

Inspection of Grasmere Nursery School

Icknield Way, Luton, Bedfordshire LU3 2BT

Inspection dates: 15–16 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Children develop their independence and social skills successfully within the calm, friendly school community. For example, children are encouraged to find their own coat before going outside and then hang it up again when they come indoors. Children behave well. They take turns and play happily together.

Staff develop positive relationships with children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This builds children's confidence and helps them to settle quickly into the routines of school life. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the nurturing experience their children receive. They praise leaders and staff for their warm and caring approach.

Staff provide time and space for the most vulnerable children to communicate their ideas and feelings. Carefully thought-out activities, such as 'bucket time', engage and support those children who find listening and concentrating tricky. As a result, all children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

Children are well cared for in a safe and encouraging environment. However, leaders do not have high enough expectations of what children will achieve in some areas of learning. Staff do not routinely provide activities that meet children's needs, including for the most able and in the outside areas. As a result, children do not achieve as well as they can.

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

Leaders make sure that children are taught a broad curriculum. However, the curriculum is not well planned across most areas of learning, including physical development and expressive arts and design. Children do not have enough opportunities to practise and deepen their learning. In mathematics, for example, teachers do not always know children's starting points. This means that teaching does not routinely build on what children already know and can do. Teachers' assessments are not used consistently to plan activities that challenge children and stretch their thinking. Leaders and governors do not rigorously monitor the quality of education or check that leaders' actions improve the school.

Most children make good progress in communication and language. Staff value what children have to say and encourage them to express their thoughts and ideas. Staff use lively story times to help children extend their vocabulary. Children use words such as 'fossils' and 'fragile' accurately.

The environment is better organised and more interesting indoors than outside. In classrooms, children learn through engaging activities such as making birthday cakes with play dough and using props to re-enact the Goldilocks story. Most staff model vocabulary and question children skilfully. They use signing to support children's understanding and develop their language. In the areas outside, staff do

not make the most of the learning environment. There are not enough stimulating activities or effective adult support to help children learn well.

Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. They demonstrate how to be considerate and helpful to others. Children respond positively by following instructions and looking after resources, such as toys, with care. Breakfast club and lunchtimes are happy, social occasions. Children are encouraged to display good manners and eat healthily.

Leaders and staff plan themed days linked to events and festivals, such as harvest time and Diwali. These events broaden children's knowledge and understanding of the wider world. Staff promote children's personal, social and emotional development well, such as showing how to care for the class tortoises and guinea pigs. This supports children to understand responsibilities, as well as being a focus for settling less-confident children.

Leaders are swift to identify and effectively support children with SEND, including those who join the school's SEND resource provision. Staff are knowledgeable and put specific programmes of support in place that are well suited to the children's needs.

Leaders and governors care for the staff's well-being. Leaders are mindful that staff should maintain a good work-life balance. They provide staff with training and support to help them achieve this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders check rigorously that staff are suitable to work with children. They are not always as thorough in checking that the school's agreed procedures, such as the positive handling of children, are firmly in place.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training, including about issues in the local community. They understand that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility.

Leaders hold detailed records relating to children who may be at risk of harm. They are advocates for vulnerable children and their families, signposting families to other agencies for extra help. We agree that leaders 'face any challenges head on and find a solution'. Parents say wholeheartedly that their children are happy and safe at school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not sufficiently well planned in most areas of learning. Leaders need to make sure that they set out clearly what children need to learn and in what order so that teaching builds on what children already know and can do.
- Leaders need to strengthen the curriculum by developing the outdoor environment so that it consistently provides high-quality learning opportunities for children to revisit, build on and deepen their prior learning.
- Leaders need to make sure that staff have consistently high expectations of what children can achieve across all areas of learning. Additionally, they need to ensure that teachers' assessments of children's learning are used to plan activities that meet children's learning needs, including for the most able.
- Leaders and governors need to strengthen how they monitor and improve the quality of education. They need to ensure that they make effective use of the information they gather to identify any weaknesses. Additionally, they need to put appropriate actions in place quickly so that the curriculum and the outcomes for children improve.

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're 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	109420
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10110236
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mohammad Alramahi
Headteacher	Joy Luxford
Website	www.grasmerenursery.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 July 2015

Information about this school

- This nursery school is larger than the average-sized nursery school teaching children aged between three and five years old. The current roll has three- and four-year-olds.
- The overall provision brings together a baby and toddler unit, the nursery school and a specialist resource base for children with profound and complex needs, all sharing the same site. This inspection report refers to the nursery school and the specialist resource base only.
- The school day is divided into two sessions, each of three hours. Many children remain for the whole day and access the wraparound care at the start and end of the day and during lunchtime.
- The school has a specially resourced base for children with SEND. The resource base caters for up to 16 children who have additional needs, including significant learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorder, sensory impairment and physical disabilities. Sixteen children currently attend the resource base. The children are fully integrated into the nursery classes. Places are allocated and funded through the local authority and are not reliant on children having an education, health and care plan.

- The school's most recent inspection was a section 8 short inspection on 8 February 2019.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- As part of this inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding leader, and the deputy headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). Inspectors met with the leaders for communication, language and literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and personal, social and emotional development. Inspectors also met with the school business manager, the office manager, the assistant SENCo and a trainee teacher to discuss the impact of the support they receive from leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body, the vice-chair and one other governor. Additionally, the lead inspector met with a local authority adviser to discuss their work with the school.
- The following areas of learning were considered as part of this inspection: communication, language and literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and personal, social and emotional development. Inspectors spoke to curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at a range of children's work and met with teachers. Inspectors also observed children learning in classrooms and outdoors.
- The lead inspector attended the school's breakfast club.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including the school's own self-evaluation, improvement plans and records about behaviour, safeguarding children and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 21 responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 21 responses to Ofsted's free-text system. Inspectors also spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. There were no responses to Ofsted's online staff survey or Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- This inspection does not include the Grasmere Nursery and Tadpoles Baby and Toddler Unit, which is on the same site as Grasmere Nursery School. Grasmere Nursery and Tadpoles Baby and Toddler Unit is separately registered with Ofsted to provide full daycare for children aged 0 to three years (URN EY241136). The most recent inspection of the provision was on 14 February 2019, when it was judged as outstanding. The inspection report can be found on Ofsted's website.

Inspection team

Fiona Webb, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jacqueline Bell-Cook

Ofsted Inspector

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