
Taken from Ofsted inspections of Schools in Gloucestershire - Autumn Term 2017-2018

The statements are ordered under general themes and some statements could go under more than one heading.

Leadership and Management - staff development, supervision, self-evaluation, staff deployment

- The leader of the early years has built a strong teaching team, where teachers and additional adults contribute effectively together to improve children's learning. For example, accurate observation and assessment mean that they know and understand children's needs well, and this allows them to match activities strongly to children's learning needs. Teaching is good across the early years.
- Staff have received extra training in the teaching of phonics over the past year. This is having a positive effect, but improved teaching has not yet been in place long enough to develop the children's phonic skills fully. Even so, the teacher and teaching assistant liaise well with parents and are strongly encouraging them to look at and read books with their children at home. Consequently, children are enjoying books and developing their reading skills more rapidly this year than at times in the past.
- The leader for early years has been in post since September 2016. She is unrelenting in her drive for excellence. She carefully analyses information on what children can and cannot do to ensure that planned provision effectively meets their needs. For example, she has quickly identified that language and communication are an area that needs improvement. However, the changes she is making are in their early stages of development and are not yet fully embedded.
- The lead for early years is passionate about her role. She has a secure knowledge of early years and is focused on driving through improvements. There is a culture of high expectations in terms of learning and behaviour. Children learn and play together well, displaying empathy and strong social skills. Children are keen to help one another and adults in the classroom.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective, and welfare requirements in the early years are fully met.
- Good leadership and management have created a staff team that works well together. Staff receive appropriate training so that they support children's learning effectively. The leader keeps the learning environment under constant review to ensure that it continues to stimulate and excite children's curiosity.
- The headteacher and teacher of the combined Reception and Years 1 and 2 class work well together to provide effective leadership of the early years. Leaders have built well on the school's effective provision, in particular to enrich outdoor learning experiences for the children.
- The early years leader has accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses in the early years provision. High-quality plans are in place to ensure that current children in the Reception classes make consistently good progress have all the skills they need to successfully move into Year 1.
- The professional development of staff is well planned. Adults working in the early years are well supported in improving their teaching.
- Funding for the pupil premium grant is allocated to support children's emotional and learning needs. However, too few of these children meet a good level of development.
- Safety and welfare are given good emphasis. Staff supervise children well at all times. Children are encouraged to take responsibility and develop independence, for example in putting their own straws in their milk cartons and clearing up after snack time.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development within the early years. Regular checks on children's learning ensure that planned activities build on what children can do, know and understand. Consequently, children in the early years get off to a good start and most make good progress overall.

- Adults in the early years are well deployed and explain tasks clearly and carefully, checking that children understand what to do. This encourages children to listen and follow instructions, which guides their learning.
- Additional adults are well deployed to support children who need extra help. They make good use of praise and encouragement, which motivates children to remain focused.

Routines/Independence/Behaviour

- Parents spoken to during the inspection are very positive about the transition to 'big school'. Enabling children to start full time more quickly this year is paying dividends. The children have settled to routines well, showing independence and increasing levels of concentration.
- Children behave well and demonstrate that they feel safe. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that movement between lessons and activities is calm and orderly. They care for the children well. Staff establish clear routines so that children know what to expect. Children listen carefully to adults' instructions and behave sensibly as they explore and learn. They enjoy a stimulating outdoor area with equipment to inspire their learning.
- Children in the early years show positive attitudes to learning. They behave very well such as when demonstrating independence selecting from a range of learning activities. Children know the routines and follow them. For example, children know that the five-minute 'tidy up' bell means that they need to start to draw their activity to a close. Consequently, transition times are brisk and learning time is not lost. They are keen to learn, and to share their enjoyment with one another and with the adults who help them.
- The positive behaviour of children and their strong relationships with the adults around them demonstrate the confidence and safety they feel at school. Their parents agree, feeling strongly that their children are safe, happy and well looked after at school. Safeguarding is effective.
- The Reception teacher has established routines that children know and understand. Consequently, children are ready to learn and are fully attentive. They make good progress in phonics and apply this to early writing skills such as letter formation. Pupils with low starting points make good progress and most children achieve a good level of development. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children willingly initiate their own learning. Teachers and teaching assistants provide strong support. Movement from one activity to another is calm and orderly. Staff care for the children well.
- The behaviour of children is good. They respond well to instructions from adults, who have high expectations of them. Children are keen to learn and have quickly acquired positive learning behaviours.
- The children particularly enjoy 'mini Mii time' which enables them to select and choose activities on offer. This helps them to build independence and develop their concentration.
- Children are happy and confident to come to school. Clear routines and structures are already well established because adults support children effectively to build their independence and confidence. Consequently, children behave well and enjoy school.
- Adults develop sensitive and caring relationships with children, which help children to feel secure. Adults have high expectations and model the behaviour they expect. As a result, children behave well and enjoy making friends with others

Observation, Assessment and Planning

- Leaders work closely with other schools to share ideas for good practice and develop their use of assessment. However, teachers' assessment of what children can do is not precise enough. As a result, leaders have an inaccurate view of children's strengths and weaknesses. This limits how effectively teachers can plan children's next steps of learning.
- Teachers' careful planning creates interesting starting points for children to explore their learning. The many indoor and outdoor learning opportunities they receive enthuse them, and enable them to develop their language, coordination, cooperation and collaboration skills very well.

- Children are provided with well-planned activities and engaging resources which help them to develop skills across different areas. They enjoy developing their communication skills through stories and songs and use their phonic knowledge to spell words.
- Good assessment ensures that children's needs are identified quickly and that teachers take the necessary action to ensure that children make good progress. Leaders recognise the importance of sustaining good teaching so that children consistently reach the highest standards they are capable of. As a result, they are implementing a new form of assessment to sharpen their understanding of how well children are achieving across all areas of learning.
- In recent years, the teacher has also strengthened the way she measures children's progress. For example, she keeps detailed records of children's developing skills in 'Learning Journeys' and in other books. Staff use these well to keep parents informed and ensure that teaching and support provide the next steps in learning that secure the children's rapid progress.
- The teacher's accurate assessments also ensure that all children, including those with most ability and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. Checks of children's understanding also enable leaders to ensure that teaching is well targeted. As a result, disadvantaged children progress as well as their classmates.

Teaching and Learning

- Children who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported, so that they make good progress from their different starting points. Teachers' and other adults' skilful questioning and support mean that these children are encouraged to develop their knowledge and apply the skills they are learning.
- Adults support disadvantaged children well so that they make similar progress towards the early learning goals to that of their peers. Current disadvantaged children are making good progress. Over time, the proportion of disadvantaged children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception has risen so that it is above the national average.
- Adults' expectations in Reception are not uniformly high. They do not give enough priority to developing children's speaking skills. Teaching does not support some children in consolidating and practising their talking. As a result, while children's progress in writing is often rapid, their competence in speaking is more variable.
- Children's progress in the early years has been variable. As a result, too few children have reached a good level of development at the end of the early years. Consequently, children are not adequately prepared to make the transition into Year 1.
- Teaching is not yet good. This is because learning is not always appropriately matched to children's capabilities. At times it also hinders pupils from developing and securing skills across a wide range of areas of learning. Consequently, children do not make sufficiently strong progress.
- Children are keen to learn and they settle to tasks with the minimum of fuss. However, adults' questions and interventions in learning do not consistently help children to make strong progress. This means that children are not fully supported to achieve what they are capable of.
- Teachers and other adults frequently choose learning activities for pupils rather than letting them make their own choices. This limits children's ability to explore the learning environment and find things out for themselves.
- Teaching nurtures, engages and motivates children and promotes their sense of achievement. Children enjoy learning and they are encouraged to make choices and decisions.
- Teaching ensures that children understand the link between their phonics learning and writing skills. As children learn new sounds in phonics, they immediately practise letter formation in a variety of ways to improve early writing skills. Pupils with low starting points make good, and in some cases rapid, progress towards the early learning goals.
- Most children are ready for Year 1 because they achieve a good level of development. Where children do not achieve a good level of development, teachers ensure that important gaps in their learning are quickly filled, especially in phonics.

- Children's progress is carefully monitored. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has increased over time and is now in line with national averages. Given that many children start school at a level which is typical for their age, a greater proportion should achieve a good level of development.
- Children enter the early years with a wide range of skills and attributes, generally broadly typical for their age. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception is consistently above the national average and is continuing to improve over time. The experiences they receive in Reception mean that children are well prepared for the learning they will meet in Year 1 due to the experiences they receive in Reception.
- Strong teaching of phonics means that children use their phonic skills well in their early reading and writing tasks, for example when writing simple sentences. The good teaching they receive in phonics contributes significantly to the above-average number of pupils reaching the threshold of the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1.
- Boys and girls generally reach a good level of development at the end of Reception in similar proportions. However, in 2017, fewer boys than girls achieved well. In response to this, the early years leader worked closely with Year 1 teachers to develop a transitional provision for these pupils which has been effective in enabling them to catch up quickly and access the learning they need in Year 1.
- Good teaching ensures that a high proportion of children reach expected standards at the end of the early years and this has improved over time. Children are therefore well prepared to make the transition into Year 1.
- The skills, particularly in reading, writing and number, of children starting in the early years provision vary in each cohort. Careful analysis by the early years leader shows a year-on-year drop in the skills that children have as they enter the school.
- The teaching of letter formation and early writing is regular and systematic. Children enjoy these sessions and show high levels of enthusiasm and interest when they learn their letters.
- Teaching in the early years is good. The breadth of curriculum is appropriate. Children experience a wide range of activities both inside and outside. They enjoy the activities on offer and show high levels of independence. For example, during 'challenge maths' children explored a variety of practical number activities outdoors to deepen their understanding of counting and finding the sum of two objects.
- The teaching and development of the children's personal, physical and creative skills are particular strengths of the setting. For example, practical learning experiences in the school's refurbished outdoor facilities and visits to a nature area in the village are enthusing and engaging the children.
- Pupils experience a successful transition from Reception into Year 1. Pastoral care is also effective at this point. However, the system in place to ensure a smooth transition in pupils' academic achievement is not as good as it could be. Teachers in key stage 1 are not provided with all the information they need to plan work that builds firmly on pupils' prior achievement. As a result, some of the most able children have not sustained their high attainment in writing into Year 1. In addition, for a few children, though specific targeted support and teaching has been provided in the summer term, learning has been too fragile. So, academic standards have not been fully sustained in writing when moving to Year 1.
- Children experience a wide range of activities to extend their speaking, listening, writing and numeracy skills effectively. For example, during the inspection children were observed talking together during sand and water play and counting how many laps they were completing on their tricycles.
- Teachers make learning interesting to capture children's attention. For example, teachers were effective in developing children's mental arithmetic skills during a game of hopscotch.
- Children benefit from well-planned teaching in phonics, which underpins early reading skills effectively. Children's achievement is monitored closely and teaching is adjusted to increase progress. Over the past year, teachers have introduced a range of new activities to increase boys' interest in writing to good effect.
- Leaders regularly check on children's progress and use this information to plan learning that meets the needs of disadvantaged children well, particularly in their personal development. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have their needs identified at an early stage. The school works well with other agencies to ensure that their needs are met effectively, for example in developing their speech and language.

Environment

- The early years is a supportive environment which ensures children's safety and welfare while developing their social skills effectively. Parents are supportive and appreciative of children's smooth transition to the Reception classes.
- The early years is a welcoming and engaging environment and offers exciting activities for children. The 'space station' and cosy book corner invite children to explore their understanding of the world and develop a love of reading.
- The early years is well resourced. Children benefit from stimulating and inviting learning environments, both indoors and outside. The Reception class is warm and welcoming.

Outdoor Learning

- Outdoor learning is underdeveloped. Assessments of children's learning outdoors are not as precise as inside. Adults capture what children are doing, but adult interactions do not help deepen their learning consistently well.
- Staff are also using these stimulating outdoor activities well to boost children's communication, social and physical skills. For example, during the inspection, children were observed working together mixing elderberry and blackberry juice and helping each other to make leaf prints.

Partnership

- Leaders liaise well with pre-school providers and parents and this helps to ensure that children are well supported when they start school. Parents are very positive about the way that the school supports their children and comment that this helps them to settle well. Parents enjoy receiving regular communication from teachers, allowing them to celebrate their children's achievements and support their learning at home.
- Parents contribute to the assessment of their child's learning through regular meetings with staff and opportunities to contribute online. Parents speak highly of the warm, welcoming and inclusive transition their children make into Reception, and the close communication they have with the early years staff about their child's learning. This includes the well-attended regular learning workshops for parents.
- Adults in the early years form close working partnerships with parents, which help them to share and celebrate children's achievements. Parents fully appreciate the support that adults provide and comment favourably on how well their children have settled into the early years.
- Children are integrated well into the setting and arrangements for starting school and for moving to Year 1 are good. Parents are encouraged to get involved with the school from the beginning of their children's time at the school.
- Parents warmly welcome systems for sharing what their children have been learning at school. The online system enables parents to contribute to their children's significant learning moments. A number of parents commented that they value this system and the effective communication between home and school that they experience.
- Staff liaise well with parents and pre-schools to secure the children's smooth entry into school. The teacher and teaching assistant work well as a team to ensure that statutory welfare requirements are fully met and children are kept safe. Staff set clear expectations that children should relate caringly toward each other. As a result, children show self-confidence and behave well.