

# Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Cherry Trees Nursery School

Hawkins Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 9LS

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Inspection dates:

26 and 27 November 2024

## Outcome

Cherry Trees Nursery School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Children make a fantastic start to their education at Cherry Trees Nursery School. They learn and play happily in the school's stimulating environments. The school community is diverse. Between them, children, parents and carers, and staff speak many languages in addition to English. The school celebrates this diversity and weaves it into its rich curriculum.

Children behave extremely well. They arrive promptly and settle quickly each day, keen to explore the enticing activities staff have set up for them. Strong routines and a highly consistent approach from staff underpin this.

Relationships throughout the school are warm and caring. Children are kind and friendly. They share resources, take turns, and listen well to adults' instructions. At tidy-up time, for example, children enthusiastically sweep up the leaves and sand outside or help put away their toys and games inside.

The school is ambitious for children to achieve well, regardless of their starting points. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those in the early stages of language acquisition, are very well supported. Children rise to the school's high expectations. They are extremely well prepared for moving on to their next school by the time they leave Cherry Trees.

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

The school's curriculum is meticulously designed. It sets out clearly and in some detail what children will learn, from the moment they join the school. This enables staff to set highly purposeful learning activities. Everything children do is intended to help them learn well. A seasonal and cultural calendar runs alongside the curriculum, connecting children's learning to the world around them.

The school's well-established routines support children's learning as well as their behaviour. On arrival at school, every child uses their emerging understanding of letters and sounds to find their name label. Staff encourage children to attempt to write their names. In regular group sessions, children develop number sense through dice games and counting rhymes. At the snack table, children learn and practise new words such as 'spread', 'slice' and 'edge'.

Children have extremely positive attitudes. They help each other and work together to solve a problem. Children concentrate and persevere, sometimes for prolonged periods. For example, two-year-old children perfect the use of a safety knife when cutting apples for 'Gruffalo crumble'.

Staff use songs and rhymes extensively to support children's communication and language. In small group sessions, greetings songs draw children in and give them a sense of belonging. Number songs reinforce their mathematical vocabulary and understanding. Books underpin all areas of the curriculum. Children listen to high-quality stories often. They act out or re-tell a story with props. They take part in exciting activities linked to stories. For example, after reading the story 'Owl Babies', children had an awe-inspiring visit from some live owls.

Throughout the environment, children learn through purposeful play, using a wide range of resources. Staff skilfully interact with children during their play, to check their understanding and to move their learning on. The school is quick to notice children with additional needs or SEND. It sets up appropriate, effective support for these children and tracks their progress carefully. This enables children with SEND to be successful learners.

An impressive range of activities, events and visitors enriches the curriculum and broadens children's horizons. For example, children take part in a weekly music session, led by a music specialist. They perform to an audience in termly concerts. Visits from the police and fire service teach children about personal safety. Children get involved with their wider community. For example, participating in a community arts project or decorating the church Christmas tree.

Since the last inspection, the school has not stood still. School leaders and governors have continued to act in the best interests of children. They ensure staff are as effective as possible by prioritising their training and development. Consequently, staff feel valued and are highly committed to the school's ambitious vision.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in July 2019.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109413
<b>Local authority</b>	Bedford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10345079
<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	130
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing</b>	Deborah Simpkin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Smith
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cherrytreesnurseryschool.co.uk">www.cherrytreesnurseryschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	4 and 5 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Bedford Nursery Schools Federation.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds. This provision has expanded since the last inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There is before and after-school wraparound care. This is led and managed by the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with a range of leaders, including the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers and school business manager. She met with

governors, including the chair of governors. She also spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority.

- The inspector visited the learning environments, observed adult-led sessions, spoke to some children about their learning and viewed children's work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector reviewed a range of school documentation and policies. These included the federation development plan and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspector took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the free-text responses. She also reviewed responses to the staff survey and spoke with parents, staff and children throughout the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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