

Inspection of an outstanding school: Kingswood Nursery School

Briar Road, Watford, Hertfordshire WD25 0DX

Inspection date: 20 April 2023

Outcome

Kingswood Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children love coming to Kingswood Nursery School. Every day is exciting and fun. Children delight in the very wide range of opportunities that are provided for them. These are matched closely to their age and interests. For example, the school's guinea pigs and bearded dragon are much loved and provide plentiful opportunities to learn about looking after animals.

Leaders want the very best for all children. As a result, children learn a lot while they are at Kingswood. They spend lots of time outdoors, having fun and learning new things in the school's lovely outdoor areas. The nursery gets children's education off to an exceptionally good start.

Children are very well looked after by the staff, who have a deep understanding of early years education. Children have a particularly strong bond with their key person, but they know all the other staff well too. This helps children to feel safe and happy at school.

Rules and routines are taught explicitly. This helps children to know what is expected of them. Leaders and staff have high expectations of children, appropriate to their age. Children respond very well to these, following the rules and being kind and considerate to each other.

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

Over the past two years, leaders have focused strongly on developing the curriculum. The school's 'five ways to wow' curriculum is carefully matched to children's needs. Leaders are highly ambitious for children and are determined they will achieve well. Leaders have put clear end points in place across the curriculum. These make clear what children are expected to know and be able to do by the end of the Nursery Year. Leaders' ambitions are realised very well. Children leave Kingswood Nursery well prepared and ready for the next stage in their learning.

The school has a very effective key-person system. Each key person knows their children extremely well. They regularly check what children know and can do. They use this knowledge highly effectively to plan learning for children. They think carefully about how best to present children's learning. Staff have a particularly strong understanding of the needs of very young children. They make sure that learning experiences and resources are suitable for two-year-olds.

The curriculum focuses well on developing children's early literacy skills. For example, when they are ready, children are taught how to hold a pencil properly, and how to form the shapes they will need to write letters correctly. Development of vocabulary is another key aspect of the curriculum. Teaching of new words is closely matched to children's individual needs. For example, some children might learn 'egg', when learning about caterpillars and butterflies, while others learn 'metamorphosis'.

Staff focus very well on encouraging children to develop a love of reading and books. They share well-chosen stories with children, sometimes selected to help them learn about and understand the diversity in our society. Staff help children to develop the key skills that will be vital to them when they start their formal phonics learning in the Reception Year, when they move on to primary school.

Provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is notably strong. Staff notice very quickly when children have additional needs. Leaders take action promptly so that children quickly get the help and support they need. Children with SEND make really strong progress during their time in nursery.

Children behave extremely well, often with maturity beyond their age. This is because leaders view helping children learn about how to behave in different situations as a key part of the school's curriculum. As a result, the nursery has a calm and purposeful atmosphere, where children concentrate on and persevere with learning activities.

Staff feel particularly well supported and valued by leaders. They say their workload is manageable because leaders have done all they can to make it so. This helps staff to focus their attention on ensuring that children get the best quality provision at school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Children are looked after very well. They have strong relationships with staff, who notice when they are upset or when there are small changes in their behaviour. Staff report their concerns promptly. The school's designated safeguarding leads are tenacious in ensuring that children are safe. They take prompt and appropriate action when staff raise concerns about individual children.

Leaders have put robust systems in place to ensure that only suitable adults are employed to work with children. They make sure that all the necessary checks are made before new staff are allowed to take up their posts.

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 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in March 2017.

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	117076
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10212420
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	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Peter Williams
Headteacher	Clare Macdonald
Website	www.kingswood.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The previous headteacher retired in December 2020. The current headteacher joined the school in January 2021. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and pre-school manager, both existing members of staff, also took up their current roles in January 2021.
- The school accommodates two-year-olds in its pre-school provision.
- The school does not use 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.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the SENCo and the pre-school manager. The lead inspector met with a group of four governors, including the chair of governors. Two governors were physically present in the room and two attended via video link. The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in literacy and communication, mathematics, and personal, social and emotional development. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited both classrooms, spoke with children about their learning and looked at children’s work.
- To check the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors met with the school’s designated safeguarding leads, checked the school’s single central record of pre-appointment checks, looked at safeguarding records, and spoke with staff and children.
- Inspectors took account of the 25 responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey, and the same number of free-text comments that were submitted. Inspectors spoke with parents and carers as they brought their children to school. Inspectors also considered the 13 responses to Ofsted’s staff survey.

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Katherine Douglas

His Majesty’s Inspector

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