

Inspection of an outstanding school: Bensham Grove Nursery School

Sidney Grove, Bensham, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE8 2XD

Inspection dates:

26 April 2023

Outcome

Bensham Grove Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children flourish in this warm and nurturing school. Staff are highly skilled practitioners. They are expert in knowing how young children learn best. High expectations are customary for all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Provision is exceptional. Rich learning experiences stimulate children's curiosity to discover new things. High-quality play is commonplace, for example analysing the minibeasts in forest school or working in the beachside pizza cafe. Whatever the activity, children are completely immersed in their learning and achieve well.

Routines and expectations are well established. Children explore the large indoor and outdoor classrooms with confidence. Thoughtful reminders ensure children know what is expected of them. Children quickly learn the importance of sharing and turn taking. Older children support younger children to settle quickly. As a result, children behave exceptionally well.

Strong relationships with parents form the bedrock of the school's success. Parents welcome and value inclusion in their children's learning journey. They are highly complementary of the support they receive.

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

Leaders are highly reflective. They invest heavily in training and research to ensure their skills remain current. They use their extensive knowledge effectively to create a fulsome curriculum across all areas of learning.

Children's language and communication development is at the heart of all curriculum planning. Leaders have identified with great precision how children's knowledge and skills will build. Staff interactions are of the highest quality.

Books are everywhere. Core stories and rhymes are shared repeatedly. Children know them by heart and can retell them with assurance. They re-enact them in their play.

Leaders make sure the curriculum is suitably flexible. A changing context following the COVID-pandemic led to a rethink of the curriculum for children's physical development. Leaders identify where and how children's core strength and motor skills will be taught and modelled. Children show impressive control of the tools and objects that support their learning. Children in the studio discussed their choice of brushes for painting cherry blossom. One child explained, 'I need the fine brush to paint the stalk.'

Children's mathematical development is carefully crafted. Leaders are clear about the concepts they want children to know and remember. Staff model mathematical thinking exceptionally well. Children are encouraged to use mathematical vocabulary accurately. Opportunities for children to explore and compare are exploited across the wider curriculum. For example, children in the construction area were building a dinosaur park. They were encouraged to compare and sort a range of dinosaurs. At first this was done by size, then by features such as spikes and wings. In some cases, this was done by scientific names. A mix of direct and supported teaching is enabling children to become confident mathematicians.

Children with SEND receive high-quality support. Curriculum adaptations are effective in enabling children to access the full curriculum. Needs are identified quickly. Precise individual targets ensure children with SEND make excellent progress.

Staff morale is high. They value the changes leaders have made to improve their workload. A daily reflection meeting brings staff together, where they evaluate curriculum successes and identify next steps. This ensures all staff have an accurate understanding of what children know and can do.

Equal thought goes into enriching the curriculum. Leaders organise a raft of visits and visitors to enhance children's awareness of the wider world. This includes crossing the Millennium Bridge and enjoying a visit to the theatre.

Governors collaborate closely with leaders. They use their considerable skills and expertise to maintain a strong focus on continuous curriculum improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training, so they are up to date on national and local safeguarding issues. Staff know the children well. They watch for any changes in children's behaviour.

Record-keeping is meticulous. Leaders' chronology of their actions and interventions is detailed.

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 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

Unique reference number	108320
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10255914
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	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Green
Headteacher	Denise Kilner
Website	www.benshamgrovenurseryschool.org
Date of previous inspection	8 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is the only maintained nursery school in Gateshead local authority.
- It shares a site with private early years provision that offers access to wraparound care.

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 met with senior leaders, including the headteacher and SEND coordinator, to gain an understanding of the school's curriculum.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in the areas of learning: communication and language, physical development, and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors spent time observing children in the nursery. This included observing the quality of interactions between staff and children and the daily routines that have been established.

- Inspectors talked to children and to staff and observed the planned activities to determine the impact of the curriculum and the quality of teaching methods on children's development and well-being.
- Inspectors held discussion with parents and took account of 19 free-text comments and responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- An inspector had a meeting with three members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. A meeting with a representative of the local authority was also held.
- Safeguarding records and procedures were reviewed.

Inspection team

Diane Buckle, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Andrew James

Ofsted Inspector

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