

Inspection of Lydalls Nursery School

Lydalls Road, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 7HX

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Children have a wonderful time at Lydalls Nursery. Each day, staff give them a warm welcome. Children settle quickly, keen to share their news and participate in the many exciting activities waiting for them. Adults know children and their families remarkably well. Staff provide children with high-quality care and guidance. As a result, children are well cared for and safe.

Children love learning. They demonstrate highly positive attitudes towards tasks and are very engaged. Children settle to activities for sustained periods, showing perseverance and resilience when things do not go as planned. They know how to get help to find a solution, if they need it.

Leaders provide children with a plethora of rich learning experiences. These include a visit from a local farm and trips to a local theatre. Leaders also plan engaging activities to stimulate learning such as eggs hatching and raising chicks. Children enjoy participating in forest school, which develops their wonder and curiosity about the world around them.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Many commented on the broad range of activities and opportunities given to the children. One parent, reflecting the views of many, referred to the 'excellent teachers who really care about the children's holistic development'.

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

The personal development for children is exceptional. Leaders are passionate for children to know that they will be heard, and that someone will listen and help. As a result, children develop self-advocacy and know they can say 'no, thank you'. Across the curriculum, high-quality literature and stories allow children to explore different views, faiths and cultures. Adults celebrate important festivals for the children such as Eid. Children's home languages are valued and celebrated. Parents volunteer to read the nursery's core texts in their home language and these are shared with the children during story time. Children learn about their local areas and where they are in the world. Images from family holidays are shared with children, to build a sense of living in a far larger, global community.

The provision for communication and language is particularly strong and underpins all learning. Well-trained staff provide children with high-quality support. Adults demonstrate high levels of expertise utilising all opportunities when talking to and with children. They ensure that every child contributes to conversations and can ask questions. Adults encourage children's language to build incrementally through modelling and use of key vocabulary. As a result, children learn to communicate with others well, developing key listening and attention skills.

The children's conduct is exemplary. Staff expertly help children respond and deal with differences. They use every opportunity to promote turn taking and sharing.

Staff use familiar songs and rhymes to reinforce routines. Staff help children develop a sense of right from wrong, including during story times. This builds in the children an early sense of the impact of their actions.

Staff have an expert knowledge of how children learn and develop. They work closely together to precisely support children. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve the best outcomes. This is because adults know the children well and carefully plan their next steps, while working with parents. Staff encourage children to make links in their learning and apply key skills such as early number or mark making. Throughout the nursery, adults promote a love of reading. Children relish story time and retell stories in their play. For example, children use tyres in the outdoor space to build a house the wolf could not blow down.

Through carefully planned activities, children develop detailed knowledge across most areas of learning. This is because the curriculum is planned towards ambitious end points, called goals, that are designed to give children the knowledge they need to prepare them for Reception. This is achieved more successfully in the prime areas of learning, such as physical development, where the intended learning is clearly identified. Some of the specific areas of learning, such as understanding the world, are at an earlier stage of development. In these areas, staff are less clear about what it is that children need to learn. As a result, children do not learn as well in these areas.

Leaders are passionate about providing all children with the very best start in their education. Governors know the school well. They provide effective challenge and support to leaders. Staff are rightly proud to work here. They are highly appreciative of the guidance and support they receive from leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is new and does not consistently provide adults with precise guidance on the knowledge children are to learn in all the specific areas of learning, such as understanding the world. As a result, children are not achieving as well as they could. The school should be clear about the specific sequence of knowledge they want children to learn across this part of the curriculum, so that children learn as effectively as they currently do in the prime areas of learning.

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	122972
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10268108
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Michelle Williamson
Headteacher	Sarah Phillips
Website	www.lydallsnurseryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 June 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is organised into two mainstream nursery classes, one for younger children aged two to three, and the other for children aged three and over.
- The school does not currently use any 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They also met with members of the governing body and a representative from local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication & language (taking account of early reading), mathematics, personal, social and emotional

development and understanding of the world. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited some lessons, spoke to staff and children about their learning.

- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors spoke to the safeguarding leader and scrutinised a wide range of information, including a selection of the school's records. They also spoke to staff about safeguarding and looked at how children learn to keep safe.
- Inspectors met some parents to gain their views of the school. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also took account of staff responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Laura James, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Clare Haines

Ofsted Inspector

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