

Early Years in School Award

Greenfields Nursery School and Children's Centre

Southall



Greenfields has a real passion and commitment to linking creative projects to real-life issues

– judge

Central to the success of Greenfields Nursery School and Children's Centre in Southall is its creative curriculum that gives children the power to play with ideas and develop projects on an ambitious scale – such as creating an enormous whale and building a raft. Critical too is the team's willingness to engage with the children's families and the wider community.

Greenfields is situated in the London Borough of Ealing and ranked within the top 20 per cent most-deprived wards nationally. Deprivation, overcrowded housing, immigration issues, high unemployment rates and poor language development mean children enter the setting with very low starting points. During their time at the setting, however, they make outstanding

progress and the majority leave working at or above expectation.

The school's creative projects stem from the children's interests and experiences. One child seeing beached whales on the news inspired a whale project, while a raft-building project came about when another child saw a photograph of a refugee boat capsizing in the Mediterranean. Throughout the projects, practitioners and resident artists challenge the children to create large works with new materials, while considering questions of mathematics and physics and exploring a set of art practices.

Children are involved at all levels of the creative process, in which open discussion of ideas, shared problem-solving and teamwork are central. The adults acknowledge the children's skills and passions and make clear

that they value children's contributions. 'The quality of the enabling environment and the thoughtful, creative and inviting experiences on offer feed children's play and exploration and active learning,' says early years consultant Di Chilvers.

For more than a decade, the school's innovative approach to learning has resulted in high-profile public representation of children's work, through exhibitions at national and international museums and galleries. These have included the V&A Museum of Childhood and Horniman Museum in London.

Its 'Ecofish' project was presented as a case study at the World Conference on Arts Education in Seoul, South Korea, while its 'Shelter from the Storm' project was shown at the Fukushima Fine Art Biennale in Japan following the tsunami in 2011.

Last year, Greenfields developed a permanent public site for a Children's Sculpture Garden along the banks of the Grand Union Canal through a creative partnership with local organisations.



HIGHLY COMMENDED Grove House Nursery School and Children's Centre, Southall

'To say we see the nursery as an extension of our home is not far from the truth,' says one parent at Grove House Nursery School and Children's Centre (GHCC) in Southall. Judged Outstanding in all six Ofsted inspections over the past ten years, GHCC is a flagship setting committed to meeting the needs of every child and working in close partnership with parents – work that was recognised last year when it won the Ealing Family School Partnership Award.

GHCC's interest and investment in its families enable children – growing up in one of the most deprived communities in England – to thrive, develop resilience and make outstanding progress. All children are seen as competent life-long learners and are supported to follow their interests, explore, and engage in sustained shared thinking. Excellent leadership, reflective professional dialogue and rigorous self-evaluation mean GHCC is constantly trying to improve and innovate – most recently through a Learning Stories project that captures significant moments in a child's life.

FINALIST

Bedworth Heath Nursery School,
Bedworth

CRITERION

For Early Years Foundation Stage or equivalent provision in nursery schools and primary schools which have developed high-quality practice for nursery and Reception children