



**Self-evaluation for**  
**Guildford Nursery School (GNS)**  
 Unique Reference Number 133731  
 DfE Number 936/1009

|                 |   |   |  |
|-----------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Our aims</b> | <b>GNS – where everyone can flourish</b>  |   |  |
|                 | To inspire our children, parents, community and staff to be the best they can be. | To enable all children, parents and staff to love learning. | To empower all children, parents and staff to make progress and achieve. |

## Context

### **Introduction:**

Guildford Nursery School and Family Centre (GNSFC) is an inclusive, maintained nursery school based in Guildford, Surrey, operating across two sites at York Road and Hazel Avenue. The organisation provides early years education for children aged 2-5 and operates two Early Years registered settings for babies and children under the age of 2, alongside integrated Family Centre services that support families with children up to the age of 18 (or 25 for those young people with additional needs). The organisation is distinguished by its Froebelian approach: a unique educational philosophy that views children as capable, autonomous learners who flourish through play, self-activity, and a close connection to nature.

Guildford Nursery School (GNS) serves 140-170 children aged 2-5 years depending on the time of year, along with 15 babies and children aged under 2 years in our two EY registered settings. Our provision is characterised by significantly higher than average numbers of children with SEND (typically 30+% vs 6.4% nationally in EY settings and 15.5% in state funded schools); children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (22+%); and multilingual learners (50+% vs 21.2% nationally). Of the two sites: one is a large ex-primary school with a huge mature garden within a national 20% most deprived LSOA. (English Indices of Deprivation 2025). The other is a Victorian building with a walled garden and is in the town centre (York Road).

### **Children and families:**

- 97.5% of children are funded to attend through either working parent (52.5%) or universal (39%) or low-income for two-year-olds (6%) funding. 2.5% of children (4) are fee-paying because their families have no recourse to public funds.
- Only 30% of children deemed 'disadvantaged' attend for 30 hours, the remainder attend 15 hours weekly. 70% of those deemed 'disadvantaged' are on the SEND register.
- 10% of all children on roll pay for additional sessions outside of the funded hours.

### **Staff:**

- Our retention of staff is very strong; for instance, from the year 24-25, only three staff members are not currently working at GNS (one relocated to Ireland, two are on maternity leave). Despite this, 27% of all nursery-based staff started working at GNS since September 2025. We have needed to recruit more staff due to the increase in children attending all day, the opening of two baby rooms and the level of support needs of those children on the SEND register.

- Since the last Ofsted inspection (Nov. 21) we have had three external reviews of teaching and learning plus one visit from the local authority. These have supported our ongoing self-evaluation and drive for excellence.
- GNS has an extensive professional development offer including formal qualifications which results in a highly qualified team.

**Our wider role:**

- GNS delivers workshops, seminars, training courses, and visits for practitioners, settings and schools locally and beyond. For instance, since September 2025, 50+ practitioners have visited, we have delivered four webinars reaching over 100 delegates nationwide and presented at one conference.
- We are the Surrey commissioned lead provider for Early Help in Guildford borough, supporting 100+ families through our team of Family Support Workers.

| SAFEGUARDING EVALUATION SUMMARY     |   |                 |                   |                 |             |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Safeguarding                        | NOT MET   |                 |                   | MET             |             |
|                                     |   |                 |                   | ✓               |             |
| CURRENT EVALUATION SUMMARY          |   |                 |                   |                 |             |
|                                     | URGENT IMPROVEMENT  | NEEDS ATTENTION | EXPECTED STANDARD | STRONG STANDARD | EXCEPTIONAL |
| Inclusion                           |   |                 |                   | ✓               |             |
| Curriculum and Teaching             |   |                 |                   | ✓               |             |
| Achievement                         |   |                 |                   | ✓               |             |
| Attendance and Behaviour            |   |                 |                   | ✓               |             |
| Personal Development and Well-being |   |                 |                   | ✓               |             |
| Leadership and Governance           |   |                 |                   | ✓               |             |
| PRIORITIES                          |   |                 |                   |                 |             |
| 1                                   | To recruit, retain and continuously develop high performing staff to ensure every child, family and staff member has the opportunity to flourish. |                 |                   |                 |             |
| 2                                   | To embed a culture which champions the diversity of the community we serve so that everyone feels they belong and is able to flourish.            |                 |                   |                 |             |
| 3                                   | To ensure that every child has the best opportunity to flourish in life.  |                 |                   |                 |             |

## Progress since previous inspection

### Areas to improve:

Leaders have not made the distinction between pedagogy and content clear enough in their curriculum thinking. This means that sometimes staff revert to talking about how children are learning, rather than what they are learning and how they can develop children's knowledge and understanding. Leaders should make sure that all staff are consistently as focused on the intended and actual learning as they are on the enjoyment of activities. (Nov. 21)

### Impact since Nov. 21

- *A review of the curriculum document shows that there are clear learning intentions and developmental pathways are clearly identified for the children, both within the seven areas of learning and the Froebelian occupations.* (External review, Oct. 25)
- *There is an extensively planned and well thought out curriculum for both the inside and outside areas.*
- *The Leadership team have thought extremely carefully about the progression across all areas of the curriculum with a strong focus on developing children's language and communication. In addition to curriculum guidance for the 7 areas, there is also extensive guidance for block play, clay, cooking, gardening, nature kindergarten, weaving, sewing and woodwork.* (Note of visit from local authority advisor, July 25)
- 100% of parents state that the nursery school's educational curriculum is good (Parent survey, June 2024)
- *The curriculum has been developed to give an effective balance of guidance and support for practitioners and children, alongside developing children's independence in the seven areas of learning from the EYFS as well as Froebelian occupations. As a result, staff have a clear understanding of what they expect children to learn and understand in each area of provision.* (External review, Nov. 23)
- *"The leadership have worked with the staff team to develop a guidance document that outlines the aims, vision and commitment to delivering the curriculum. It clearly outlines the sequences for the seven areas of learning and the Occupations. This document has had a significant impact on both the confidence, and staff knowledge and understanding when planning curriculum sequences."* (School Advisor report, May 23)
- *"Planning is effective and all areas of the EYFS are covered. We particularly liked the use of the white board where children's interests were listed under curriculum areas. The planning that goes into providing this early education for the children is complex and multi-faceted. The philosophy of Fredrich Froebel has been adopted as a golden thread to support your approach to pedagogy. Each of Froebel's occupations is carefully matched to the seven areas of learning (EYFS 2021) to ensure that the educational programmes are securely covered. There are detailed plans for core books which involve considerate elements of pre-teaching. This builds a foundation of knowledge and understanding which the children can then readily apply as they work on three core books a term."* (External review, May 22)

### Next steps by July 2026

- Give meeting time for teams of staff to plan for intentional teaching and learning.
- Teachers to provide a bank of short-term plans for each area of learning.
- Staff to identify the progress the children are making towards the curriculum ambitions in the individual learning journeys and in termly meetings with the SENCo/Assistant HT.
- Ensure the curriculum document highlights core vocabulary to support children's learning.
- Teachers to plan with other key people to support planning process.
- Vocabulary lists to be added to curriculum document.
- All staff to be able to articulate why they are doing what they are doing, why now and what next.

## Safeguarding is met

*“The safeguarding culture at Guildford Nursery School and Family Centre is exceptional and represents one of the strongest safeguarding cultures observed by Cornerstone Safeguarding. Staff at all levels consistently demonstrate their contribution to creating a safe, healthy, and supportive environment.”* (External audit, Jan. 26)

### **Leadership of safeguarding, including establishing an open and positive safeguarding culture:**

- The culture of safeguarding is one of all knowing that ‘it could happen here’.
- All team meetings start with sharing of any safeguarding matters to ensure all relevant staff are aware.
- All staff within all teams use CPOMS (an online system) to record any and every concern which means that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs can see the whole picture.
- Training is effective resulting in all staff understanding that, if in doubt, record and alert.
- There is a thorough understanding of the continuum of support meaning timely and appropriate referrals are made.
- There is effective communication between all staff and all DSLs. The results are that staff commonly seek advice, share practice, give and receive supervision, monitor and audit cases and receive feedback from the monitoring of cases.
- Sharing of information with other agencies is always timely and fulsome with staff understanding that even small pieces of information will support the bigger picture.
- Early Help support is support provided by the school. It is given to children and families who have additional needs above that of all families but less need than 1:1 whole family targeted support. Early Help can include:
  - Additional support from the key person.
  - Additional support from the SENCo/designated teacher.
  - Referral to another agency such as Homestart.
  - Signposting to groups such as SENDsory play or a parenting course.
  - An advice session with the family centre team.
- The very well-established key person approach ensures a triangle of trust exists between key person, parent and child. Each child and parent know they have someone safe to talk to in their key person. Key persons are attuned to each of their children and notice when children show through their behaviour that something is not right.
- The child’s key person, who knows the child and family best, attends all case conferences, core group and Team around the Family (TAF) meetings which means the child’s voice is centre stage.
- Training and regular reminders and checks ensure that all staff know how to make an allegation of both a serious nature and a low-level concern.
- Records are kept of all referrals to the LADO, DBS and all low-level concerns.

### **Strengths**

- The governors ratify the policy each year; the governor with responsibility for safeguarding carries out a thorough audit each term; and each governor at every visit checks at least one member of staff's knowledge of safeguarding. These actions ensure that the governing body has a sound knowledge of the effectiveness of safeguarding within GNSFC.

**Safeguarding information for all staff to know and act on:**

- Thorough and regular training ensures that all staff understand their role in keeping children safe.
- All staff and governors sign to state that they have read and understood the appropriate parts of the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE). A quiz checks understanding and any gaps in understanding are addressed immediately.
- An online Single Central Register (SCR) alerts leaders when an employee or governor needs to update their safeguarding training.
- The Headteacher (DDSL) and Family Centre Service Manager (DSL) attend every DSL network meeting each term to ensure their knowledge is completely up to date.
- The weekly staff newsletter provides safeguarding updates in bite-sized chunks and reinforces information to ensure a constant awareness and ever-increasing knowledge.
- Nursery staff and DDSLs benefit from the knowledge and expertise held by the family centre team and DSL.

**Management of safeguarding:**

- DSLs (all members of the senior leadership team) meet twice every term to support one and other and to improve their knowledge.
- DSLs write management oversight onto CPOMS when reviewing cases at DSL meetings.
- Time is prioritised to ensure staff can be effective in their roles.
- DSLs ensure that best practice is maintained and areas for development are acted upon immediately through termly audits carried out by the safeguarding governor, external checks and internal audits.

**Safer recruitment:**

- At least one member of all interview panels has up-to-date safer recruitment training.
- The online SCR shows that all checks are completed for all staff and all other adults.

**Child-on-child violence:**

- Our staff are trained to spot the signs that a child is, or may be experiencing, child-on-child abuse and how to report it. They maintain an attitude that 'it could happen here'.
- Our staff challenge any inappropriate behaviour between children, including the use of derogatory language.
- The nurture and relationships (behaviour) policy, which includes our whole school response to abuse, makes sure everyone knows how to behave and how to respond consistently when children show unacceptable or abusive behaviour.
- In all areas of school life, we teach children how to act and to treat other people, including when they are online.

| <b>Safeguarding</b>   |   | <b>Impact of actions:</b>  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Actions from previous year:</b>  |   |  |
| Develop an attendance policy that reflects our procedures in order that families know how we support improved attendance for children whose attendance is of concern. |   | Attendance policy written, ratified by governors and published on website. |
| <b>Areas for development</b>  | To ensure that each staff member understands that they have an individual as well as a team responsibility for maintaining the security of the site including cyber-security.   |  |
| <b>Progress made:<br/>Autumn term</b>   | Monitoring has shown that there is a greater understanding amongst all staff that each of us has a responsibility to maintain the security of the site.<br>A card entry system at Hazel Avenue has increased site safety for all.<br>The introduction of MFA has improved our cyber security. |  |
| <b>Progress made:<br/>Spring Term</b>   | All staff have updated their annual training in cyber security, online safety, Prevent and GDPR.  |  |
| <b>Progress made:<br/>Summer Term</b>   |   |  |

## Inclusion - Strong

Our ethos is rooted in celebrating each child as an individual, in line with Froebelian principles of seeing children as whole, autonomous learners. We focus on understanding where every child is in their developmental journey and meeting them with respect and curiosity. Through observation we build a picture of children's strengths, interests, and any areas where they may benefit from additional support.

### **Identifying, assessing and meeting needs and reducing barriers:**

- Our SENCo is the assistant headteacher, giving them sufficient authority within the leadership structure to make a positive difference for pupils with SEND and ensure transformational impact on every child.
- We prioritise early and accurate assessment of children's needs through our robust observation and assessment systems, allowing staff to identify support needs quickly and make appropriate reasonable adjustments.
- Our recently developed continuum of educational support needs ensures all staff understand what provision is required to reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing for each child.
- Key People know their children exceptionally well enabling them to ensure each child makes excellent progress from their individual starting points.
- The assistant headteacher meets termly with each key person to monitor the progress of each child and to ensure the support is having the intended impact.
- All staff receive high-quality training and support from induction onwards to implement a graduated approach constantly developing their skills to provide the right support at the right time.
- We work effectively with external specialists to ensure coordinated, effective and timely support is provided for the child and their family.
- Additional funding, including EY pupil premium, is very effectively deployed to ensure barriers to development and learning are significantly reduced and to ensure each child achieves very well.
- Parents are nurtured from their very first encounter with Guildford Nursery School (GNS) admissions; they quickly know that GNS is a safe place.

### **Strengths**

### **Supporting disadvantaged children, children with SEND and those who are known (or previously known) to social care:**

- Parents are hugely positive about the support they and their children receive. (Parent survey, Feb. 25)
- The flexibility of staff and their responsiveness to children's support needs are a real strength of our setting. Relationships are warm, caring and respectful, as a result children thrive and enjoy a rich and stimulating learning experience.
- Our highly personalised ambitious curriculum; key person approach; observation, assessment and planning cycle are very effective in ensuring that each child, regardless of any barriers they may face, achieves well and enjoys a high level of wellbeing.

| <b>Inclusion</b><br><b>Actions from previous year:</b>   | <b>Impact of actions:</b>  |
|--|--|
| Establish an annual assessment system that is manageable for staff and provides accurate information that leads to timely support. | We have a system in place that celebrates each child, that considers well-being as well as development and learning.<br>Our continuum of educational support ensures staff know how to ensure each day is a good day.<br>Developmental milestones ensure staff know when to seek additional support.   |
| <b>Areas for development</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop nurture spaces to encourage self-regulation and create a calming atmosphere.</li> <li>• Ensure all staff use Makaton all the time.</li> <li>• Consider the 'love languages' of each child who faces barriers and use them to support their learning and well-being.</li> <li>• Continue the work undertaken on inclusion to ensure that, where possible, interventions do not remove children from the provision so their sense of belonging within the school community develops fully.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Progress made:</b><br><b>Autumn term</b>  | Some love languages are embedded and being supported - for some other children we are still discovering what their love language is.<br>Experienced staff are supporting newer, less experienced staff to learn and use the 12 core Makaton signs.<br>Calming areas have been created.<br>SENCo is gradually persuading external therapists not to remove children but to work with the children within the nursery.   |
| <b>Progress made:</b><br><b>Spring Term</b>  | Some children now recognise when they need to go to a calming area or may choose the sensory room or to engage in an experience that they know helps them feel calm, such as woodwork.<br><br>At Hazel Avenue a nurture room has been developed and staffed by suitably qualified adults in response to the support needs of the cohort aged 3-4 years. This provision is proving to be very effective in supporting children's ability to self-regulate and therefore develop and learn.  |
| <b>Progress made:</b><br><b>Summer Term</b>  |  |

## Curriculum and teaching - Strong

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Strengths</b> | <p><b>Strategic leadership of curriculum and teaching:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Systematic monitoring and evaluation of curriculum and teaching by external reviewers (every 18 months), governors (termly) and senior leaders provide a comprehensive understanding of the quality and areas for development.</li><li>• Teachers effectively use their expertise to model, coach, and teach all staff to ensure that the curriculum is delivered very well indeed.</li><li>• Our curriculum is built around a relational pedagogy formed from in-depth knowledge of children and families. This enables staff to ensure their teaching is appropriately matched to each child's stage of development.</li><li>• Our curriculum is very ambitious for every child. Staff ensure children receive additional support if required so that all children have success and feel successful in their learning and development and are ready for the next stage in their life.</li><li>• Effective communication between adults ensures that there is consistency for each child.</li><li>• All staff have detailed knowledge of the children and can talk about their learning and developmental needs with confidence.</li><li>• The nursery environment has been thoughtfully designed for optimum learning needs. The light, bright, airy spaces are accessible, the space is purposefully resourced. There are plenty of natural resources, giving children purposeful experiences with real objects.</li></ul> <p><b>Securing strong foundations for all pupils:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Our curriculum focuses heavily on the Prime areas whilst ensuring children benefit from stories, rhymes, singing, foundations of phonics and appropriate Maths activities.</li><li>• The outdoors features heavily in our curriculum. Our research, supported by academic studies, shows that children communicate more in terms of both quantity and quality when they are outdoors. The outdoors also encourages physical play on a larger scale and is thus crucial to developing the physical skills and abilities needed for later learning particularly reading and writing.</li><li>• We believe that humans learn language as we use it, that we learn through language and that we learn best about language when there is a real purpose to the learning. Therefore, we provide each learner with exciting opportunities and experiences that motivate them to communicate and give them something to communicate about.</li><li>• Constant high-quality interactions between adults and children ensure that the children develop and expand their vocabulary and knowledge.</li><li>• Makaton is used with spoken language to enhance both understanding and children's ability to communicate their needs.</li><li>• A sequenced core book and rhyme approach to early reading supports all children to achieve early success and satisfaction. This approach that involves music and repetition helps children to learn English more quickly. It enables pre-verbal children to join in with the actions and accompanying Makaton.</li><li>• Our aim that children develop positive attitudes and interest in mathematics is realised through children having plentiful opportunities with an adult to subitise, count, spot patterns, explore size etc. We provide this through meaningful play, stories and rhymes, and educationally worthwhile adult-led and adult-supported small group work.</li><li>• Staff understand that noticing comes before counting and that subitising makes sense to young children.</li></ul> |
|------------------|---|

**School and subject curriculum:**

- Curriculum guidance has been written for the seven areas of learning of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This includes what we want children to learn (curriculum ambitions), and the sequence of knowledge and skills (pathway to success) children need to achieve those curriculum ambitions. The guidance supports Key People to plan, deliver and assess intentional teaching.
- There is an overview for each term of the year that shows when the following will happen: core books and rhymes, foundations of phonics learning, planned events/visits, specific experiences, and involvement of parents. The overview ensures that nothing is left out.
- Planning at all levels is consistent ensuring that every child receives the same curriculum experiences that are adapted to meet each child's specific needs.

**Teaching:**

- Staff play with children and in doing so teach children the necessary personal, social and emotional skills they need to succeed in life.
- Children are taught prosocial behaviours from the beginning.
- Children's communication, language and literacy is promoted effectively through high-quality adult interactions and planned activities.
- Small adult-directed and adult-led group times are effective in supporting and extending learning.
- Staff understand the importance of developing children's independence skills. Children have a good balance of adult-directed, adult-led, child-led and child-initiated learning. Staff are skilled at knowing when to direct or lead or support children and when to allow children to play uninterrupted.
- "The Froebelian principle of "Freedom with guidance" is deeply embedded in practice and children are encouraged and supported to make choices about how they learn, with staff planning well-resourced and enticing environments which stimulate children's interests." (External review, Oct. 25)
- Resources and opportunities offered to the children are carefully thought out and planned. This results in high levels of engagement amongst all children.
- The systematic and consistent use of visuals, objects of reference, and Makaton for all children and especially those with additional support needs, enhances and promotes children's ability to communicate.
- Intensive interactions support and improve children's listening, attention, understanding and speaking.
- The photos and learning stories within each child's learning journey enable every child to communicate about their learning and progress and make the learning and development visible for both parent and child.
- A freedom with guidance approach to physical development results in children showing good control in both large and small movements appropriate for their stage of development and necessary for later writing.
- Staff model and talk through with children how to manage risk. This means that the children are more confident and competent to manage risk safely.
- Staff know that the following are all early literacy: communication, a love of stories, pretend narratives, singing, rhyming, painting and drawing.

- Reading and a love of books is fostered through our continuous provision, our core stories and rhymes approach, key group times and rich language constantly modelled by staff.
- Frequent and meaningful opportunities to use maths means that children have a confident, have-a-go, can-do attitude.
- Our Froebelian principled approach ensures consistency of pedagogy for all children.
- The flexibility of staff and their responsiveness to children's needs are a strength of the setting. Children thrive and enjoy a rich and stimulating learning experience during their time at the school.

**Inclusive curriculum and teaching:**

- Assessment, moderation meetings and cohort reviews highlight which children might not be making expected progress and targeted support is provided to ensure progress is accelerated.
- Specially trained staff are effectively deployed to support children with additional needs and ensure that these children make accelerated progress.
- All staff are trained to provide the right support at the right time.
- The stimulating continuous provision provides a wealth of opportunities for development and learning.
- Links with parents are strong. The value of home visits is recognised and evidenced in children's learning journeys. Arrival and pick up times are relaxed and create easy times for conversing about what children have been doing during their nursery time.
- Staff know children exceptionally well, and as a result they respond sensitively to children's emerging needs. The team can talk in depth about children's interests and fascinations and are able to identify when children need additional support to sustain their attention, and when to allow children to play independently.
- Staff understand the phases of language acquisition especially for those learning English as an additional language. They do not expect a child to respond verbally if that child is still working within the 'silent phase', they appreciate the importance of 'intent participation'.

| Curriculum and teaching<br>Actions from previous year:   | Impact of actions:   |
|--|--|
| <p>Further develop and embed music within the curriculum by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sharing rhymes that support diversity, equality and inclusion</li> <li>- Sharing the value of songs and rhymes with parents and staff</li> <li>- Ensuring all staff share songs and rhymes daily with children.</li> </ul> | <p>Songs, rhymes and singing feature daily for every child.</p>  |
| <p><b>Areas for development</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that practical, real-life experiences such as cooking, weaving and sewing, gardening etc. are provided daily and accelerate learning for those who need it most.</li> <li>• To ensure that every member of staff can confidently explain what they are doing, why now and what next.</li> <li>• Consider and discuss the use of group/gathering time, what will happen for children who are not ready to gather and who will support them in their play?</li> <li>• Reflect on snack provision and consider how this could be further developed, depending on children's particular needs now.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Progress made:<br/>Autumn term</b></p>   | <p>There is a timetable and a rota ensuring that practical, first-hand experiences are offered daily.</p> <p>Staff are becoming more confident in being able to say why they are doing this, why now and what next. Experienced staff are supporting less experienced staff. There are many staff who are new to the nursery school so this is taking time.</p> <p>Adult support at snack time has been reviewed and amended to ensure greater opportunities for children to learn more especially with regards to maths and communication.</p>  |
| <p><b>Progress made:<br/>Spring Term</b></p>   | <p>Room leaders have reflected with their teams and tweaked when group times are happening, to best meet the needs of the children. The few children who are not ready to come to group time are supported in the garden or in a small group.</p>  |
| <p><b>Progress made:<br/>Summer Term</b></p>   |  |

## Achievement - Strong

### Strengths

#### Foundational knowledge:

- All children are observed learning through play with skilful adult guidance to ensure they achieve well.
- There is much meaningful praise and encouragement provided, which affirms children and ensures they feel valued and understood.
- Learning walks show children demonstrating very high levels of engagement and concentration for their stage of development and age.
- Sensitive co-regulation and emotion coaching with attuned adults results in children increasingly being able to self-regulate.
- Children are curious, motivated, keen to join in and are supported to develop their unique dispositions for learning.
- Carefully planned and thought-out experiences that are just beyond a child's current capabilities mean that each child is enabled, encouraged and supported to develop perseverance and resilience; to do and know more.
- The systematic teaching of skills means that children can do more and know more. This is evident in the learning journeys.
- Children consistently learn new vocabulary and/or Makaton signs which enables them to communicate effectively.
- Working with clay, weaving and sewing, woodwork, cooking all promote the development of the physical skills needed for writing which results in children leaving with the necessary skills for legible and fluent handwriting.
- Children leave GNS knowing by heart many rhymes and songs which support them to access the later literacy curriculum.
- The strong culture of reading results in children being able to 'read' the core books when they move onto their reception classes.
- The encouragement given to children to notice and the teaching to subitise results in a deep understanding and sense of number.

#### Inclusive achievement:

- Individual and bespoke teaching ensures that every child achieves extremely well.
- Staff know each child's support needs and adapt their provision and teaching accordingly to ensure that every child achieves very well.
- They proactively seek out children who engage less readily.
- Every child leaves GNS with the necessary support and paperwork in place ready for the next stage of their education.

| <b>Achievement</b><br><b>Actions from previous year:</b>  | <b>Impact of actions:</b>  |
|---|--|
| Develop a greater understanding of the development of children's play and how adults can support and expand children's learning and development through play. | The curriculum now includes a section on the layers of play which supports staff to better understand the play they observe and how to support and expand this.  |
| <b>Areas for development</b>  | Model, teach and monitor intensive interactions especially for new staff to ensure exceptional achievement for every child.  |
| <b>Progress made:</b><br><b>Autumn term</b>   | All staff received specific training on intensive interactions in Nov. More will be given in Feb.<br>Monitoring shows that intensive interactions happen particularly through routine care, play, sharing of stories. The focus now is on developing staff confidence to use songs more to support and promote intensive interactions. |
| <b>Progress made:</b><br><b>Spring Term</b>   | Monitoring indicates that the less experienced staff are becoming increasingly adept at intensive interactions.<br>Teams have developed a bank of songs to help children with transitions, routines and first-hand experiences.  |
| <b>Progress made:</b><br><b>Summer Term</b>   |  |

## Attendance and behaviour- Strong

*"The staff are wonderful and lovely to my child, very nurturing and calm."* (Parent survey, Feb. 2025)

### Strengths

#### **Strategic leadership of attendance and behaviour:**

- A comprehensive policy on nurture and relationships (behaviour) supports a consistent, developmentally appropriate approach.
- A clear policy for attendance effectively communicates our expectations for and to all.
- The behaviour and attitudes of all staff are calm, kind, respectful and utterly professional and this results in high levels of wellbeing amongst the children.

#### **Attendance:**

- High expectations for attendance are effectively communicated with parents from home visits onwards.
- Attendance is closely monitored and parents of all absent children who have not provided a reason for the absence are called on the first day of absence; this has led to better reporting from parents and ensures close monitoring of vulnerable children.
- Key People raise concerns with senior leaders and the parents as soon as there is even the slightest concern about attendance.
- Persistent absence is always raised with parents and support provided to ensure improvement.
- Termly attendance data, including the individual data for those children with a social worker and previously with a social worker, is reviewed and evaluated by governors. All children with and previously with a social worker have attendance higher than 95% this academic year.
- Attendance is currently 96.2% excluding children who are persistently absent. Overall, it is currently 87%.

#### **Behaviour including bullying:**

- Respectful and responsive relationships are given the highest importance and status. Staff recognise and respond to children's emotions, interests, experiences and needs in a timely and appropriately developmental way.
- The consistent approach to nurturing children means that they learn to have respect for each other and resources.
- Children are effectively helped by adults to transition using visuals, objects of reference, trusted adults, time.
- Adults observe and listen carefully so can give children what they tell/show them they need.
- Observations and knowledge of the Leuven scales help staff identify which children are engaged and involved and which need more support.

#### **Attitudes to learning:**

- From open days to home visits, weekly newsletters for parents and the key person approach; families are made aware of and supported to build positive attitudes to learning.
- Restorative approaches such as emotion coaching are used to support behaviour and attitudes.
- Specially chosen books help children to identify and name their feelings and thus become emotionally literate.

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|  | <p><b>Inclusive approaches to attendance and behaviour:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reasonable adjustments are always made in consultation with the family to ensure every child can achieve very well.</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

| <b>Attendance and behaviour<br/>Actions from previous year:</b>  | <b>Impact of actions:</b>   |
|--|---|
| Provide professional development opportunities so that staff can use the Leuven scales of well-being and involvement as assessment tools that will support well-being, development and learning for every child. | Staff use their knowledge of the Leuven scales to assess children and to then adapt the provision and practice so that every child can flourish.  |
| <b>Areas for development</b>   | Review lunchtime now that most children are full-time. Ensure it is a calm, nurturing time for all children.  |
| <b>Progress made:<br/>Autumn term</b>  | Various strategies have been trialled at lunch time, some with greater success than others. The transition to lunch and actual lunchtimes are becoming calmer for all children and staff but more work is needed to embed this.   |
| <b>Progress made:<br/>Spring Term</b>  | Lunchtime is now a positive occasion for almost all children. Work continues to ensure it is positive for every child.<br><br>One senior teacher is studying lunchtime as the subject of her master's dissertation and the school will adopt her recommendations once her research is complete. |
| <b>Progress made:<br/>Summer Term</b>  |   |

## Personal development and well-being – Strong

### Strengths

Our vision is that everyone feels they belong; they are accepted and valued for who they are, just as they are.

#### **Strategic leadership of personal development and well-being:**

- Clear policies and procedures effectively ensure every child's personal development and well-being are promoted.
- Enhancements are provided through the core offer of continuous provision ensuring that all children have access to a wide set of cultural capital experiences beyond that which one would reasonably expect them to get elsewhere. Children who face barriers to their learning and/or well-being are provided with additional or extra opportunities to reduce the effects of these barriers.
- Our curriculum offer is broad and includes cooking, gardening, woodwork, nature kindergarten, weaving and sewing, working with clay, exploring their environment in and out. As a result, children demonstrate high levels of well-being, engagement, motivation and therefore development and learning.

#### **The personal development programme including pastoral support:**

- A very well-established key person approach supports all children to form secure attachments and ensures that children's welfare, well-being and independence are high.
- Relationships between adults and children are warm, responsive, sensitive, calm yet stimulating.
- Adults know the children very well indeed; they know what excites them, what calms them, how they learn, what they like and dislike.
- The provision feels calm and welcoming. Positive, loving and nurturing interactions from all the staff to all the children are always observed.
- Children are taught how to manage risk and keep themselves safe, e.g. when climbing, playing in water.
- Routines such as toileting and eating are opportunities to connect further with each child and to promote independence when appropriate.
- Awe and wonder are promoted through celebrating the different faiths and customs within our diverse community, with children and families leading on those celebrations and sharing with others.
- British values are interwoven throughout the curriculum by giving children opportunities to be heard, make decisions and choices, learn about each other's cultures and, through understanding boundaries and guidance, they become cooperative and respectful.

#### **Inclusive personal development and well-being:**

- Family photos give children the opportunity to notice and talk about similarities and differences within and beyond their group. The photos reflect the diversity within GNS.
- Staff are very aware of unconscious bias and the need to challenge this.
- Staff understand the need for equity and therefore provide the right support to each child at the right time.
- The systematic and consistent use of visuals, objects of reference, and Makaton for all children and especially those with additional support needs, enhances hugely children's ability to communicate their feelings of belonging and inclusion.

| <b>Personal development and well-being</b>   |   | <b>Impact of actions:</b>   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Actions from previous year:</b>   |   |   |
| Audit books and resources to ensure that every child can see themselves and their heritage in books and resources. |   | The audit showed that there are not enough books with main characters from the global majority. Further research suggests that these books do not exist, so staff are making them to represent the children in their group/class. |
| <b>Areas for development</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To continue to ensure that every child can see themselves as a main character in at least one book.</li> <li>• To ensure that there is a doll that looks like each child and/or has the same family circumstances.</li> <li>• Make sure family photos have parents' names on the back so that staff can always use their correct first names.</li> <li>• Create communication boards to support children to make choices.</li> </ul> |   |
| <b>Progress made:<br/>Autumn term</b>  | ALD boards have been created for every class for first-hand experiences, snack time, core books.<br>Names of parents are on backs of family photos.   |   |
| <b>Progress made:<br/>Spring Term</b>  | <p>Whilst we are continuously increasing the visibility of and access to books and resources that represent every child in every group, this is a piece of development work that will never be finished.</p> <p>New dolls have been purchased to represent children in this year's cohort.</p>  |   |
| <b>Progress made:<br/>Summer Term</b>  |   |   |

## Leadership and governance – Strong

*"This is a great place to work. The constant awareness of all staff and the culture of the organisation is about providing the best for the children whilst supporting the staff to achieve this aim with a realistic awareness of workload."* (Staff survey 2024)

### Strengths

#### **Strategic leadership:**

- The staff responsibilities document ensures that everyone is very clear about the expectations of their role and they provide a very high-level quality of education.
- Staff feel empowered and trusted within a collegiate culture. (The GNSFC culture survey, 2024)
- A robust recruitment process followed by thorough induction, support, supervision and performance management processes have resulted in a highly skilled and committed workforce.
- A rigorous, carefully thought-out recruitment procedure limits unconscious bias as much as possible.
- The website is checked for compliance regularly by senior leaders, governors and an external reviewer.
- All statutory policies are up to date.
- Our Froebelian approach gives us a shared vision, values and language.
- Practice-led research with the support of researchers results in continuous quality improvement of teaching and learning.
- Staff delivering training to other settings and schools has increased staff confidence, knowledge and ability to articulate our practice and pedagogy.
- The level of adult engagement is consistently high which results in high levels of wellbeing and involvement amongst the children which in turn leads to deep-level learning.
- Our increasingly strong reputation within and beyond the local area means we have been able to recruit staff of excellent calibre.

#### **Governance:**

- Governors provide very effective support and challenge for all staff and especially for members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Governors provide effective and confident strategic direction for the school through policy ratification, monitoring of the Development Plan and co-creating the vision for the school.
- They are very knowledgeable about what is happening on the ground due to their regular visits and meetings with staff at every level and from every team.
- During frequent visits and meetings, governors test out staff knowledge and understanding about safeguarding, whistle-blowing, financial probity.
- Governors carry out a termly safeguarding audit and meet with staff to consider their wellbeing termly.

**Staff well-being and workload:**

*"I enjoy my work. And I do feel the staff are like a family. I am very lucky to love what I do in a beautiful setting."*

*"I feel professionally happy; the feelings of the children and adults seem to reflect each others."*

- The agreed three behaviours (We will be consistently kind, honest and reflective) have a very positive impact on all interactions within GNSFC. "I feel this is now more consistent within the team and the use of the words kind, honest and reflective have supported us if needing to prompt people in a gentle way in conversation." (Staff survey, 24)
- Referrals to occupational health are always timely and appropriate.
- A clear wellbeing strategy ensures everyone knows their entitlements and responsibilities.
- December 2025, 80% of staff rated their opportunity to flourish at work as 'High', 20% as 'Medium', 0% as 'low'. In March 2026, 86% of staff rated their opportunity to flourish as 'High'.

Staff surveys (2023 and 2024) found that morale amongst staff is high:

- 100% of staff enjoy their work
- 100% of staff reported that there was someone who cared about them as a person at work
- 96% of staff reported that they have opportunities to learn and develop at work and opportunities to be listened to.
- All staff report that they feel valued and safe at work.
- 92% report that they can manage their workload most of the time.

**Professional learning and expertise:**

- Every member of staff has effective performance management, reflective practice discussions and check-ins with their line manager enabling each to be the best they can be. 100% of staff reported that they know what is expected of them at work; that there is someone who encourages their development; that they know what the school is trying to achieve; and that they are valued (Staff Survey 2024).
- Each line manager ensures that their staff have access to the training needed for them to do their job well.
- A well-planned professional learning programme that includes formal qualifications results in a very well qualified and expert staff team who are forever developing and learning.
- Line managers have training in the use of coaching skills to empower their staff and build resilience. The use of coaching has resulted in all staff being increasingly solution focused.
- Mentors effectively support and guide new and less experienced staff.
- Our understanding of diversity, equality, equity and inclusion is continually increasing. This is due to extensive professional dialogue, outside speakers offering different lived experiences, updates in the weekly staff newsletter, and staff training.

- Practice-led research is very effective professional development. Educators are constantly learning through reflecting and professionally discussing what they have observed, what they have done. They seek, with guidance, to better understand both the children and themselves. This results in continuous quality improvement of teaching and learning.

**Parental, professional and community engagement:**

- Twice termly come and play sessions as well as termly parent meetings, initial home visits, learning journeys, regular communication from the key person ensures parents are well-informed about their child's development and learning.
- Community events such as the annual Saturday Froebel Festival (315 visitors May 2025) have supported a cohesive community spirit.
- We use translation apps and interpreters to enhance understanding.
- Our website is available in nine languages, which are the ones most spoken by our families.
- The Key Person Approach is well-embedded and provides an effective triangle of trust between key person, family and child.
- Our home learning section on the website is comprehensive and widely accessed, e.g. one rhyme video was viewed over 4K times. How to do Makaton videos are especially valued by families and professionals from other settings.
- In the last 4 years over 350 professionals from other schools and settings have visited to learn from our practice and provision.
- We have devised and recorded online training sessions that any professional may access: [Training available with the Froebel Partnership](#)
- We set up the South-East maintained nursery school group and now benefit from termly visits and professional learning opportunities.

| <b>Leadership and governance</b>   |  | <b>Impact of actions:</b>   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Actions from previous year:</b>   |  |   |
| Fund one day a term WFH for all key people and 3 hours weekly of PPA to promote a better work/life blend and increased well-being. |  | Staff have welcomed this increase in PPA time and the opportunity to work from home for a day a term. |
| <b>Areas for development</b>   | Use our Reflection with Guidance tool to reflect on children/practice/environment at every opportunity such as inset days, team meetings, staff meetings.  |   |
| <b>Progress made:<br/>Autumn term</b>  | We use our Reflection with Guidance toolkit every 3 weeks during our staff meetings. This is enabling staff to reflect on their practice and to engage in professional reflective dialogue with colleagues. This is leading to continuous quality improvement of both practice and provision at an individual and team level.  |   |
| <b>Progress made:<br/>Spring Term</b>  | Educators are using the reflections and observations from the Reflection with Guidance toolkit to implement changes e.g. reflecting on lunchtime provision for teams, focusing on individual children with additional needs<br><br>We have shared our Reflection with Guidance toolkit with educators in Edinburgh, Birmingham, Aberdeen, Sheffield, London this academic year.<br><br><a href="#">Toolkit   The Froebel Partnership</a> |   |
| <b>Progress made:<br/>Summer Term</b>  |  |   |