

Inspection of an outstanding school: Blagdon Nursery School

Blagdon Road, Whitley, Reading, Berkshire RG2 7NT

Inspection date: 2 May 2024

Outcome

Blagdon Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff greet children with wide smiles, warmth and reassurance at the start of each nursery session. They build strong and trusting relationships with children, who settle quickly and are very happy to be in school. Parents are rightly confident that their children are in safe hands. One said: 'Staff are wonderful. They are kind and caring to every one of their children and understand their needs.'

Children learn and behave exceptionally well. They thrive in the school's safe, nurturing and highly inclusive atmosphere, greeting each new activity with interest and excitement. Children make striking progress in the development of personal, social and independence skills. The youngest quickly settle in, hanging their coats up at the start of each session and moving confidently between activities. The oldest are thoroughly well prepared for the move to 'big school'. Parents are understandably enthusiastic about the school's impact on their children's learning and development. One said: 'My child has come so far. I cannot thank them enough.'

The school's ambition for every single child's learning is clear. Staff are passionate about teaching and know precisely how to support each child so that they flourish. The school's provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is exemplary.

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

Blagdon Nursery School's high-quality curriculum is meticulously designed to support children's learning. Leaders have given great thought to what will be taught and about the activities and opportunities they would like children to encounter. The school's rich curriculum provides children with an extensive range of stimulating experiences. These make a strong contribution to their learning, to their enjoyment of school and to their understanding of the wider world. One parent commented: 'My child has experienced things in school that he may not have experienced at home, such as seeing a bonfire, building a den, and watching ducklings hatch.'

Leaders and governors share a determination to provide the best for all children, and particularly for those who need extra help, such as disadvantaged and vulnerable children. The school's family worker plays a pivotal role in establishing and maintaining links with families. Leaders provide highly effective education and care for children with SEND. Children's needs are identified at an early stage so that they can benefit from the support they need as quickly as possible. The recently established specially resourced provision, 'The Orchard', has quickly become an indispensable and much-valued part of the school community. The quality of children's learning and development is impressive.

Communication and language skills are given a very high priority in the curriculum. Adults routinely model and reinforce key vocabulary throughout the nursery, and children copy their lead. High-quality texts are used with great skill to promote children's love of reading and their understanding of how books work. Children are excited about books and delight in curling up to enjoy a story. Regular phonics sessions make a strong contribution to children's early reading skills.

Children love learning and achieve exceptionally well. Many demonstrate remarkable focus and sustained concentration because they are absorbed by what they do. They are proud of their achievements. For instance, one child proudly exclaimed, 'This is the biggest number I have ever thought of!', while completing a number activity, while another quietly explained how he had made a caterpillar for his daddy. Staff are knowledgeable about child development and confident about what they can do to support children. They design activities carefully to capture children's interest and to teach them what they need to learn next. Leaders take good care of the staff, who are rightly proud of the work they do to support children's learning and development.

Outdoor learning is valued just as much as learning in the classroom. The school's outdoor areas are happy, busy, active places. A wide range of activities give children the opportunity to learn about ways to keep safe while having fun, whether using the construction area, joining in with a ball game, or climbing on the play equipment. All areas are closely supervised.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 outstanding. 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 outstanding in November 2014.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	109748
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10321758
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	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Terry Hardie
Headteacher	Charlotte Jennings (head of school) Joanne Budge (executive headteacher)
Website	www.reysfederation.org
Date of previous inspection	8 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Blagdon Nursery School is part of the Reading Early Years Schools Federation.
- The school has a specially resourced provision, 'The Orchard', for 12 children with social and communication difficulties, autism, or sensory processing or learning needs. The school also has a specially resourced provision within the main nursery for children with moderate social communication needs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the head of school, the executive headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with three governors, including the two vice-chairs. She also met with two local authority representatives.

- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff at different times during the inspection. They also considered the views of staff expressed in Ofsted’s survey.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading; communication, language and literacy; mathematics; and personal, social and emotional development. Deep dives included visits to lessons and discussions with leaders, teachers and children.
- Inspectors spoke with children at various times throughout the school day. They gathered parents’ views through Ofsted’s survey and spoke with parents at the start of the morning session.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and children; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children’s interests first.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Linda Culling

His Majesty’s Inspector

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