

Inspection of an outstanding school: Lea Nursery School

Wexham Road, Slough, Berkshire SL2 5JW

Inspection dates:

3 December 2019

Outcome

Lea Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Every child at Lea Nursery is valued and is everyone's responsibility. Staff know children and their families well and take very good care of them. This is a happy school where children are safe.

Leaders have set high expectations for children's learning. When designing the curriculum, leaders have considered the local area and children's interests. For example, leaders work with the community library. Children and families are expected to sign up for a library card before they start Nursery. As a result, parents regularly take their children to the library and children have access to a wide range of books to share at home.

Children enjoy coming to school and play well together. Their behaviour is exemplary because they are so busy having fun and learning new things. There is no bullying.

Staff and parents are very positive about the school. One member of staff said that working at the school was 'like being part of one big family'.

There are some inconsistencies in the way staff deliver the different areas of learning in the curriculum. As a result, children's experiences don't always help them to learn and remember new things. This is particularly true when children are playing outdoors.

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

Children experience a suitably broad and well-planned curriculum that is ambitious and well-designed. Children's learning is well-sequenced across all areas of learning. Leaders and staff strive to ensure that all children enjoy school and achieve well through a range of rich learning experiences. Staff find out what interests the children. They plan activities and experiences that are engaging. For example, children walked to the supermarket to buy the ingredients for their baking. They talked excitedly about what they needed and

how much it would cost.

Although curriculum plans have been thoughtfully developed by leaders and staff, the plans are not implemented consistently by staff. Leaders know which staff need more support and work is underway to help them to improve their practice. Staff appreciate the way leaders take account of staff workload and well-being.

Leaders are passionate about helping children to enjoy books and stories. Staff find many different opportunities to tell and read stories to children. They provide children with picture books and props to support them as they retell stories and talk about the characters. Staff are highly skilled in the nursery's approach to teaching phonics (letters and the sounds they represent). This ensures that pupils achieve well. For example, some children were learning the 's' sound by making the shape with pipe cleaners. Others were spotting the letter in signs as they were on their walk and drawing the shape in the air.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and others who are vulnerable do well in the school. Staff know when children need more help. This is because the headteacher has a very good knowledge of children's specific needs and she takes time to share this information with her staff. Staff receive high quality training. As a result, they plan learning opportunities carefully that help every child access the full curriculum.

Children enjoy a stimulating learning environment. They move freely between indoors and outdoors engaging in interesting activities that staff plan for them. However, some staff do not make the best use of the outdoor area to promote children's learning. For example, children's social and communication and language skills are not developed consistently well when learning outside.

Children are given time to pursue and develop their learning without interruption. They become curious and independent learners. Children cooperate well with each other and treat one another kindly.

School leaders work hard to support children's attendance at school. As a result, parents bring children to school regularly and if they are unable to attend, they let staff know why.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The culture of safeguarding is consistent with the caring ethos of the school. Staff receive regular training and are vigilant. They know what to do if they have concerns about a child's welfare. Staff teach children how to stay safe. For example, when walking to the supermarket children walked hand in hand and knew that it was not safe to run.

Leaders have put systems in place to check that all adults are safe to work with children. Staff and governors also regularly check that the school environment is safe and is kept safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although staff have fully engaged in the development of the curriculum there is too much variability in how the different areas of learning are delivered. As a result, the quality of children's experiences varies. Leaders should ensure that staff implement the planned curriculum consistently well, to ensure that children develop their learning coherently and in the order intended.
- Leaders should ensure that the whole provision made for children's learning, including out-of-doors, supports children's learning effectively, particularly so that this promotes pupils' social, communication and language skills consistently well.

Background

When we have judged a maintained nursery school to be outstanding we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Lea Nursery School to be outstanding on 25–26 January 2012.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	109763
Local authority	Slough
Inspection number	10111395
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David MacIsaac
Headteacher	Nikki Elsmore-Cary
Website	www.lea-nursery.slough.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 January 2016

Information about this school

- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- A new deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2019.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, groups of staff and five governors. A meeting with an inspector was held for other members of staff. An inspector spoke to two representatives from the local authority.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, physical development. This involved discussing curriculum planning with leaders, carrying out lesson visits, looking at children's 'records of achievement', talking to children and staff, talking to parents, observing pupils sharing books with an adult and observing story time.
- An inspector reviewed the single central record and attendance information. He met with the school's designated safeguarding leads and discussed systems and processes as well as considering case studies. Inspectors talked to parents, pupils, governors and staff about safeguarding and checked that practice was consistent across the school.

Inspection team

Sarah Varnom, lead inspector

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