

Lydalls Nursery School

Lydalls Road, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 7HX

Inspection dates

24–25 January 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

- The headteacher, manager and members of the governing body ensure children achieve the highest possible outcomes.
- There has been a relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching through observation and training. As a result, teaching is outstanding.
- Children make very good progress in all areas of learning. This is because staff are very good at ensuring what children can do when they arrive at the school and as they progress through each term.
- Leaders rightly identify that children for whom English is an additional language do not make quite as much progress in language and literacy.
- The quality of the indoor and outdoor learning environment is superb. Play areas are well set out and learning resources are easily accessible. This helps the children make independent choices while learning through play.
- Children make rapid gains in their personal development and are very well prepared for primary school. Older children show a great deal of confidence in early reading skills. They can make up small words using sounds that letters make.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make very good progress related to their starting points.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged children is used effectively. As a result, the small differences in achievement between these children and their peers are diminishing rapidly.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. They work very well as part of a group. They understand and respect their own and others' needs.
- Governors use their wide range of skills to make a strong contribution to the school. Through focused monitoring visits, they provide excellent support and challenge to the headteacher.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To ensure that children for whom English is an additional language achieve as well as others by:
 - raising the awareness of staff on how an additional language is acquired
 - ensuring that the learning environment reflects the language and culture of all children.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. She is highly knowledgeable and has exceptionally high expectations for her own and others' performance. Along with the governors, she has created a culture of excellence which is evident in the high number of children who make more than expected progress by the end of their term in the nursery school.
- The school's self-evaluation and school improvement plans are rigorous. They accurately reflect the school's strengths and its leaders' priorities for development. For example, leaders rightly identify that adapting the provision for children for whom English is an additional language would help them to make as much progress as their peers.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, and meets the age-appropriate needs of the children very well. It is further enriched through activities such as farm visits to the nursery and observing chicks hatching from eggs.
- Leaders and governors use additional funding highly effectively to provide individualised support for disadvantaged children. For example, the deployment of additional support staff has resulted in much improved outcomes for these children.
- The manager of the base for two-year-old children, along with her highly caring staff, models excellent practice in nurturing very young children. All equipment is set at the right level to ensure children can access it independently. Children readily explore the highly stimulating activities indoors and outdoors. Staff notice that these children are already well settled when they join the main nursery as three year olds.
- 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 show tolerance and respect for their peers as they listen to them during their small-group work. They are enthralled by many of the activities and

opportunities, whether examining water which has turned into ice outside, or examining a paw print left in the dew, concluding emphatically that it was a fox.

- Leaders have taken effective action to improve the areas identified in the previous inspection. The outdoor learning environment provides a high-quality, well-organised learning space, which enables all the children, including the youngest, to play, climb, learn and encounter carefully managed risks. Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding, reflecting the accurate feedback, well-planned training and exceptional support provided for teachers and other adults.
- There is a highly effective three-way relationship between parents, teachers and children. Parents are delighted with the way the school is led and how the adults keep them informed about the progress their children make. One parent commented: 'My son is very well settled here and I receive regular information from staff on the progress my child is making. I have applied for a place for my daughter and I am hoping she will come here too.'

Governance of the school

- Governors share the headteacher's passion and vision for excellence. They ask probing questions on the progress that children make and hold teachers to account through a robust system of managing teachers' performance. They rigorously apply the pay policy which recognises the excellent performance of teachers.
- Members of the governing body keep themselves fully up to date with national changes in education. They receive relevant training from the local authority, for example, on carrying out an audit of skills to support and challenge improvements in the school. They make regular health and safety checks to ensure the procedures for safeguarding children are fully implemented.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are highly effective.
- All staff place a very strong emphasis on keeping children safe. The entrance to the school building itself is very secure, and classrooms have secure entry systems in place.
- There are highly effective and well-thought-out procedures in place for the safe collection of children at the end of the sessions. This includes those nominated to pick a child up, if not known to staff being asked to give the assigned code-word. The school takes great care to make sure that parents are contacted before a child is released into someone else's care.
- Staff have a very good awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse and the child protection procedures to be followed in the event of an incident. Staff are also aware of the policy for any of them to make a referral to the relevant authorities if they have a concern about a child. They know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and make sure to discuss any children causing concern in their weekly

meetings. The single central record is compliant and all records relating to safeguarding are fully up to date.

- Children are taught to keep themselves safe. They are very aware of safety, being actively involved in carrying out daily risk assessments, especially in outdoor activities, such as demonstrating a good grip while swinging on the outdoor apparatus.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- All staff demonstrate deep knowledge of the needs of the children they work with. They plan highly interesting and stimulating activities to develop children's independent-learning skills. Staff provide meaningful and timely intervention to sustain children's thinking. For example, a two-year-old child was seen persevering for a long time, cutting around the edges of a shiny card and holding the scissors carefully with both hands, helped by an adult holding the card to make the activity achievable.
- There is a healthy mixture of activities between those initiated by children and those led by adults. For example, older children learn quickly through excellent systematic teaching of letters and sounds to help them read and spell out simple words. These lessons are planned extremely well for children who are at different stages in their learning.
- Teaching assistants play an important role in teaching basic skills and help children become confident in caring for themselves. For example, a teaching assistant let a two-year-old child pour water into his cup himself. He was able to identify his cup with his picture and hold it up to drink unaided.
- Adults plan activities very effectively, taking in to account the needs of each child. Special experiences are planned in all areas of learning to deepen children's understanding. For example, staff used children's love of traditional stories, such as the Gingerbread Man, to extend children's imagination to make up their own narratives. The leader ensures all areas of learning have special experiences planned throughout the year, carefully mapping out the full curriculum coverage.
- Indoor and outdoor planning is closely linked to the seven areas of learning, all areas being extremely well resourced and applied to the learning intentions of each activity. For example, the mud area aimed at developing children's co-ordination and control is well provided with small size diggers and watering cans which children use skilfully.
- Children's responses to the activities are assessed thoroughly by knowledgeable adults and recorded in detail in their learning journeys.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

- The school's work to promote children's 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 had markedly developed after attending just a few sessions.
- Most children make outstanding progress in their personal development, a key element in their preparation for the next stage of education. They soon settle in due to the excellent transition arrangements and quickly become confident and independent learners.
- The relationships between staff and children are very good. Children get on very well with adults and develop a very strong sense of their own identity. They enjoy coming to nursery and rarely miss a day. On the rare occasions when a child is absent from school, the school contacts parents on the first day of the absence as parents know that they need to inform the school if their child is ill.
- 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 in a highly positive learning environment.
- Children learn about health and safety. They are taught to wash their hands before they touch food and they talk about which foods are good for you. They experience risk in a well-managed and appropriate way, carrying out activities independently, such as climbing, while being very carefully supervised.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is outstanding. Their 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. For example, a child tried the climbing and sliding activity repeatedly, struggling initially and was elated when she could do it with greater balance and ease. Through regular observations of children's involvement in various activities, staff stringently monitor children's behaviour for learning. They adapt the activities to make them more appealing so children who need additional support can sustain their concentration and make excellent progress.
- Staff manage children's behaviour very well. This is particularly noticeable when children are tired towards the end of a session. Staff ask them to look and listen carefully and praise them for responding positively.
- All parents who responded to the online Parent View survey, and those spoken to during the inspection, agreed that there are no issues with behaviour or bullying, and 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 make exceptional progress in their learning and development. All children make at least good progress from their starting points, and many make very much more.
- Differences in the attainment of disadvantaged children are diminishing. For example, at the beginning of the autumn term 2016, all children were working at a level typical for their age in literacy as compared to disadvantaged children who were identified as below the expected level. After one term, the disadvantaged children have nearly caught up, and are on track to make typical or better progress by the end of their stay in the nursery.
- Children talk to the adults in an age-appropriate manner, using words and sentences to state their needs or preferences and to demonstrate their growing knowledge and understanding. For example, while gluing and sticking in the construction area, a most-able disadvantaged child showed preference for a big box which he used to make a present. While decorating it, he was able to point out that one of the sequins he was using was in fact a square shape with four corners.
- Older children can read, simple three-letter words. They are eager to show the adults how they use individual letters of the alphabet to make their own words, such as 'Sam'.
- The nursery supports children who have special needs and/or disabilities very effectively, as teachers carefully identify what they need. The special needs coordinator liaises with other agencies to ensure that the children and their families get the full range of help available to them. Adults working with the children receive special training to support and record the small 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.

School details

Unique reference number	122972
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10012603

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 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liz Harding
Headteacher	Rebecca Saunders
Telephone number	01235813137
Website	www.lydallsnurseryschool.co.uk
Email address	office.1017@lydalls-nurs.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Provision for children aged two was also inspected as part of this section 5 inspection.
- Lydalls Nursery School provides integrated nursery education and day care for children aged two to five years. Most of the children are of White British heritage. The number of children, who speak English as an additional language has risen from the time of the previous inspection. In the current cohort, 16% of children whose circumstances make them vulnerable receive additional funding. The proportion of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.

The day-care provision in the Chameleon Club, which shares the school premises and is also managed by the governing body, is subject to a separate inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, four members of the governing body including the chair, and had a telephone conversation with the local authority adviser. The inspector also had informal discussions with parents to seek their views of the school. She carried out joint observations with the headteacher, both indoors and outside, looked at the examples of children's work, and spoke to the children. She also reviewed a range of documentation, including the single central record, the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, and records of progress children make. The inspector also took account of the 21 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire completed by parents, results of the school's own survey of parents' views, and nine questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Kusum Trikha, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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