

Inspection of a good school: The Grove Nursery School

Tower Mill Road, London SE15 6BY

Inspection date: 18 April 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff welcome children and their families with open arms and friendly smiles at the start of every session. Children eagerly find and put on their name badges, hang up their coats and have a quick catch up with their key member of staff. From the moment they come through the gate, children are immersed in a highly stimulating and exciting learning environment. The outdoor area is a particular favourite among the children. For example, they have great fun rolling up their sleeves, putting on their wellies and looking for creatures or birdwatching in the various nature areas.

Two-, three- and four-year-old children all get the chance to play and learn alongside each other. These times are used well to support children's social and emotional development. Children build strong and happy friendships. They attend regularly and behave very well. The school's high expectations for children's learning and well-being are realised. Children benefit enormously from everything the school has to offer. When the time comes, older children are very well prepared for the move up to primary school.

Parents and carers are key partners in their children's learning and development. They are regularly invited into school for things like singalongs and reading sessions. Parents are extremely positive about the care and support that their children receive. This all makes the school a much-loved and valued part of the community.

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

The Grove Nursery School is a special place to be. Children and parents like that there is always something exciting or meaningful happening. Staff provide interesting, well-considered learning opportunities which allow children to flourish. It is no surprise to see why children of all ages have so much fun here. They settle in well and play happily with

others. Over time, they soon get to know the places they like best and the toys, resources and the activities that are their favourites.

Staff build on children's interests and are always looking for 'teachable moments' to intervene and extend children's learning. Staff are good at encouraging children to try something new. This builds their confidence and extends children's knowledge across the different areas of learning.

The multi-layered curriculum is well planned and takes into account the things children need to be able to do, in small steps, in each area of learning. One strand of the curriculum is the natural environment. Children are taught how to observe the world around them, including the seasonal changes. For example, children enjoyed watching the footage of the school's night camera to see what the foxes had been up to overnight. Older children completed tally charts when they went on a 'spring bingo' hunt while younger ones worked together to fetch the grass, water and leaves for the school's family of snails. Everyone gets the chance to plant and grow something. Staff are skilled at maximising what children learn and remember from these experiences. For example, staff encouraged counting, number patterns and physical development while children were digging in the garden.

Children demonstrate a love of reading. Younger children become familiar with stories and rhymes and readily recite these in small groups. Older ones are taught to predict and think about the characters in different stories. Children's early writing is developed well. For instance, children were encouraged to write letters in the pretend post office while others made marks and shapes with chalk on the garden wall.

Staff use their expertise well to support children's language and communication. For example, in the sand area, children were busy mixing sand with water to create pies. Staff encouraged older children to think deeply about which jugs would hold the most water while younger children were introduced to words such as 'pour', 'more' and 'full'.

Staff extend children's knowledge effectively as they play. For instance, staff skilfully encouraged children to work together to build a road bridge from wooden blocks. Children persevered and tried out different sizes and shapes until they finally created a bridge which worked. They were pleased to see that their cars could travel across without falling into the 'water' below.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported. The school works closely with parents and other professionals to identify children's needs and get them the help that they need. Children benefit from small group or one-to-one sessions which help to develop their speech and language.

Equality and diversity underpin everything that happens. For example, in a recent project based around the book 'My Hair', children explored different types, sizes and styles of hair. Alongside their parents, they used mirrors to look at the similarities and differences between the different hair styles that exist in the school community. Children demonstrate kindness to others. Staff help children to understand the importance of taking turns. This helps everyone to get along.

Leaders, including governors, have worked effectively to continually improve the school. Staff are very proud to work here and feel well supported in their roles. They appreciate leaders' attention to staff workload and well-being. For example, by streamlining the procedures for checking and recording children's achievements, staff now have more time to interact and play with children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 good in December 2014.

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	100771
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10323256
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	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Robert Weir
Headteacher	Rebecca Sherwood (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.grovenurseryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of a hard federation with another local maintained nursery school. The executive headteacher leads both schools.
- The school makes no use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, assistant headteacher and other senior staff. The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- 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 held discussions about the curriculum, joined children

and staff during learning times and spoke to staff. Inspectors held meetings with members of staff to discuss children’s learning and development.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders and staff; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children’s interests first.
- Inspectors met with parents at drop-off time and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors reviewed the responses to the online staff survey.
- Inspectors visited all parts of the setting to observe the interactions between staff and children during play.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Tom Canning

Ofsted Inspector

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