

Inspection of a good school: Oldbrook First School and Nursery

Illingworth Place, Oldbrook, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK6 2NH

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 July 2023

Outcome

Oldbrook First School and Nursery continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's vision, 'together we make a difference', comes to life through its inclusive and welcoming culture. Pupils feel special, valued and safe as soon as they join the school. They know and understand the school's values and take great pride in earning golden stickers when they work hard, play fairly and show kindness towards each other. Parents and carers appreciate that staff care deeply for pupils and that they provide enjoyable opportunities to engage pupils in their learning.

At Oldbrook, leaders successfully combine their high academic aspirations for every child with strength of care, nurture and love. Leaders know every pupil well. They have built positive and trusting relationships which enable staff to provide effective support for pupils. This includes help for pupils who may find managing their behaviour more difficult.

Staff have consistently high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. Pupils proudly meet leaders' expectations. They are considerate and show respect for each other and their teachers. Leaders take all concerns about bullying seriously. They deal effectively with incidents of unkind behaviour and pupils say that bullying does not really happen. They feel safe and trust adults to help them resolve any disputes.

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

The curriculum is ambitious across all subjects. From Nursery to Year 2, leaders have ensured that, in most subjects, the essential knowledge that pupils should learn throughout the school is clearly set out. However, in a few subjects, leaders are yet to finalise their curriculum thinking about the important content that needs to be taught. Leaders prioritise giving pupils a varied and exciting educational experience that lays firm foundations for lifelong learning. Consequently, pupils love coming to school.

Leaders have made the teaching of reading a top priority. Staff are well trained in delivering the systematic phonics programme. Skilled staff make sure that pupils get off to a strong start from the Nursery Year onwards. The carefully chosen approach and delivery

of the phonics curriculum captivates pupils and inspires them to learn. Staff give pupils books to read that are precisely matched to their reading ability. Any who fall behind get extra help to catch up quickly. This enables all pupils to become confident and fluent readers. Staff read to pupils regularly. They skilfully voice different characters and convey mystery, drama and excitement through their retelling of stories. Staff's passion for reading is infectious. Pupils love to listen to stories in school and are keen to be able to read more books independently.

Teachers ensure that key concepts within most subjects are delivered effectively. They provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop and embed their learning. In mathematics, for example, pupils learn how to become increasingly confident working with numbers and use these skills to solve problems. Staff are quick to identify and support pupils who may need extra help, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers carefully adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs so that they make effective gains in their knowledge and understanding. In most subjects, teachers assess carefully what pupils know and what they need to learn next. However, in a few subjects, this is still developing.

Pupils understand why behaving well matters. They know that their teachers want everyone to be successful in their learning. Children in the early years share ideas and take turns. Across the school, pupils work hard in their lessons and happily discuss their ideas.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. They make sure that pupils are taught about how to stay safe and healthy. Leaders value listening to pupils to find out their views and what interests them. They choose trips and visitors to give pupils experiences that they would not otherwise have. For example, pupils thoroughly enjoyed their recent visit to a local farm. This helped them to learn where the food they eat comes from and to identify a wider range of animals accurately.

The curriculum promotes difference and raises cultural awareness. This includes creating opportunities to celebrate a range of religious and cultural festivals together. For example, staff helped pupils to link their understanding of the Christian Harvest Festival to the Hindu festival of Pongal. Pupils and families shared their beliefs and customs with each other.

Members of the governing body understand their responsibilities and statutory duties. They are successfully holding leaders to account for the quality of pupils' education. Staff are very positive about the school. They appreciate leaders' efforts to ensure that their workload and well-being are always taken into consideration.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of vigilance. Staff receive comprehensive safeguarding training. This means that they know about local risks to pupils and how to

recognise signs of harm or of neglect. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves protected. They learn from an early age about potential dangers, such as from online games.

Leaders keep detailed records when concerns are raised. They make timely referrals to secure support from external agencies. They are persistent in raising concerns when pupils and their families are not receiving the support that they believe is needed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not yet precisely identified the essential knowledge that they want pupils to learn in the curriculum. This means that teachers do not always know exactly what knowledge needs to be taught and revisited. Leaders need to ensure that, across all subjects, the key knowledge that pupils should learn is coherently planned and sequenced from the beginning of early years.
- Teachers' checks on pupils' learning in the foundation subjects are not precise enough. This means that learning is not always tailored to what pupils already know. Leaders need to refine their approaches to assessment so that teachers can identify pupils' learning gaps and adjust their next steps accordingly.

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 November 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	110240
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10269117
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Janet Haines
Headteacher	Kirk Hopkins
Website	www.oldbrookschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has an on-site nursery provision for three- and four-year-olds.
- The school runs both breakfast- and after-school clubs.

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 leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, school leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.

- During the inspection, the inspector looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other subjects.
- The inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- As part of the safeguarding checks, the inspector reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record of staff recruitment.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments. The inspector met with parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Clare Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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