

# Arlesdene Nursery School and Pre-School

Blindman's Lane, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire EN8 9DW

## Inspection dates

8–9 March 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher, ably supported by the pre-school and nursery leaders, has focused relentlessly on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The school is now a shining example of early years excellence.
- The headteacher is an outstanding, inspiring leader with profound and extensive knowledge of children's early years development. She leads by example. Staff, governors and parents have complete confidence in the headteacher's leadership.
- Governance is effective. Good strategic planning for the future ensures that the school moves forward continuously.
- The improvement plan does not make clear the link between the actions the school is taking and the impact that they will have on improving outcomes for children.
- Exemplary teamwork underpins the school's success in improving outcomes for children. Everyone at Arlesdene pulls together and plays their part in delivering high-quality care and provision.
- Teaching is outstanding overall and never less than good. Staff collect and record detailed information about every child's learning and development. They use the information exceedingly well to adapt or adjust learning on the spot so that children make as much progress as possible.
- Parents are effusive about the school and especially about the staff. They say that staff consistently go above and beyond requirements to meet the individual needs of their children and to support them in parenting.
- All children, including disadvantaged children, children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, make good or exceptional progress from their starting points.
- Children's attainment in literacy and mathematics is not as strong as in other areas but it is improving strongly.
- When they model writing for children, staff are not consistent in using correct punctuation and grammar.
- Children of all ages make rapid progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They mix well, play happily together and quickly learn, through expert guidance, how to share toys and take turns.
- Children behave beautifully.
- Safety is a priority at Arlesdene. Children learn how to play safely and staff's vigilant supervision ensures that they are safe. Safeguarding arrangements are effective and welfare requirements are met fully.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen the school's strategic plans for improvement by:
  - ensuring that actions show a clear link to the intended difference they will make to children's learning and development
  - separating the duties of the persons leading each action and those responsible for monitoring progress towards achieving it
  - setting milestones at regular intervals when progress towards each action will be reviewed.
- Raise children's attainment in literacy and mathematics, and ensure consistency in correct use of punctuation and grammar in modelling writing for children, labelling resources and writing captions for displays.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- Leadership is inspirational. The leadership team is passionate about early years education and have in-depth knowledge and understanding of how young children learn best. They constantly seek ways to improve provision and are pivotal in creating a warm, caring ethos that positively supports children's learning and development as well as their well-being.
- As a leader of learning, the headteacher looks both inwardly and outwardly in equal measures. She critically evaluates all that the school provides and, in response, adjusts approaches and methods to perfect teaching. Importantly, she listens to staff's and parents' views about what works well and what could be even better. Projects underway in other schools as well as national and international research are carefully considered to see if they could enhance provision further at Arlesdene.
- Staff flourish as teachers and leaders through targeted development opportunities that influence their practice. Staff are supported to develop their knowledge and skills by taking additional qualifications and participating in action research projects. As a consequence, teaching is consistently good and frequently outstanding over time so that all groups of children make very good progress.
- Effective appraisal systems support improvement well. Senior leaders set targets for staff linked to the school's plans for development. The professional training needs of individuals are identified through this thorough and comprehensive process.
- Leaders interrogate information about learning and development extremely well to evaluate children's achievement. The detailed knowledge about every child's progress and attainment in all areas of learning is exceptional. Staff use this knowledge to quickly provide additional support for any children whose development is stalling and they seek advice from external professionals if appropriate.
- Well-considered spending of the early years pupil premium makes a difference to the achievement of disadvantaged children. It is used mainly to increase staffing levels but also to provide children with the additional resources that they need. Last school year, disadvantaged children's achievement was better than that of non-disadvantaged children.
- Curriculum development is excellent. Creative ideas and experiences inspire children and enable them to explore, experiment and make decisions. What makes the curriculum outstanding is the way in which staff take into account children's ideas, interests and preferences, and use these cleverly to design new experiences to excite and engage them.
- Parents and grandparents of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities could not praise leaders more highly for the way in which they have helped them to come to terms with and support their children's needs. One parent commented that 'The level of love, care and education my child has received is outstanding. The entire staff from the office to the headteacher are caring and amazing people.'
- Children are prepared very well for moving on to the next stage of their education from pre-school to nursery and then on to primary school. The school's strong values and

inclusive ethos rub off on the children and promote their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They move forwards as sociable, well-behaved children who gain understanding of equality and diversity rapidly.

- All staff engage parents in their children's learning and include them through a planned partnership. Parents' knowledge of their children and their hopes and aspirations are taken into account fully and used effectively in planning for children's learning. Many parents commented that the school is like 'an extended family', offering them advice, support and encouragement unconditionally, especially when facing life's challenges.
- All staff contribute to the school's effective systems for monitoring and evaluating its performance. Self-evaluation is accurate. Time is allocated for staff to discuss and plan for the future.
- Improvement plans indicate priorities and actions clearly. However, the actions are not linked closely enough to the intended impact they will have on children's learning and development outcomes, or show who is responsible for leading each action.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance is effective.
- Governors put the children's needs first. They know the school well through regular visits, monitor the school's performance effectively and ensure that statutory requirements are met.
- The governing body provides leaders with a balance of support and challenge, and ensures that the headteacher's performance is appraised annually and appropriately.
- Governors have a good understanding of children's achievement and they question leaders if they see any dips in children's achievement. They keep a keen eye on how well disadvantaged children are achieving to ensure that spending of the early years pupil premium achieves good value for money.
- Governors maintain regular contact with parents by attending fundraising and other school events.
- Restructuring the school twice since the previous inspection has been managed very well. Governors did not waver from making difficult decisions when, under the local authority's reorganisation of children's centres, the school was no longer responsible for managing the centre. Governors provided objective thinking for leaders about how the school could balance its budget.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A strong ethos surrounding children's safety and well-being exists within the school community.
- The headteacher and the governing body have created a culture where everyone shares responsibility for safeguarding children and where this aspect of the school's work is of high priority.

- Staff contribute to continuous improvement in safeguarding arrangements through their input, for example in updating the school's form for recording any concerns. All staff demonstrated in-depth understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures during the inspection. Staff know the children so well that they are in a strong position to notice any changes in behaviour or well-being instantly.
- Staff are all trained to the right level to fulfil their duties, including the lead professionals for safeguarding and child protection. Staff receive regular updates ensuring that they know when guidance from the Department for Education changes. All staff are trained in the 'Prevent' duty and know the signs of radicalisation or extremism.
- All staff are vigilant and entirely confident in raising concerns, which are followed up quickly and effectively by the designated leads for safeguarding. There is an overview of each case to ensure that any referrals on to external services are timely.
- Documentation and records, including individual child protection case files, are of high quality. They are kept in chronological order so that important information can be retrieved easily.
- Representatives from the school accompany parents to formal inter-agency meetings and, in particular, help parents to understand professional jargon.
- Staff are all vetted carefully prior to appointment and all of the statutory checks are made to ensure their suitability to work with children.
- All of the statutory welfare and safeguarding requirements for the early years foundation stage are met.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Outstanding**

- The headteacher insists that all adults working directly with children are known as teachers. They all make a valuable contribution to the school's excellent practice in planning and assessment. Every child is assigned to a key person who builds a strong relationship with them to increase their sense of security and well-being.
- A well-planned induction programme for children and parents ensures that teachers are alert to children's diverse needs so that they can plan to meet them as soon as they start pre-school and nursery. These arrangements help children to settle in very quickly and, from this point onwards, teachers begin to gather information about what children know, understand and can do in relation to a typical range of development for each area of learning.
- All teachers contribute to establishing the starting point for each child and recording their ongoing progress in the learning journals (books where staff record this information). They check and double check the accuracy of their judgements and share all of the information with parents at regular intervals. The learning journals are of exceedingly high quality and very popular with parents.
- Key people enter data on to the school's tracking sheets about children's learning and well-being, and leaders ensure that they interpret developmental statements accurately.

- Teachers notice the patterns of behaviour that children repeat when they like the activities, such as joining things together or moving things from place to place. Staff use this information to plan further activities that they will want to try. This approach enables children to thrive because their needs and interests are catered for so well.
- Children’s development in acquiring early reading, writing, talking, listening and mathematical skills is promoted very well through an extensive range of provision, including stories, rhymes and songs, and activities that enable children to make marks, count, wonder and imagine. In their high-quality conversations with children, teachers use descriptive language to introduce new words and deepen thinking.
- Staff achieve a good balance between children making purposeful choices about what they want to try and adults directing what children do so that they learn specific skills well.
- The pre-school and nursery are welcoming and interesting spaces for play indoors and outside in the gardens. Teachers use resources imaginatively and provide plenty of variety to keep learning fresh. Resources are accessible to children and stored at the right level so that they can retrieve them unaided.
- Teachers expect the unexpected and capitalise on it, making the most of unplanned opportunities to broaden children’s experiences. For example, when a child commented that the pasta they were exploring was hard, the teacher immediately cooked it so that the child could see that it became soft and could be eaten. This led to further activities such as cooking pasta dishes and talking about Italy.
- Teachers actively teach children, and show them how, to take turns, share and learn from each other. Staff’s engagement with children is excellent. They join in with children’s play to give them ideas and extend their learning. During the inspection, pre-school children were dancing to music in the garden alongside their teachers. They were making swirling patterns in the air using ribbons on sticks and the enjoyment of children and adults alike was tangible.
- Classrooms are rich in language, with objects, pictures, digital images and examples of children’s work supported with written words and sentences to introduce children to the idea that words have meaning. Sometimes, words and sentences are not displayed with the correct use of punctuation and grammar.
- A strong culture of mutual respect underpins all learning and care.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Outstanding**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Key people know each child and their families extremely well. Strong relationships between staff and children give children the confidence to talk about and share their feelings with an adult if they are anxious or upset. Children’s physical and emotional well-being is supported sensitively.

- The trusting relationships that exist between staff and parents often give them the confidence to share any concerns or anxieties that may affect their children's well-being or safety.
- Children are taught how to use tools, toys and equipment safely, and they do. They learn how to take responsibility to clear up and tidy after themselves so that trip hazards are avoided and potential risks minimised. Children are safety-conscious without being fearful.
- From a very early age, children learn about e-safety through stories such as 'Chicken Clicking', a picture book that introduces young children to safety on the internet. In addition, parents receive guidance and are alerted to safe use of the internet and mobile phones in the home.
- All respondents to Parents View confirmed that their children are safe at school. A typical comment was: 'The staff are amazing and always make sure that their priority is the children's welfare.'

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is outstanding.
- Staff keep all children on their radar throughout each session and quickly step in to help children to resolve any conflict should it arise. In this way, children recover very quickly if they are upset and they gain insight into how their actions can affect others.
- Children learn how to share toys fairly. For example, children use sand timers to measure the length of time allowed for children to have a ride on the very popular rocking horse, which is usually in great demand.
- Children are highly motivated to participate and are willing to make choices and decisions. They join in, make friends and respect each other.
- Children learn about diversity because, through excellent provision, the school actively encourages them to understand each other's differences. Parents appreciate this immensely. One parent commented that they chose the school because they wanted their child to be 'a well-mannered person who values himself and others, knows what he is good at and keeps passionate about it'.
- The school does everything possible to encourage parents to bring their children to school regularly. They follow up absence rigorously, regardless of the fact that children attending pre-school and nursery are of non-statutory school age.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- From lower than typical starting points, children make good progress; the majority make very good progress and current information suggests that 20% are making exceptional progress.
- Last school year, the school successfully diminished the difference between the attainment of disadvantaged children and non-disadvantaged children. The proportion of disadvantaged children that made good progress by the end of Nursery was higher than that of non-disadvantaged children.

- Outcomes in literacy and mathematics are not as strong as they are in other subjects but leaders are addressing this relentlessly through ever-improving provision.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with complex needs, do extremely well because the curriculum is adapted so well for them.
- Children who speak English as an additional language are supported very well through signing, pictures and rich opportunities to develop their language.
- Significant and impressive progress is made by children in communication and language, and in their personal, social and emotional development, often from very low starting points on entry.
- The school gives every child a chance to shine and all of them do extremely well. All children make significant gains in their learning. They all show exceptionally high levels of curiosity, imagination and use all of their senses to explore and solve problems.
- Children move on from the nursery to primary school as happy, confident individuals who enjoy learning new things.

## School details

Unique reference number	117066
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10001346

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rosemary Bloomfield
Headteacher	Catherine Croft
Telephone number	01992 626879
Website	<a href="http://arlesdene.herts.sch.uk">http://arlesdene.herts.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@arlesdene.herts.sch.uk">office@arlesdene.herts.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	15–16 November 2012

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school has undergone restructuring twice since the previous inspection. The attached children' centre is no longer managed by the school. The school previously catered for child care. This has been replaced with pre-school provision.
- Three-hour morning and afternoon sessions are provided in the pre-school and the nursery. Some children stay for a full school day.
- Over half of the children attending the pre-school and nursery are disadvantaged. Two-thirds of children attending pre-school are eligible for two-year-old funding.
- Some children with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities and are supported through education and health care plans.

- This is a multicultural school, with children from a wide range of ethnicities. Around 40% of children speak English as an additional language and 17 languages are represented within the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) has the discretionary power to inspect any school in England under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection began as a one-day, short section 8 inspection undertaken by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI). During the first day, the HMI converted the inspection to a full section 5 inspection. The HMI returned the following day to complete the inspection.
- The headteacher accompanied the HMI to observe teaching and learning in action in the pre-school and the nursery. They observed activities led by teachers and those that children chose for themselves both indoors and outside. Morning and afternoon sessions were seen.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and pre-school and nursery leaders, all staff working in the pre-school and the nursery, members of staff responsible for administration, the chair of the governing body and one other governor.
- The HMI had a telephone conversation with the school's improvement adviser.
- Throughout the two days, the HMI spoke to children informally and many parents. The HMI took into account a wide range of information that the school provides for parents.
- The views of 34 parents who responded to Parent View and 13 members of staff who completed the staff questionnaire were considered.
- The HMI looked at a range of the school's documentation, including policies and record-keeping for safeguarding children.
- The single central record of statutory suitability vetting carried out on all staff, volunteers and governors was checked.
- The school's information about how well it is performing and its plans for future improvements were evaluated.
- Minutes of the governing body's meetings were examined.
- A range of information about past and current children's achievement was evaluated, including information about disadvantaged children and other vulnerable groups.

## Inspection team

Linda Killman, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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