

Inspection of an outstanding school: Gamesley Early Excellence Centre

Winster Mews, Gamesley, Glossop, Derbyshire SK13 0LU

Inspection date: 13 July 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children arrive at this nursery school with big smiles on their faces. They are pleased to be here. They learn in a safe, positive and caring learning environment. Children are respectful and work together well.

New behaviour systems have had an immediate effect. They help children to know what is expected of them. Children are praised for their good conduct and where necessary, are supported to reflect and make better choices. As a result, they want to do their best. Those children who previously found regulating their emotions tricky are now flourishing.

Most parents and carers hold the nursery school in high regard. Many of their children have attended this nursery school over the years. As one parent commented, typical of many: 'I couldn't have asked for a more positive start for my children. I hope this will continue for others.' A few parents felt less well informed about their child's education and the changes the nursery school is about to embark upon.

Children enjoy learning the curriculum that has been recently introduced. However, the key knowledge that children need to know and learn according to their age or stage of development needs further clarification.

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

This nursery school is in a period of rapid transition. There have been significant changes in leadership. It is due to relocate to shared premises with a local primary school. Despite these challenges, leaders are ambitious for all the children in their care. They are determined that all children, regardless of their needs, will make secure progress from their starting points in readiness for their Reception year.

In a short space of time, leaders have swiftly introduced new systems and routines. This includes clear procedures for behaviour and an interim curriculum that outlines what children will know. These systems have had a rapid impact. They have raised expectations of what children can do and achieve. Leaders plan to further refine the curriculum they have implemented.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are included in all aspects of nursery life. The environment is inclusive for all children, regardless of their needs. Leaders carefully consider the small steps of knowledge these children need to succeed. As a result, children with SEND thrive here.

Children enjoy their daily story. It is a special time. They enjoy talking about the animals and characters they meet in the books they share. Adults weave rhymes and songs into routines and adult-led activities. Children with SEND enjoy listening and responding to these language patterns. Adults encourage them to join in through actions, pictures and gestures. Older children learn to listen to sounds in the environment and sounds at the start of words.

Children develop their vocabulary well. Adults ask effective questions, prompting children to adjust their thinking or ideas through play and adult-directed activities. For example, while playing with a garage, adults promoted children to park cars on the 'middle level' as opposed to the top and bottom.

Children have a strong sense of what is right or wrong. Expectations for children's conduct are well understood by all. Leaders ensure that children learn about communities different to their own. Adults use stories such as 'Owl Babies' to help children understand emotions such as anxiety, worry and hope. They reassure children about their move to their new nursery school site.

Leaders work hard to engage parents in their child's education. Most parents appreciate this. A few parents worry about the communication they receive from the nursery school, particularly during this period of transition.

Staff understand why leaders have implemented rapid changes. They feel well supported. They are looking forward to a fresh start.

Governors recognise that they will need to continue to monitor the impact of the recent changes. They have a clear vision and ambition for the nursery school. They ensure that their statutory responsibilities are met.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff take their responsibility to safeguard children seriously. They recognise the signs that indicate a child could be at risk of harm. Staff are acutely aware of the vulnerabilities of some children and families they work with.

Leaders have daily 'supervision meetings'. These enable them to prioritise children and families who may need additional support. They do not shy away from challenging each other's decisions. Leaders are tenacious in their efforts to ensure that all children receive the right support from external agencies.

Children develop an age-appropriate understanding of safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The nursery school's curriculum does not yet reflect leaders' high ambitions. The knowledge that children need to know at each stage of development is not clearly identified. Therefore, the curriculum is not yet precisely meeting the needs of all children. Leaders must complete the work they have started on the curriculum. They must ensure that the curriculum is precisely sequenced for the different ages and developmental levels of children the nursery school caters for.
- The nursery school is in a period of rapid change. Many of the systems and routines that leaders have introduced are at the very early stages of implementation. There is a sense of anxiety from some stakeholders. Leaders, including governors, must, in this period of transition, ensure that systems, procedures, routines and expectations are understood by staff, parents and children.

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 June 2013.

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](#)' 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

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| Unique reference number | 112470 |
| Local authority | Derbyshire |
| Inspection number | 10211577 |
| 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 | 53 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Emma Rettig |
| Headteacher | Deborah Meredith (executive headteacher) |
| Website | www.gamesleyeec.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 18 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes in leadership since the last inspection. The executive headteacher took up post in April 2023.
- The nursery school is due to relocate in September 2023. The executive headteacher will provide leadership for two schools at the same site.
- The nursery school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The nursery school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders to discuss the nursery's curriculum, including the provision for pupils with SEND. The lead inspector met with representatives of the local governing body and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these areas of learning: communication and language; personal, social and emotional development; and understanding of the world. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders and spent time observing in the classrooms. Inspectors also talked to staff and children and observed activities to determine the impact of the curriculum and teaching methods on children's learning and development.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including school improvement plans, governors' minutes, records of visits from the local authority and documentation relating to behaviour.
- The inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. They reviewed documentation leaders held for pupils' safeguarding and welfare. They spoke to various staff, pupils and governors about their understanding and roles in relation to safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's parent and staff questionnaires. They also spoke to a sample group of parents while on site.

Inspection team

Shaheen Hussain, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Roary Pownall

Ofsted Inspector

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