

Inspection of The Fields Nursery School

Galfrid Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB5 8ND

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Outstanding
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What is it like to attend this school?

Children look forward to coming to the nursery. The start of the day is calm and productive. Dedicated staff make the nursery an inviting place. They do this through warm greetings and through setting out interesting activities for children to get stuck into.

There are familiar routines, for example the 'story bell' that tells children a story time is about to happen. Children like knowing what is going to happen next as it makes them settled and secure.

Children learn how to be polite because staff model kindness and friendly behaviour such as turn taking and sharing. Staff use their expertise in child development to notice when children need extra help with communication or being able to concentrate. Staff make sure that children are always safe and well cared for.

The outdoor space provides opportunities for children to explore imaginary worlds while developing their strength and sense of balance. The school's curriculum helps children to appreciate different cultures. This is brought to life through learning about different kinds of traditional dances and festival foods.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have set about developing the curriculum. This work is yet to be fully completed. This means, occasionally, some activities do not always build on what children already know and can do. In most learning areas, leaders have identified key knowledge and skills that children need to learn and have set this out in a logical order. This improvement work has already led to positive changes in the nursery. For example, the way that children learn how to dance and move their bodies is now broken down into smaller steps. This means that children are better at successfully learning these new skills.

Staff have received training in how to develop children's language and communication skills. Staff introduce children to new words and teach them how to use new words in sentences. This helps children to understand and talk about the world around them.

Leaders make sure that reading plays a big part in children's school lives. Staff use story books to help children make connections with something they have learned recently. For example, when reading 'Jasper's Beanstalk', children make connections with their outdoor learning about planting seeds in their nature area. Staff use props, animated language and actions to bring stories to life. Leaders encourage parents to take part in the nursery's 'Big Rhyme' and family story events. Children who have English as an additional language receive extra teaching using bi-lingual story books.

The school quickly identifies children's needs. Home visits and insightful staff knowledge of the children help leaders to create bespoke learning plans for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school helps parents to engage with specialist services. The school provides specialist in-house speech, language and communication interventions. These have a positive impact on children's language development and ability to concentrate.

The school has high expectations for children's behaviour and attitudes. Staff act in a calm and collected way, which children emulate. If a child struggles to regulate their behaviour, staff seek to understand the cause of this. They then provide tailored support to help children learn more self-control. School routines bring order and structure to the day. However, the design of some routines does not always help all children to be productive and patient. As a result, some children become more distracted while waiting for the next activity.

Outdoor learning complements the school's curriculum for personal development. Experiences include building a teepee. These opportunities promote children's social development and encourage teamwork. Staff work sensitively to broaden children's diet, for example encouraging children to try salad at lunchtime. The school provides 'touch and taste' sessions to help children overcome difficulties with eating.

Leaders, including governors, know that this school provides a vital service to the local community. They are committed to providing the best education and care for children. Collaboration between the federation's nursery schools provides opportunities to share expertise. This also supports staff workload and well-being. Parents appreciate staff's availability to discuss their child's development with them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some learning areas, leaders are still identifying the key knowledge they want children to know. This means that, occasionally, activities do not sufficiently build on what children have learned already or need to know next. The school should continue to explicitly lay out the exact knowledge to be taught so that staff can plan better activities for all children.
- Some daily routines to support children's focus are not designed as well as they could be. As a result, some children become easily distracted while waiting for an activity to start. Leaders should adapt the school's routines to ensure they always engage children in purposeful activities. This will help children to develop their patience and independence.

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	110593
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10323599
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	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-Chairs of governing body	Carolyn Purser and Veronica Sharpe
Headteacher	Ruth Holman
Website	www.thefields.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 July 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school caters for children aged two to five years. The school offers morning, lunch and afternoon sessions. Children can attend part time or full time.
- The school provides wraparound care in the form of a breakfast- and after-school club.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is federated with Brunswick Nursery School and Colleges Nursery School.
- The headteacher and the assistant headteacher took up their positions in January 2024.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and spoke via telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these curriculum areas: communication and language; understanding the world; and personal, social and emotional development. The lead inspector also considered other curriculum areas such as expressive arts and mathematics.
- For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some children about their learning and looked at samples of children’s work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that pups pupils’ interests first.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school’s development plan.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses, and responses to Ofsted’s staff survey. The inspectors also spoke to parents during the day in the course of the inspection.
- The inspectors observed children’s behaviour across the nursery.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Daniel Short

His Majesty’s Inspector

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