

Inspection of an outstanding school: Homerton Early Years Centre

Holbrook Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB1 7ST

Inspection date:

15 July 2021

Outcome

Homerton Early Years Centre continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children in this nursery become enthusiastic learners within a vibrant community. From the start of their day, children are ready to learn. Children play together purposefully. The well-equipped outdoor area is a hive of activity. Independently, children explore, and problem-solve in a range of ways. This could be designing a water park in the sandpit, cooking in the mud kitchen or finding their way around the maze of climbing apparatus.

Children take the opportunities they are given to connect with the natural world. They learn to grow, look after and harvest their own vegetables in the school's allotment. Teachers enhance children's learning. For example, children are taught about the lifecycle of a butterfly alongside the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. The excitement of releasing butterflies into the garden is one of the many moments of wonder that children experience at Homerton.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that ensures all children will be ready for full-time school, regardless of their different starting points. The high level of care staff provide means that children are safe, happy and self-assured.

Staff build excellent relationships with parents, who are typically very positive about the school's work. One parent's comment was, typical of many: 'I couldn't recommend Homerton highly enough. It is the most wonderful, happy and caring environment I could have wished for.'

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious, well-structured curriculum that builds children's learning step-by-step. Adults check that children are making strong progress. Staff work

well with parents, carers and other pre-schools to find out what each child needs before they start.

Staff prioritise developing children's language, communication and literacy skills. Staff use songs and rhymes to develop children's language. Staff read stories that help children develop their understanding of the wider world. Adults support children in storytelling by modelling language and sentence structure clearly. Children learn to sequence stories and develop a wide range of vocabulary.

Staff plan activities across all subjects to support children's physical development. The school's music curriculum builds on developing children's strength in their fingers. This includes playing string instruments and bells. Children learn to play safely on a wide range of outdoor equipment.

Staff support the needs of all vulnerable children effectively. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders work closely with health and other agencies when needed and identify quickly any help individuals need. As a result, children and their families get the right support at the right time.

Leaders' systems ensure that behaviour remains excellent. Adults teach children to be kind and respectful towards everyone. They provide children with stories and activities that help them to recognise that everyone is equal. Children learn about different races and religions. They say that 'everyone laughs in the same language'.

All families become part of this thriving school community. A high number of children arrive at the nursery from diverse backgrounds. Leaders work with all families to foster respect and open-mindedness for all cultures. Families enjoy sharing different aspects of their culture with the school community. This includes recipes, festivals and key words and phrases in their own language.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is integral to all learning. Children, including the very youngest, can concentrate for sustained periods. Adults know the children well. They know how to support children if they become anxious or lose focus. This helps them to re-engage in their learning. There are strong systems in place to encourage children to self-manage. This means that the very youngest children learn how to become independent.

All staff share leaders' high aspirations for the children in the community.

In discussion with the headteacher, inspectors agreed that ensuring curriculum plans align more closely with teachers' weekly planning may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding children is a top priority for all staff. There is a culture of care and vigilance. Leaders keep thorough and clear records of incidents, and pass these on appropriately to the child's next provider. Leaders are aware of the local context and respond sensitively regarding risks to children. They ensure that staff are well trained in safeguarding.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in March 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 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school [here](#).

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	110594
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10197311
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	Ken Ong
Headteacher	Alex Pearson
Website	www.homerton.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 May 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Homerton Early Years Centre is a maintained nursery school with provision for two to four-year-old children. Children aged two are taught in the Nest, while children aged between three and four are currently being taught in five classes. Children attend either full or part time.
- The headteacher took up her substantive post in 2017.
- A large proportion of the children are White British. However, some children start school at an early stage of learning English as an additional language and currently 39 home languages are spoken.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors did deep dives in the three prime areas of learning: communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and physical development.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, leaders at all levels and teachers and teaching assistants. They held a separate meeting with the leader with responsibility for SEND.

- The lead inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors visited classrooms and outdoor learning areas and talked with children.
- The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. A separate meeting was held with the governor responsible for SEND.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of school information, including documents on the school website, records of recruitment checks and leaders' improvement plans. They also reviewed the school's curriculum plans.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the morning nursery sessions. They considered 81 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They considered the views of staff during meetings with them and took into account the 32 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Charlie Fordham

Her Majesty's Inspector

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