

Kingswood Nursery School

Briar Road, Watford, Hertfordshire WD25 0DX

Inspection dates

1–2 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Kingswood Nursery is a special place to learn. Children are happy and they learn very well because they greatly enjoy all the stimulating and exciting activities.
- The headteacher leads the school community with passion and skill. Her expectations for excellence are shared by senior staff and governors. As a result of excellent leadership, the quality of teaching is outstanding.
- Staff love their work and are a highly effective team. They are reflective practitioners, who welcome new ideas and are keen to try them out.
- Teachers base their planning on an accurate understanding of children's needs and interests. Staff are skilful in extending children's learning by using questioning and discussion very effectively to develop their understanding. This contributes to children's outstanding achievement.
- Children thrive because of the strong focus on care and nurture. They are known and valued as individuals. Because of this, they feel secure and have high levels of confidence and self-esteem.
- Children behave exceptionally well. They come into school eagerly and have excellent attitudes to learning. They maintain high levels of concentration and perseverance, both inside and out of doors, in the exceptionally well-resourced learning environment.
- Leaders work hard to develop very positive relationships with parents who are unanimously supportive of the school. This ensures that the home-school partnership is an important part of the children's exceptional achievement.
- All children make excellent progress in their learning whatever their starting points. Almost all children are reaching, and many are exceeding, age-related expectations by the time they leave Kingswood Nursery.
- Leaders rightly identify that some boys and disadvantaged children, while making excellent progress from their starting points, do not attain as highly as their peers in literacy.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the attainment of boys and the disadvantaged children by finding ways to further accelerate their learning, particularly in literacy.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher provides exceptionally strong leadership. She is highly knowledgeable and continually seeks ways of improving the school to make the children's experiences even better. The school's core value, 'Children are at the heart of everything we do', is shared and understood by all staff and governors. Along with the senior staff and governors, the headteacher has created a culture of excellence that ensures that all children make good or better progress by the end of their time in the nursery school.
- All staff and the governing body share the headteacher's determination to provide the very best for every child. Staff morale is very high and the staff questionnaires show unanimously that they are proud to be working at the school. Staff take every opportunity to learn from one another, try out new ideas and make learning fun. Collaborative teamwork is a major factor in the school's success.
- School leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching and children's progress. The systems are rigorous and show leaders how well children are doing so they can quickly put in place any support the children need to achieve successfully. Staff are well trained and continually develop their skills to ensure that teaching continues to be outstanding.
- Leaders make sure that children benefit from a broad and engaging curriculum of well-planned, exciting activities which cover all the required areas of learning. Both the indoor and outside play areas are used very effectively to provide children with very stimulating learning experiences. All activities are appropriately challenging and give children an excellent grounding in the skills they need to learn. This ensures that all children are ready for the next stage in their education.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity, and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children, through its highly inclusive ethos and values. Children from a wide range of backgrounds get on really well together. They learn about life in modern Britain, and show tolerance and respect as they listen to each other during their small-group work.
- No opportunity is missed to reinforce children's reading, writing and number skills. Activities are invariably designed in ways that appeal strongly to the children's interests and personal experiences. For example, boys enthusiastically write story maps outside on large pieces of paper using writing equipment from toolboxes called 'literacy toolkits'. They also practise their writing skills using toy trucks with felt pens attached to them. As a result, the difference in boys' attainment in literacy compared with the girls is reducing.
- Leaders and governors use additional funding effectively to provide individualised support for disadvantaged children. For example, the deployment of the skilful intervention teacher has resulted in much-improved outcomes for these children. The small differences in achievement between disadvantaged children and their peers are diminishing rapidly.

- Funding for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well spent. Regular reviews of progress ensure that teaching, including programmes of support, is well suited to children's needs. Consequently, children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities consistently achieve well.
- The school's partnership with parents is a major strength. Parents are delighted with the way the school is led. One parent stated: 'My child has such a thirst for learning. The staff are friendly and approachable. They show a clear dedication to enhancing children's learning.' Parents are particularly complimentary about how staff keep them informed about the progress that their children make. Parents have many opportunities to find out more about the school and their children's learning through open sessions and active workshops covering all aspects of learning.
- Parents spoke about how much they appreciate being able to come into school to see how activities are taught, learn how they can support their children's learning at home and share these approaches with their children. All parents said they would recommend the school. One parent commented: 'The school and staff work very closely alongside parents and involve them in the children's learning as much as possible. I have brought a lot away from the workshops and used the ideas in our home environment and in our outside activities. The staff do a fantastic job every day.'
- The local authority provides suitably 'light touch' support for this outstanding school. Kingswood is recognised as a centre of excellence by the local authority. As a result, staff from other schools regularly visit to observe practice, and the school provides training to staff from other schools on a local and national level. In addition, the school provides specific support to a local primary school.

Governance

- Governors regularly visit the school and are involved in evaluating its work and developing improvement plans. Governors ask probing questions on the progress that children make. They hold leaders to account and oversee a robust system of managing teachers' performance.
- Governors keep themselves fully up to date with national changes in education and receive relevant training from the local authority. They make regular health and safety checks to ensure that the procedures for safeguarding children are fully implemented. Consequently, governors play a full role in determining the strategic work of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff and governors place a very strong emphasis on keeping children safe. There is extensive and regular safeguarding training for all staff, including when new teachers join the school.
- Leaders ensure that vulnerable families have access to the support they need, and that external agencies are involved to further support pupils and their families.

- All staff and visitors are subject to the appropriate checks so there is no doubt that the school is a secure and safe place to be. All records relating to safeguarding are fully up to date.
- Staff are supportive and watchful. They ensure that children are safe at all times. The ratio of adults to children for two-year-olds meets statutory requirements.
- Children are taught well how to keep themselves safe – for example, gripping on to the bar when climbing outdoor apparatus, or sweeping up sand that has spilled on to the floor to prevent slipping.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- The quality of the provision for two-year-olds is as effective as that for the older children. The calm, caring staff model excellent practice in nurturing very young children and have an in-depth knowledge of how younger children learn. They plan activities that appeal to the children's interests and effectively promote their enjoyment of learning. All equipment is set at the right level to ensure that children can access it independently. Consequently, children readily explore the stimulating activities indoors and outside, and show high levels of engagement. Staff notice that these children are already well settled when they join the main Nursery as three-year-olds.
- Staff have an excellent knowledge of how to promote children's development with both the younger and older children, and in all areas of learning. This means that staff are able to create and adapt activities very quickly to extend the children's understanding. Throughout the day, adults interact with, talk to and question the children, and develop their use of language and other aspects of their learning exceptionally well.
- Staff stimulate children's enthusiasm for learning very well. For example, after twigs appeared in the outdoor play area, following some windy weather, the children were very excited to make a 'bonfire' and pretend to cook marshmallows. This activity sparked many language opportunities as they described the fire as 'really warmy' and the cotton wool marshmallows as 'gooey'.
- All staff know the children very well and they rigorously check children's progress and achievement. This ensures that all groups do extremely well, and that no child falls behind in their learning. Every week, staff review the learning experiences and progress of each child. This means that they are able accurately to tailor the next week's activities to match the children's progress and plan from their varying starting points.
- Leaders are aware that some boys and some disadvantaged children do not always attain the same standards as the other children in literacy. They respond to this by providing these children with appropriate interventions and support. In particular, leaders have worked hard to develop the outside area to provide many more opportunities for writing. For example, children write lists in the 'police station', and write their names on a tally chart for a skittle competition. The school's current assessment information demonstrates that boys and disadvantaged children are beginning to make quicker progress in literacy, and the differences in their attainment compared with that of other children are diminishing rapidly.

- Classrooms and outdoor areas are well maintained and colourful. They are used well by adults to provide an exciting and imaginative range of experiences. Consequently, children are highly motivated as they enter the school for each session. Children settle very quickly and eagerly get involved in the daily 'busy fingers' activities, such as picking up small pompoms with tweezers, and weaving ribbons through metal grids. This effectively develops the fine motor skills they need for writing.
- Staff make maximum use of learning time and every opportunity is used to develop early reading, writing and mathematical skills. For example, many of the resources and pictures around the learning areas are numbered clearly or have letters and words visible. Staff frequently provide chances for children to count, sort, order, make marks and enjoy books, and so no learning time is wasted.
- The excellent outdoor area is well designed and used to provide many opportunities for children to develop their physical skills, investigate the environment and explore. All activities are richly supported by adults, who engage well with children at all times.
- All the adults play an important part in observing the children and checking their learning. They make very good use of observations and pictures of the children at work and play, and include these in the children's 'learning journal' books. These vibrant workbooks provide a comprehensive record, shared between school and home, of the outstanding progress made by the children.
- Home visits and play sessions are used very successfully to prepare children for starting at the Nursery. When the time is approaching for them to leave, the school adds school uniforms to the dressing-up box and school meal trays and cutlery to the role play area. Children from the Reception class at the local infant school visit with their teachers and share a presentation with photos explaining a typical school day. This effective transition programme ensures that children are prepared successfully for their next stage of education, and move confidently on to their next school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Children who are new to the Nursery settle quickly due to the very good routines and excellent care. For example, a child who had only been in the Nursery for a week was playing happily with peers and moving confidently between activities. Many parents commented on how well their children settled when they joined, and described how their children have made rapid progress after just a few sessions.
- The relationships between staff and children are exemplary. Children get on very well with adults and because every child is valued, they develop a very strong sense of their own identity. Children feel secure in the nurturing environment and display an excellent attitude to accessing new learning experiences. They approach their peers and adults with confidence, and are taught to be good 'triers' when learning new skills.

- Children learn about health and safety. They are taught to wash their hands before they touch food and to walk sensibly around the Nursery. Children experience risk in a well-managed and appropriate way, while being very carefully supervised, carrying out activities independently. For example, they put their bowls and beakers in the sink after snacktime, and climb safely on the apparatus outside.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Children make outstanding progress in their behaviour because of the excellent way staff model positive behaviour in front of the children. Staff encourage children to talk about, and describe, their feelings, and teach them how to learn to manage their emotions very well.
- Children's excellent conduct contributes extremely well to their exceptional learning and achievement. Children help and encourage one another as they play on the high-quality outdoor climbing apparatus, assessing the risks involved and setting themselves challenges.
- Leaders work hard to ensure that children attend school as often as possible. Good attendance is celebrated and the school works very closely with families providing exceptional support to alleviate any issues affecting children's attendance.
- All parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that there are no issues with behaviour or bullying, and that their children are safe in school. School records, and evidence seen during the inspection, confirm that this is the case.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Children learn exceptionally well because staff are careful to get the best out of each child through careful questioning, focused observations and well-chosen activities. These, coupled with the exemplary care and attention children receive from each adult, help them to develop skills in reading, writing and number. This ensures that they are very well prepared for the next stage of their schooling.
- All children make at least good progress from their starting points, and many make much more. Some boys, however, do not always reach the high standards of the girls in their literacy development. The recent focus on providing more engaging reading and writing activities for boys is resulting in the rapid progress of this group, who are now attaining similarly to the girls.
- Differences in the attainment of disadvantaged children are diminishing rapidly. For example, at the beginning of the autumn term 2016, disadvantaged children were identified as below typical attainment for their age in communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, and mathematics. After one term, the disadvantaged children had nearly caught up. The difference in the attainment of disadvantaged children compared with other children in literacy remains, but leaders are focused on improving outcomes in reading and writing. The latest assessment information demonstrates that this is having a positive impact on reducing any differences.

- The most able children can read and write simple three-letter words. They are eager to show adults how they use individual letters of the alphabet to make their own words, such as 'pen'. After making the word 'frog' in a phonics session, a child wondered if frogs have teeth. His key person helped him to find the answer using the internet. He excitedly told another adult, 'We've just found out that frogs don't have teeth.' Through stimulating and appropriately challenging activities, the most able children make rapid progress and achieve well.
- The Nursery supports very effectively the children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities because teachers carefully identify what they need. The intervention teacher liaises with other agencies to ensure that the children and their families get the full range of help available to them. Staff working with the children receive special training to support and record the steps in the children's learning and development, which they share regularly with parents and carers. As a result, these children make very good progress.
- In both the pre-school and Nursery classes, staff successfully meet the needs of children who speak English as an additional language. Children receive targeted support to help them to improve their speaking skills quickly – for example, by using puppets and toys to check that they understand new vocabulary as soon as it is introduced. Consequently, these children make rapid progress from their starting points.

School details

Unique reference number	117076
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10002632

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Melanie Harvey
Headteacher	Bernice Jackson
Telephone number	01923 672 531
Website	N/A
Email address	admin@kingswood.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 February 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average nursery school.
- The pre-school class admits children aged 2 and 3 years old. The Nursery class admits children aged 3 to 5 years old.
- The Nursery provides morning and afternoon sessions, and an optional packed lunch club is offered for all children.
- The Nursery offers wrap-around care for all children who can extend their core entitlement of 15 hours. The Nursery is the hub school for the local area, trialling the Department for Education's 30 hours free childcare project.
- The majority of children are of White British heritage with around a third of children from minority ethnic backgrounds. This varies from year to year.

- In the current cohort, 12% of children are eligible for the early years pupil premium, and 9% receive special educational needs support or have an education, health and care plan.
- The school works in partnership with a local teaching school alliance. It also provides training and support for other schools.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector carried out joint observations of teaching and learning with the headteacher, both indoors and outside, looked at examples of children's work and spoke to children. Snacktimes and lunchtimes were also observed.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, five governors including the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The inspector also had informal discussions with parents and children to seek their views of the school.
- The lead inspector scrutinised the school's website, and a range of documentation, including records of assessment and children's progress, planning for improvement, monitoring of teaching and learning, governors' meetings, and those relating to attendance and safeguarding.
- The lead inspector considered the 28 parent texts and 33 responses made by parents to Parent View.
- Additionally, the lead inspector looked at the 10 views expressed by members of staff in response to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Fiona Webb, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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