

Inspection of an outstanding school: Low Hill Nursery School

Jenks Avenue, Low Hill, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV10 9JN

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

Outcome

Low Hill Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

High expectations and nurturing relationships make for a calm and safe environment for children to learn at Low Hill. Children are highly interested in the resources and activities which staff share with them. Staff tailor their interactions with each child to help them learn exactly what they need to. Staff reinforce learning through repetition of new language and vocabulary. They develop children's independence, for example, by teaching them to use tools, such as scissors and knives safely. Children learn exceptionally well.

Children respond to the curriculum with the same enthusiasm shown to them by staff. Staff use their knowledge of children to hold children's attention and keep them focused on the task at hand. As a result, children become absorbed in their learning. They engage happily and enjoy the feeling of success, which staff praise and celebrate. Familiar routines at family times, where children sing rhymes and share their feelings, provide a settled experience in which children thrive.

Leaders work hard to build strong partnerships with families. The school is at the centre of the community. Leaders know that by supporting families they will improve the life chances of the children. Parents and carers agree. One parent reflected the views of many when they said, 'This school has saved my life.'

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

Leaders, including governors, are ambitious for all children to achieve highly. They are acutely aware of issues in the local area and are determined to build children's aspirations. With this in mind, they have created a unique curriculum that weaves children's interests with defined learning effectively. Leaders plan for children to become 'confident communicators', 'story makers' and 'masters of maths'. This learning is extremely well sequenced from the two-year-old provision upwards.

Staff are exceptionally skilled at knowing each child's interests, needs and next steps. They use this knowledge extremely effectively to plan exciting learning, both during group

sessions and while children work independently outside and inside. Children who may be falling behind are identified early. Staff plan work and interact with children during independent learning activities to help them to catch up.

Staff make story time a thoroughly enjoyable experience. They immerse children in books by sharing them repeatedly and talking about the story. All areas, inside and outside, have books available for children to look at. Staff follow a multisensory approach to reading. For example, in one book being read, staff role played the way a hot air balloon moves across the sky. This helped children to understand the new words that they came across. Children soon start to join in with stories and songs. Children are prepared for school through activities which encourage them to play with words orally and identify the sounds in them.

Leaders have developed many successful ways to support all children, but especially children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff work closely and well with a range of specialist services to give each child what they need at any moment in time. Children in the resourced provision are extremely well supported. For example, those with sensory needs attend specific sessions which, once completed, enable them to go and play alongside their peers. Parents of children with SEND feel extremely well supported, with one comment being typical of many when they said, 'They try their utmost to ensure that children get the support they need to succeed.' All children are encouraged to learn some sign language, which makes sure everyone is included. For example, at their graduation event, children sang a song and signed the words at the same time.

Staff support children's behaviour exceptionally well. Children learn to consider the feelings of others, such as by sharing their things. For example, children in the two-year-old provision are responsible to share fruit at snack time. When children do not behave well, they are helped to think about how they can put the situation right.

Children learn about the diverse world in which we live. They develop their personal and social skills successfully. For example, children begin to understand their feelings by looking in mirrors and discussing 'emotion stones'. This led to two children to say, 'We are happy because we are best friends'. Children learn to cooperate with their peers and adults from different backgrounds and cultures.

Children have many opportunities to grow their knowledge, both within and beyond the setting. They enjoy many planned visitors into school, such as for circus skills and the 'owl man'. They also enjoy visiting forest school at a nearby centre.

Leaders and governors have maintained the high standards since the previous inspection. 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 unique curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that everyone working in school understands the important part they play in keeping children safe. The regular training and updates which staff receive mean they are aware of the different ways in which young children may display signs of concern. Staff are confident to report any worry, no matter how small.

Staff invest in getting to know all children and families well. This means that parents feel well supported and able to ask for help and advice. Leaders make sure that vulnerable children are identified quickly and get the help they need.

Background

When we have judged 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 December 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 children](#)' refers to those children who attract government pupil premium funding: children claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and children in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	104278
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10257040
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of children	2 to 5
Gender of children	Mixed
Number of children on the school roll	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Carol Ferron-Smith
Headteacher	Natalie Showell
Website	lowhillnursery.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school has a resourced provision for children with SEND who have a wide range of complex needs.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation.
- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the headteacher and two members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector held a meeting with a representative of the local authority. He also spoke to parents and carers at the end of the school day.
- The inspector viewed a range of safeguarding documentation. He examined checks on safer recruitment and spoke with members of staff to check their safeguarding knowledge.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and expressive art and design. The inspector visited adult-directed sessions and observed continuous provision, scrutinised curriculum documents and talked with staff about the way these areas are planned and taught.
- The inspector spoke with members of staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector observed children's behaviour throughout the day.
- The inspector considered the responses, including the free-text comments, to Ofsted Parent View. He also considered the responses to the staff surveys.

Inspection team

Barry Yeardsley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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