

Inspection of an outstanding school: Bowerdean Nursery School

Gordon Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP13 6AW

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 November 2023

Outcome

Bowerdean Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children have a superb start to their education at Bowerdean Nursery School. Across both of the school's sites – Bowerdean and Mapledean - children build strong relationships with their kind and caring staff and benefit from familiar routines. Children are well looked after, meaning that they are safe, happy and ready to learn. Families appreciate the regular information they receive about their children's learning and how they can help them at home.

Staff have high aspirations for children's learning and behaviour. There is no ceiling set, with every learning opportunity seized. As a result, children are enthusiastic learners, achieve highly and are exceptionally well prepared for their transition into early years. Parents capture this ethos well, with one saying: 'This nursery goes beyond the conventional, creating an engaging and supportive environment that fosters a love of learning.'

The nursery's curriculum includes an abundance of rich and meaningful wider opportunities. Children routinely meet visitors such as beekeepers and paramedics, helping them to build aspirations and widen their experiences. Intergenerational relationships are developed through story times with visitors from care homes. There are many outings where children learn about their local area and develop important life skills, such as travelling by bus and crossing roads safely.

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

There is a shared determination that children at Bowerdean and Mapledean will be set up for future success. The curriculum is ambitious for all children. It has clear endpoints and goals as well as genuinely responding to children's needs and interests. Staff are well trained and, as a result, are highly skilled at checking children's starting points and moving learning on. Any special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly, ensuring that children get the help they need as they learn alongside their

friends. There is a culture of inclusion perfectly balanced with a focus on providing highly effective support and extra help.

The development of children's language and communication sits at the heart of the curriculum. Staff encourage and support children in their conversation. They model grammatically correct sentences and help children to develop their vocabulary. Children love joining in with their daily stories, songs, and nursery rhymes. They use vocabulary from these experiences in their interactions with those around them. For example, during this inspection, children talked about what it means when animals hibernate as they created a den for a bear. Staff use a wide range of additional communication techniques, such as visual prompts and sign language, which children find helpful. These systems also help to support children who speak English as an additional language. Staff endeavour to occasionally use children's home languages, contributing to their sense of security and belonging.

Children's understanding of the natural world is remarkable. The curriculum has a seasonal focus which means that children notice change and make thoughtful observations and comparisons. They know, for example, that in autumn the leaves change colour and fall from the trees. They describe the weather and what they need to do to stay dry when it rains. Children enjoy growing vegetables and fruit and then harvesting them. Adults help them to develop skills such as chopping and mixing to make fruit crumble, potato salad and pakoras. Children understand food's journey from the ground to their plates.

Children are encouraged to be curious and creative learners. For example, they were the driving force behind the arrangements for the nursery's resident ducks. They visited ducks living in the wild to check what their habitat looked like. Staff helped them to understand the cost implications of owning some ducks. They visited a bank, so the children could learn about when money is used and how to pay in different ways. The children helped to design the duck enclosure, using their mark-making skills to draw simple plans. The learning resulting from this project is impressive. Children know how to keep their ducks safe and healthy. They show care and high levels of responsibility when they feed them and make sure their cage door is closed. They know the ducks must be kept safe from predators. The children's squeals of excitement when the ducks leap into their small pond is heart-warming.

Staff feel extremely well supported and proud to work at this school. They welcome their opportunities for professional development and the consideration given to their well-being. The governing body are knowledgeable and ambitious. They are determined to build on the nursery's considerable strengths. They recognise the importance of giving children the best possible start to their educational journey.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 March 2013.

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	110199
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10256555
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	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Karen Bates
Co-headteachers	Zoe Staines and Linda Lyons
Website	www.bowerdean.bucks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Bowerdean Nursery operates over two sites. The other site is known as Mapledean Nursery and is situated at Cressex Rd, High Wycombe HP12 4PR.
- There are co-headteachers who jointly lead the provision at both sites.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication and language, mathematics, understanding the world and personal, social and emotional development. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited classrooms and outdoor learning areas on both sites, spoke to staff and talked with children.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and children; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.
- The inspector had meetings with senior school leaders and representatives from the governing body. The inspector also had a phone call with representatives from the local authority.
- The inspector analysed responses to the staff survey and spoke to staff about their views of the school.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and the additional free-text responses. She also spoke with parents at both sites.

Inspection team

Kate Fripp, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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