

# North Islington Nursery School

## Self-Evaluation

September 2022

### Context of the school

North Islington Nursery School is a Local Authority Setting. We are situated in Finsbury park which is inner London and we serve a diverse community in a densely populated area. We are a standalone Nursery School and Children's Centre with 100 children on roll as of October 2021. We are open 49 weeks a year 8am-6pm. The foundations for the school were laid in 1930 and in 2009 we reopened as a Children's Centre. At North Islington, the children come from an ethnically diverse community and many of our children begin life at nursery at the early stages of learning English. One third of our intake is via the boroughs Early Years Priority Referral Team. We are a fully inclusive setting with many children having additional and specific learning and health needs.

We have extended provision for children who attend the nursery. Breakfast, lunch and Tea time is delivered by our core staff throughout the school year. We also operate out of term time provision, again this is delivered by members of our core staff team to ensure continuity for all that use this service.

Our last Section 8 Ofsted Inspection in October 2017 graded us GOOD. The Early Years Register Inspection also in October 2017, graded us GOOD.

The school is part of Bright Start North. Bright Start supports children and their families from pregnancy to age 5. Many of Bright Start services are run from our school and include, midwifery, family support specialists, health visiting teams and stay and play sessions. Adult learning courses are also delivered at the setting such as ESOL.

### School Organisation

The Head Teacher has been in post since May 2017. However, she has taught at the school since 2000 and her specialism is in early year's education. The leadership team comprises of the Head Teacher, School Business Manager, Deputy Head Teacher/SENCO, Early Years Lead Teacher and 3 Education Workers (level 3) who take on the role as room leads. Other staff in the school include: 10 staff qualified to NVQ Level 3, 2 SEND support Workers, 2 apprentice NVQ Level 3 practitioners, 6 Education Support Workers (mix of PT and FT), a Midday Meals Supervisor, a Senior Admin Officer, a Receptionist and a Premises Manager.

The school is divided into 3 main classrooms: Baby Room (**15** babies aged 3 months to 2 years), Toddler Room (**28** toddlers aged 2 years) and Nursery Class (**56** children aged 3-5 years). Children transition between the rooms as they turn 2 and then 3. The nursery class team is led by the Early Years Lead Teacher and our Deputy Head Teacher leads the provision and practise for the Baby and Toddler rooms. The classrooms operate a free flow provision for inside and outside to maximise learning opportunities and to provide opportunities. Our SENCO works alongside our Special Educational Needs Support Workers across the school to organise specific learning for different groups/individual children such as Language Enrichment groups. Sensory Groups and Attention Builders. All children with more than one professional supporting their educational development have a Short Term Plan which details support in place as well as developmentally appropriate targets which are reviewed 6-8 weekly.

The school has a strong governing body with some members having served for many years. Governors take an active role in the running of the school and regularly conduct audits under their delegated areas. Information is fed back to full governing body meetings which then may form part of the school improvement plan.

### Key Points and Progress from Previous Inspection

<i>Leaders and governors should ensure that:</i>	<b>Progress</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Practitioners have consistently high expectations of what children can achieve in writing and mathematics</i></li><li>• <i>Practitioners use skilful questioning to challenge children and help them make even better progress in all areas of learning</i></li><li>• <i>Adults routinely and regularly monitor the progress that children are making when they are playing and learning alone or with classmates.' Section 8 Inspection October 2021</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As room teams, we have addressed how we could ensure a consistent teaching approach to both mark making, writing and mathematics. We discussed how we could use particular teaching strategies to support children's learning in these areas.</li><li>• Our floor books and displays of children's work show how mark making and writing is an integral part of nursery life.</li><li>• Staff have a clear understanding of child development – milestones and support children to have a go and persevere.</li><li>• Opportunities for children to develop mathematical understanding can be clearly seen in all classrooms.</li></ul>

- The staff in the nursery class are currently using an online training tool with Early Excellence to develop their confidence in teaching mathematics and our continued approach to using games as direct teaching experiences is providing staff with an insight to what children already know and understand.
- The setting has done much work to develop our 'teaching' approach to ensure that missed opportunities for teaching are minimal. Staff from different rooms have accessed training relevant to the age/stages of the children they work directly with. For example, the staff in the under threes have accessed training around schemas so that they are skilled in identifying patterns of play and we have recently held a whole school INSET led by Professor Julie Fisher linked to effective interactions and the role of the practitioner.
- As a setting we have strengthened our observation, assessment and planning cycle. All staff are able to contribute towards documenting learning and how their interactions with children impacted on learning. Our work with Julie Fisher has provided staff with tools and strategies to develop effective interactions and to ensure that we are concisely documenting what we have observed and what we have taught so that all staff working with children are aware of what children can already do, what they know and their interests.
- Our early years teacher is working with the under three's rooms to support them in ensuring that information about children is shared in an effective way (communicating and documenting learning) and that this is used to build on for children through direct teaching opportunities and continuous provision.

## School Priorities

### Quality of Education

- *Raising the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that staff are confident and effective in providing **positive** interactions with children that **enhance** their **learning** in an age/stage appropriate way. This learning will not be limited to cognitive understanding/knowledge but will also support a child's social/emotional development. Children will be allowed time to think and respond*
- *To ensure that room leaders and colleagues, accurately identify and put support/interventions into place for those children at risk of not meeting age related expectations by the time that they leave for reception class.*
- *Embed in all three classrooms, our updated observation, assessment and planning cycle so that all staff know what children can do, are interested in and need support or challenge in.*

### Behaviour and attitudes:

- *To reflect, identify and put into practice how staff can support all children to develop executive functioning and self-regulation skills within the classroom environment*

### Personal Development:

- *To ensure that teaching across the school year provides opportunities for all children to explore learning experiences that will enrich their understanding of the world around them*

### Leadership and Management:

- *To work with governors and other stakeholders to ensure financial stability for the forthcoming years*

### Overall Effectiveness:

Self-Evaluation Grade: 1

#### Evidence that's supports this judgement:

- **"Children are lucky to attend North Islington Nursery School which offers exceptionally high quality provision"**  
Early Years Review Report March 2022
- During our most recent inspection it was noted that the school's ethos of 'happy to be here – a place where everyone feels valued' is evident in all aspects of the school's work. It was also noted that, "You (the head teacher) have identified the right priorities to continue the school's journey to outstanding. You and the deputy head teacher are accurate and incisive in making judgements about the quality of teaching and learning. You are able to pinpoint exactly what practitioners need to improve their good teaching skills further."
- Since this inspection we have appointed an experienced early years teacher who leads the nursery class and the team has gone from strength to strength. Their documentation of teaching and learning enables staff to accurately provide challenging learning opportunities for all children. The team collectively know what children's strengths are and where support is required and this is immediately put into place. Since the pandemic we have been able to provide further training for staff and were fortunate to work with Professor Julie Fisher to strengthen our pedagogical understanding of why effective interactions with young children are so important and how we can use interactions as a way of strengthening our ability to use open ended/skilled questioning as a way of ensuring that our teaching impacts positively during child centred learning /play.
- We continue to value our work with other professionals in the wider community and those that work from the setting as part of Bright Start North. Our close working relationships with our link CAMHS and SALT leads enable us to provide the additional support and expertise that children may need. Staff are able to also work with our CAMHS professional to further their knowledge or to develop strategies when working with particular children and families. The setting provides working spaces for the health visiting team, midwifery, family support services and adult learning. These services are vital to our local community and we are fortunate enough to have these services on our doorstep. This close partnership working allows families to be signposted to relevant support networks in a timely way and the fact that we all work together ensures that families trust and feel secure when working with a variety of professionals. Our work with family support workers also ensure that families are provided with the right support to improve outcomes for children and to keep families safe. At least 25% of the children who attend the school have at one time accessed early help support.
- Safeguarding at this school is a strength. Our most recent inspection report states, "The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school."

### Quality of Education:

Self-Evaluation Grade: 1

#### Evidence that's supports this judgement:

- **"Staff are extremely knowledgeable about child development and use what they know about children to offer a wide range of stimulating, interesting, exploratory experiences. The quality of the learning environment including outside is generally exceptional and its role as the 3<sup>rd</sup> teacher extremely well considered"** Early Years Review Report March 2022
- Over the last 2 years we have, as a staff team, re looked at our values and our approach to teaching and learning a to consider and pull together, what our setting offers children in terms of a broad, stimulating and ambitious curriculum. Our curriculum links to all that we do and provide for children from the moment that we offer them a place at the school, to the moment that they leave.
- Our school offers a well-planned and stimulating environment for children to learn in. Staff tune into children's interests to ensure that the learning opportunities reflect what they enjoy doing and observations document what children are able to do. Together with this information, staff collectively think about the appropriate ways that the learning environment can be enhanced and teaching opportunities maximised to ensure that children remain on track to achieve expected/better progress.
- We have processes in place to ensure that staff are clear about children's starting points and that they are able to access the learning environment and its activities in an inclusive way. Any adaptations are thought about and put into place before a child starts at the setting.
- Progress checks at the age of 2 and termly summative assessments support staff in keeping track of children's progress which is also shared with parents/carers.

- The local authority have approached the school to join the register of good practice for our outdoor learning environment.
- Children that are not making expected progress and/or those identified with additional needs are supported by skilled practitioners. The setting provides language enrichment groups and Attention Builder groups to enable children to make progress in their listening and attention skills and their communication and language skills. Intensive interaction work with individual children also support children to make relationships with staff. Our staff team are supported by an experienced SENCO who ensure that staff have access to relevant training and the support of other professionals such as SALT, our link Clinical Psychologist and the school's Educational Psychologist.
- Practitioners are routinely observed by the leadership team to ensure that they are confident in the delivery of our agreed curriculum and that their teaching is effective in ensuring children make good progress in their learning. Peer coaching enables staff to be self-reflective on their own practice and to consider areas for improvement which is closely linked to the settings school improvement plan and CPD.
- It is our intention to always be reflective and to evaluate the impact of our teaching on outcomes for children. Every term, the classrooms will evaluate the curriculum offer and think about how it was implemented and what the impact was. This then feeds into priorities for learning for individual and groups of children. This evaluation also highlights where there may be a need for coaching, mentoring or training.
- Pupil premium budget is spent on appointing an artist who works closely with children to enable them to develop their PSED and communication and language skills through art activities. These wonderful art activities also provide opportunities for children to develop effective characteristics of learning.
- Our seasonal and cultural approach to teaching and learning ensures that children are exposed to learning experiences that they may not self-initiate or have prior knowledge of. We aim to take children to new places and have hands experiences with the natural world as much as possible. Celebrating the diversity of our school community also provides teaching opportunities for children to learn about the world around them and that of their friends and other people's families. The school works closely with the local authority who are able to provide free outings and visits as part of 11 by 11.
- Despite some children not attending the setting for several months because of COVID, the level of attainment of the children in the nursery class in summer 2021 showed that all children had made good or better progress from their starting points. The overall attainment for children achieving expected levels of development was as follows:

Summer leavers 2021 % children achieving Expected Level of Development													
PSED	88.5%	CL	85.7%	PD	88.5%	L	80%	MD	88.5%	UOW	88.5%	EAD	85.7%

Summer leavers 2022 % children achieving Expected Level of Development													
PSED	84%	CL	87%	PD	94%	L	90%	MD	90%	UOW	90%	EAD	94%

## Behaviour and Attitudes:

### Self-Evaluation Grade: 1

#### Evidence that's supports this judgement:

- ***“Children demonstrate strong characteristics of effective learning, displaying high levels of well being and involvement in activities. They show independence and confidence when exploring their environment and playing together. A strong key person system is evident, there are respectful, warm and caring relationships between children and adults”*** Early Years Review Report March 2022.
- The setting's approach to teaching and learning enables children to flourish. We promote independence and autonomy and believe that children learn best when they are in charge of their own learning. Skilled practitioners play alongside children to ensure that they are not only developing key skills, knowledge and attitudes in all 7 areas of learning but we prioritise our vision and aims which reflect the characteristic of effective learning. We want children to be inquisitive, be willing to have a go, to explore and be creative and we believe that they do this best in a well-planned and resourced environment where they have time to return to activities that they love and to repeat and refine newly developing skills. Resources are selected to provide challenge and to enable children to imagine, discover, creative with and be inspired.
- Our in the moment approach to teaching allows children the time and space required to have a go and persevere. Children are not rushed and frustrations are managed calmly.
- Our positive approach to behaviour management begins with thinking about the environment. We ensure that classrooms are neutrally decorated and are not too colourful as this can cause over stimulation. Our child to adult ratios aim for a plus one in every classroom. This enables some flexibility when children require additional support/1:1 time. The layout and resources in the learning spaces are well planned and thought out. There is sufficient space for children to play alone and in small groups and each classroom has a quiet/reflective space for when needed.
- The setting has adopted a positive behaviour management policy. We reviewed this policy in February 2022 after INSET liked to supporting children's emotional development and self regulation skills.

- Older children at the setting are confident in managing turn taking through the use of sand timers and creating lists. We encourage all children to use the Makaton sign for 'more', 'wait' and 'next'.
- Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and attitudes but these expectations are also closely linked to child development. Staff understand children's stages of emotional development and are keen to allow time and reflection for children to calm down when needed. We know that behaviour is a form of communication and staff take time to listen to and observe children before making assumptions as to how they feel.
- Our parent handbook explains our approach to behaviour management and parents/carers are consulted in any updates to our behaviour management policy.
- Books are used as talking points to explore emotions and issues such as bullying, being kind and discrimination. Our vision is that all children feel included and valued and we ensure that we take as much time as needed to listen to children and encourage them to have a voice.
- Although attendance at the school is not statutory parents/carers are informed that attendance and punctuality at school is important and sets a good example for later in life. We operate a first day calling system for absence children and absences are recorded. Where staff have a concern about a particular child's absence, we will meet with the parent/carer to discuss any issues that there may be and where relevant we notify other professionals that may be working with the family.
- Attendance figures are shared at each governing body meeting and highlighted in our monthly newsletters.

## Personal Development:

### Self-Evaluation Grade: 1

#### Evidence that's supports this judgement:

- Our approach to teaching and learning ensures that focus is paid to children as individuals. We take note of their individual interests and fascinations, their heritage and home life experiences and develop learning opportunities which reflect what makes each child unique.
- Achievements are celebrated through displays and each child has their own profile book/learning journey which we take time to share with them and reflect upon to boost self-esteem and confidence.
- Some children have tailored short term plans to ensure that their needs are being met and that they continue to make good or better progress. Joint work with other professionals is also a key factor in the school ensuring that all children have the opportunity to make the best progress possible in their learning and overall development.
- Parents/carers with children who have additional needs will often request a PELSSEND place for their child at the setting. We are held in high regard for our inclusivity and provision for children with additional needs. Our places for children with additional needs are always full.
- Our positive behaviour management policy closely reflects the values that will enable our children to achieve in a modern British society. Our children's voices are valued and we model respectful behaviour and democracy through every day learning opportunities. We encourage children to make positive choices and encourage them to share their preferences and ideas.
- Our kind coats and donations of hygiene products ensure that those families who are struggling financially, are discreetly supported. Parents/carers are encouraged to take a winter coat for their child if needed and hygiene products are available for those that need them.
- ***"The high standard of provision greets you at the front door where 'Kind Coats' are available for families to borrow, take or donate. There are also signs for the 'Hygiene Trolley' which is available in the bathroom so families can access hygiene products in a discreet way."*** Early years Review Report March 2022
- The setting has been awarded a bronze certificate for Healthy Schools and we continue to work on this award to achieve the next steps.
- Oral hygiene is promoted through stories and demonstrations together with information shared via our newsletters and posters. Oral hygiene products are given freely to parents/carers where required.
- Cooking activities with children promote healthy eating and are closely linked to fresh and seasonal produce. Children will often prepare soups during the winter months with vegetables grown in the garden and we will make fruit salads during summer months.
- Our seasonal and cultural approach to teaching and learning is described in our curriculum. We use not only our wonderful gardens as a way for children finding out about the world around them but we also use visits and outings as a way of enriching children's lives and knowledge about the world, arts and culture. Despite the recent pandemic and not being able to take children on trips, we have ensured that hands on learning experiences were still taking place at the setting by; inviting in a visiting zoo, celebrating Black History Month with an African drummer, hosting a theatre production and observing the life cycle of a butterfly first hand.

## Leadership and Management:

### Self-Evaluation Grade: 1

#### Evidence that's supports this judgement:

- The leadership team at the setting has been established for several years and works hard to ensure that the school continues to be self-reflective and proactive in securing the best outcomes for children.
- The staff and governors have worked collaboratively to establish and uphold our shared vision and values. Collectively we set relevant and challenging targets for the school improvement plan to raise standards in our care and education of children.
- The staff team are encouraged to be reflective and will spend time to determine what the impact has been on children's learning and development on a termly basis. This information, together with staff teaching observations and the moderating of practitioner's records of children's learning, will create a picture for our priorities in teaching and learning and may also feed into performance management targets and CPD.
- Leaders are supportive of all staff and provide opportunities for mentoring and coaching. We also provide time for staff to engage in peer coaching (videoing of own interactions with children) to reflect on and improve practice.
- 2 staff members are completing their NVQ Level 3 qualification in education and childcare through the apprenticeship scheme.
- Supervisions provide forums for staff to celebrate success and to request support. Supervisions are also used for leaders to check in on staff's well-being and mental health. Work-life balance is considered and wherever possible, leaders will do what they can to ensure that the workplace is a healthy place for everyone to be in.
- The setting was proud to be able to offer support to a local Nursery School whilst their head teacher was on leave via shared headship of both schools. This partnership has continued and as two settings we are working closely to implement the changes to the EYFS and our SENCO is supporting their newly appointed SENCO.
- As a setting we work hard to try and ensure that parents are fully engaged in school life and their children's learning. The pandemic aside, the school is proud to hold events where parents come into the setting to join in activities alongside their children. We were and aim to reinstate Fun Fridays which we held monthly. Fun Fridays would often be centred round cultural or seasonal events or we would focus on a particular area of learning to demonstrate to parents how their children learn in this area whilst at the setting and how they can support and extend this learning at home. The setting also hosts weekend social events and we have just re booked our visiting farm for Easter 2022.
- Our governing body is very committed and keen to be part of moving the school to outstanding. Governors have identified roles and will come into school to conduct visits which they then feedback to the FGB. Members of the governing body work in collaboration with the Local Authority to ensure that the school is financially stable and to also check quality assurance and to set the targets for the head teacher.
- Monthly budget monitoring enables governors and other stakeholders to be clear about how our budget is being spent and to audit best value for money and to check that money spent is ensuring that children are given the best start to their education. With financial support from the LA we were able to set a balanced budget for year 21/22 and we are working on a plan for reducing our expenditure for year 22/23 without compromising on the quality of care and education that the school delivers.