

Inspection of an outstanding school: Holmewood Nursery School

66 Upper Tulse Hill, London SW2 2RW

Inspection date: 4 July 2023

Outcome

Holmewood Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children thrive at this happy and friendly nursery school. Children and their families are given a warm welcome. As soon as they arrive, adults engage children in conversation and interesting activities. Children feel valued and are kept safe. They separate easily from their parents and carers because they feel secure here.

Leaders and staff are ambitious for what children can achieve, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children are curious, inquisitive and keen to learn. Staff are highly skilled in supporting their development. They know the children's needs and interests. As a result, children achieve well and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Staff have high expectations and use consistent approaches for teaching children how to behave. Staff expertly help children to respond and deal with differences. Every opportunity is used to reinforce and promote turn taking, sharing and listening to each other. Well-established routines help to develop children's independence.

Children relish the rich first-hand experiences provided. These include feeding and looking after the chickens, growing their own food in the allotment and planting seeds and flowers in the garden.

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

Leaders have developed the ambitious Holmewood curriculum, with clear end goals identified. The curriculum provides children with carefully planned learning across all seven areas, as per the expectations of the national curriculum. The theme of growth and change threads through every aspect of the curriculum. Staff use this theme, along with key books and stories, to provide children with engaging and purposeful learning experiences.

The development of children's communication and language is an absolute priority. It is part of every experience and learning opportunity. Staff have been well trained. They have a high level of expertise when talking to and with children. Staff ensure that every child can contribute to conversations, ask questions and build language incrementally. They do this through explicit modelling and use of identified key vocabulary. Daily 'key group sessions' include asking children how they are and giving them opportunities to share their own news, with staff supporting them to use words that they have learned. The sessions also include story time, where children join in with props and act out the chosen key text. Adults use this time to skilfully develop children's understanding and use of language from the stories that are shared.

Leaders and staff promote a love of reading. Staff help children to listen to and hear the sounds around them. When they are ready, children are taught to listen out for the sounds in words and sentences. This prepares them well for their learning in phonics when they move to primary school. Children can access books and stories throughout the day. Adults use a rich range of literature to support children's learning across the curriculum. Families enjoy borrowing books from the school library to share with their children.

Leaders and staff use children's interests as a hook for the intended learning. Children's concentration levels are high. They play happily together, taking turns and listening to one another. There are thoughtful opportunities to support children's mathematical knowledge. For example, children join in with counting out pieces of dough and working out how many they have in total. When comparing the size of potatoes, children use words and phrases like 'smaller', 'bigger' and 'the same as'. This is because adults model these consistently.

Children with SEND are very well supported. Their needs are quickly identified. They are fully included in all that the nursery has to offer. Staff expertly adapt activities and provide individual and group sessions to ensure that children's needs are being met. Individual learning support plans provide staff and parents with clearly identified next steps and the actions to be taken to achieve them. These are regularly reviewed with parents to ensure that everyone can be involved in supporting children's ongoing development.

High-quality work to promote children's wider development is supported through close partnerships with families. Leaders and staff actively involve and include parents in their children's education. For example, they are invited to join the children for gardening sessions and outings to the local park or market. Parents regularly attend curriculum workshops or 'family Fridays', where they join in with different curriculum activities.

Governors know the school well. This enables them to challenge and support leaders effectively. Staff are rightly proud to work here. They appreciate that leaders take their workload into consideration.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff and governors receive up-to-date and regular training. Staff are vigilant for any signs of abuse or harm. There are clear reporting and recording procedures. These give leaders oversight to ensure that the right support is put in place. Leaders work very closely with the on-site children's centre. Through this, leaders ensure that families and children access the services and professionals they need.

Children are taught how to keep healthy and safe. There are clear routines for hygiene, such as handwashing, toileting and teeth brushing. Throughout the provision, children are taught to play safely but also to take measured risks with careful support and guidance from adults.

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 July 2018.

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

Unique reference number	100554
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	10293204
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Siobhan Turner
Headteacher	Luke Page (Executive headteacher) Tania Fricker (Head of school)
Website	www.holmewoodnurseryschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Holmewood Nursery School is part of the Lambeth Nursery Schools' Federation.
- Leaders do not make use of 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 carried out deep dives in these areas of learning: communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and understanding the world. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders and staff, visited classrooms and the outdoor provision, looked at examples of children's learning, and spoke to children as they played and learned.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher and head of school. They also met with governors and a local authority adviser.

- Inspectors spoke with leaders, staff and children about safeguarding. Inspectors also checked safeguarding records and documentation.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey and spoke to a number of parents informally during the inspection.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Julie Wright, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Annabel Davies

His Majesty's Inspector

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