

Inspection of a good school: Peartree Way Nursery School

Peartree Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG2 9EA

Inspection dates: 4 June 2024

Outcome

Peartree Way Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Kind, caring relationships are at the heart of this friendly nursery school. Children arrive with a happy smile, confident that their time here will be interesting and enjoyable.

Staff gently encourage children to 'have a go' and develop independence. Children respond to this well, growing in confidence. From the start, in pre-school, children begin to try new things and tackle unfamiliar activities.

Children welcome each other to join in with the games and activities taking place. For children who prefer it, a quieter place or opportunities for more independent play are always available too.

Behaviour around the nursery is calm and purposeful. Children move between activities sensibly. They learn to take turns. Children spring into action at 'tidy up time', keen to lend a hand and look after their equipment.

Staff have high expectations for children here. Children understand that adults will help them to do their best, even when things are hard for them. They watch the adults and listen carefully so they can succeed with their play-based learning. Children develop their skills and are ready for their next steps, whether it is moving from pre-school to nursery or moving on to Reception classes.

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

Leaders know their children well. They carefully check children's strengths and gaps in development when they arrive and use these to develop clear aspirations for children's learning.

Working at pace, staff have quite recently developed curriculum resources that set out the small steps of learning that are needed to enable pupils to reach curriculum goals. Systems to evaluate the effectiveness of this curriculum are still developing. Adults

effectively check how children are faring and adjust their provision on a day-to-day basis. However, senior leaders do not consistently have clear information to strategically spot what is working well or where to strengthen provision.

Ongoing training for staff is effective at giving them the skills to deliver the curriculum plans well. A particular focus has been strengthening children's communication and language skills. As a result of training, staff consistently model clear sentence structures and introduce ambitious vocabulary well. They interact effectively with children, clarifying ideas and extending their thinking with well-chosen questions and activities.

Books, songs and rhymes are skilfully woven into activities through the day. Children quickly learn to join in with familiar refrains and actions. Staff are skilled at including all children in activities. For example, they use Makaton signing to accompany stories and instructions. Pupils in nursery class enjoy their regular trips to the library. They show an early love of stories and other books that will stand them in good stead in the future.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the right help from the start. Staff work constructively with parents to understand the needs of children. They act swiftly to put extra help in place when necessary, including unobtrusive support to access group activities or highly engaging interventions for individuals. As a result, pupils with SEND make strong progress with their learning and social skills.

Staff model and teach good behaviours from the start and children quickly follow these. Children know the rules and routines. Any poor behaviour is managed sensitively by staff. They help even the youngest children to learn how to manage their feelings and to share kindly. The school vigorously promotes regular, punctual attendance from the start. This helps to ensure that children, and their families, get into good habits ready for their next school.

Through the curriculum and beyond, the school ensures that children enjoy rich experiences. There are moments of wonder, such as hatching caterpillars and butterflies. Visits to the park, or to post a letter, enable children to explore their local community. Families are involved in events to share stories and end of term sing-songs.

Governors visit regularly to see the school in action. They check that pupils are safe. Governors understand the importance of engaging with the school community and are developing their systems to do this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Systems for leaders to have the right information to evaluate what is working well or where adjustments are needed are not consistently well developed. As a result, some

leaders cannot always swiftly spot where improvements are required. The school should ensure that leaders have the information they need to carry out their roles effectively.

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/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 good in October 2014.

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	117080
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10323631
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	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kathryn Evans
Headteacher	Deborah Willcox
Website	www.peartreeway.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any off-site providers of alternative education.
- The school offers pre-school provision for children from their second birthday.
- The school offers before and after school and lunchtime childcare which is run by school staff and managed by school leaders.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior staff in the school including the head teacher, chair of governors, and the designated lead for safeguarding. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in: communication and language; personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world. For each

deep dive inspectors discussed the curriculum with senior leaders, observed focused group activities and child-initiated play and spoke with other staff.

- Inspectors reviewed minutes of governors' meetings, school development plans, curriculum documentation and external reports relating to the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors 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 pupils' interests first.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents through responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View including free text responses. Inspectors gathered the views of staff through Ofsted's staff survey, as well as discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Lynne Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rowena Simmons

Ofsted Inspector

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