should routinely check for, and evaluate, trends and patterns in behaviour.

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 September 2012.

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

Unique reference number	126563
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10240892
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	117
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Tim Elwess
Headteacher	Laura Cook
Website	www.gainsboroughnurseryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 July 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Gainsborough Nursery School shares a headteacher with Wyndham Park Nursery School in Grantham. The two schools plan to formally federate during the autumn term of 2023. They will share the same governing body.
- The school operates wraparound care through its breakfast club and after-school provision.
- The school does not use any alternative education providers.

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, the deputy headteacher and the leader for pupils with SEND. A meeting was held with representatives of the governing body, including the chair. A telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in three areas of learning: communication and language; physical development; and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors

discussed the curriculum with leaders and spent time observing in the classrooms and the outdoor areas. Inspectors observed the quality of interactions between staff and children, and the daily routines that staff have established.

- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness, improvement plans and documentation relating to behaviour.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke with the designated safeguarding leads, parents and staff. They scrutinised documents, including safeguarding records and policies.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and to Ofsted's staff survey. An inspector spoke informally to parents.

Inspection team

Vic Wilkinson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

George Huthart

Ofsted Inspector

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