

Inspection of a good school: Wheatley Nursery School

Littleworth Road, Wheatley, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX33 1NN

Inspection date: 4 May 2023

Outcome

Wheatley Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children are happy and confident at this village nursery school. Adults greet children with smiles at the start of each day. Children settle quickly to the wide range of engaging and thoughtful activities that are organised for them. Children take turns and are patient with each other. For example, during the inspection, some children tried on a model of a king's crown and shared Union Jack drawings they had prepared. One of the children jumped with excitement and said that they were 'getting ready for the big party' of King Charles III's coronation. Children develop their knowledge and achieve well, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Children are kind to each other. They express their thoughts and feelings in appropriate ways. For example, one child with SEND used picture cards to describe her emotional response to a writing activity. Another politely asked a friend to pass white and blue sticky cards across the table as they created collage artwork together. Behaviour is a strength of the school. If there are any examples of unkindness between children, these incidents are managed in gentle but clear and effective ways. Children develop increasing independence. They learn to do things for themselves, such as collect their lunch boxes and get themselves ready for the end of the school day.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all children. They have developed an effective curriculum, which sets out challenging end points and the steps towards these for all children at all stages. They identify the specific knowledge they want children to learn, including key vocabulary. This often links to children's existing knowledge and interests, allowing staff to build these with clear expectations of what they want children to achieve. For example, staff teach children about life cycles and changes by looking at tadpoles and exploring minibeast habitats. When one of the children was asked, 'What did the tadpoles start off as?', he confidently answered, 'Frogspawn.' When discovering woodlice and worms outside, another said, 'Woodlice have 14 legs!'

Children's communication and language is promoted at every opportunity. A significant number of children have lower-than-expected starting points but develop secure language skills quickly. For example, some children spotted slugs under a log seat and asked questions about the 'water' they could see. When one staff member used songs and rhyme to remind them about 'the silvery trail of the snail', the children took great delight in being able to join in. Leaders shape daily routines skilfully to ensure that key workers make a positive impact with the children they support. This helps children, including two-year olds at the setting, to develop very positive relationships with staff and to feel secure and safe.

Staff use the outside area highly effectively. There is an abundance of positive play, sharing and engagement among children. Staff facilitate interactions between children very well. They implement the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum effectively, weaving it through all of the work they do. Staff are skilled at checking how well children have learned and then using their professional knowledge to provide children with extra help when they need it. Leaders work well with staff to identify children with SEND. Where needed, staff work effectively with external professionals, such as speech and language support, to make sure that children with SEND receive appropriate support. However, some newer aspects of the curriculum are not yet fully implemented by all staff. These include how children's specific knowledge and vocabulary in some areas is developed through techniques such as questioning and thoughtful interactions. Children could, therefore, achieve even more.

Governors are clear about the strengths of the school and areas that they want to further improve. All staff say that they are proud to work at the school. Leaders and governors are considerate of staff workload and well-being. Staff appreciate the support that they receive. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. One parent said, 'Every child is nurtured and treated as an individual.' Another echoed the thoughts of many and said, 'It's exactly how the early years environment should be.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a robust culture of safeguarding at the school. The single central record is kept up to date, and leaders carry out stringent employment checks to make sure that all staff have the appropriate qualifications they need. Safeguarding records are detailed and show that leaders act quickly when children need help. Leaders work closely with external agencies to make sure that pupils and their families receive the support they need. Staff receive ongoing training, can recognise the signs of abuse, and know what action to take. Governors reassure themselves that safeguarding is effective through assessment and evaluation of policies and procedures on a regular basis.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not consistently implemented as effectively as it could be. This means that not all children are achieving as well as they could. Leaders should continue to embed the curriculum and ensure that staff learn from where practice to build children's knowledge and vocabulary is strongest, utilising training, staff development and building on existing strengths within the staff team.

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. 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 May 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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	122983
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10269063
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lynn Wong
Headteacher	Natalie Wilson
Website	www.wheatleynurseryschool.org
Date of previous inspection	20 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has experienced staffing changes since the previous inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher in September 2022.
- The school is currently being led on a temporary basis by an executive headteacher, who leads both Wheatley Nursery School and Headington Quarry Foundation Stage School.
- The school offers provision for two-year-old children.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, governors and with a representative from the local authority.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and expressive art and design. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with curriculum leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited classrooms, spoke to teachers, and looked at children’s learning records. The inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other areas of learning.
- The inspectors reviewed documentation, which included the leaders’ evaluation of the school’s strengths and areas for improvement.
- The inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in their responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, and in their free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. They also spoke with staff to understand how they keep pupils safe and reviewed the school’s record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- One inspector spoke with some parents at the start of the day. The inspectors also spoke with staff to discuss leaders’ support for them.

Inspection team

Carl McCarthy, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Simon Woodbridge

His Majesty’s Inspector

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