

Inspection of Low Hall Nursery School

Low Hall Lane, Walthamstow, London E17 8BE

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Children clearly love coming to this school. They are greeted so warmly by staff who want the very best for each and every one of them. Two-, three- and four-year-old children all get along very well. They make their way around the school happily. They soon settle and get stuck into the things they enjoy doing the most. Staff are never too far away to offer encouragement or a helping hand when children need them.

Children quickly become familiar with the school's routines. For example, they excitedly search for their photographs and name tags each day to hang up their coats on the right pegs. Everyone gets involved at 'tidy-up time'. Children sing joyfully as they put the toys and equipment away. Their behaviour is excellent.

Inside and out, children have the chance to be imaginative and to discover new and exciting things. For example, they loved their time in the quiet forest area where they made flags from twigs, petals and fabric. Others showed real determination to make 'magic soup'. They followed the recipe card carefully and had great fun hunting down the different ingredients in the mud kitchen.

Staff have high expectations. They are highly trained in supporting all aspects of children's learning. They know what children need and when. They are particularly good at helping children's language and communication to develop. Whatever their starting points, children achieve highly. When the time comes, they are extremely well prepared for the move to primary school.

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

Leaders have established very clear and ambitious curriculum goals for all children to reach. They have worked out sensible and well-thought-out smaller steps that children might achieve along their learning journey. These are known as 'milestones'. These help everyone to check and to understand what each child can do. Leaders' work has enabled staff to focus on the things that make the biggest difference to children's learning. For example, rather than spending lots of time writing observations, staff use their expertise very effectively by interacting and extending children's learning. Their observations are precise and concise and focus closely on each child's most significant achievements.

Staff know exactly when and how to extend children's language. The school's approach to teaching storytelling is a particular strength. Whatever their age or stage, children build their language very well. Children consider characters, problems and solutions in their stories. Staff are skilled at transferring this approach to other times of the day. For example, when a group of children wanted to use the same set of toys, staff helped them to find a solution. This enabled children to sort out a problem without any fuss.

Children of all ages play and learn alongside each other. Staff are skilled at adjusting their language to meet different children's needs. For example, as children played at the water tray, staff described what younger children were doing. This helped them to learn new words such as 'under' and 'wet'. Staff encouraged the older ones to think deeply. For example, they asked why the stones might be sinking to the bottom of the tray.

Staff use what they know about children's next steps deliberately to provide teaching moments to address these. For example, staff knew that some of the two-year-olds needed more encouragement to extend their physical development. Staff created a low-level obstacle track in the outdoor area. This enabled these children to navigate crates and the bridges and to crawl under a tent.

The school has a wealth of expertise in identifying and meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These children benefit from a range of strategies and approaches. For example, they take part in small-group sensory activities. Staff are consistent in their use of signs and visuals. These help all children to know what is happening and when. Children love the chance to come together for reading and stories. For example, one group excitedly welcomed 'Dave', the puppet who taught them new sounds in the environment. Others enjoyed retelling stories and rhymes that they had learned by heart.

Children's exemplary behaviour is underpinned by the positive and kind relationships throughout the school. For example, older children offered a friendly cuddle to those who were new to the school. Even though these children were a little bit upset, they soon had smiles on their faces again. Children learn to cooperate with others and solve problems. For example, children made a variety of 'ice creams' in the sandpit. One of the group suggested that they sell these to 'make lots of money'. In just a few minutes, children had turned the playhouse into a shop where they sold their creations.

Children's learning about themselves and others is enriched by special visits out and about. The whole-school visit to Parliament Hill Lido is a particular favourite. One key feature of the curriculum is 'the year of artists'. Children get to find out about and work with range of local and contemporary artists.

Parents and carers have nothing but wonderful things to say about this school. Right from the start, they are key partners in their children's learning. They, like staff, feel incredibly well supported by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	103027
Local authority	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10240877
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	58
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Abrar Malik
Headteacher	Helen Currie (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.fans.waltham.sch.uk/low-hall
Date of previous inspection	19 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is federated with another nursery school in the same local authority. The executive headteacher leads both schools.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in communication and language, literacy, personal, social and emotional development, and understanding the world. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited sessions and watched

staff interactions with children. Inspectors reviewed children’s record books and held meetings with children’s key persons.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders and staff; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children’s interests first.
- Inspectors met with parents and carers at drop-off and pick-up times. Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View and to the online staff survey.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Adam Vincent

His Majesty’s Inspector

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