

Inspection of Ashfield Nursery School

97-101 Elswick Road, Elswick, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE4 6JR

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 June 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a strong sense of community in this diverse and inclusive school. Staff build positive relationships with children and their families. Children enjoy coming to school. They are happy and safe here. This is reflected in their enthusiasm for learning. During the inspection, children were keen to show inspectors what they had been doing. For example, one child proudly showed a painting he had done of his teacher, while others wanted to share the writing they had produced.

The school has high expectations for children's achievement. Ambition is evident for all children and many achieve well. They make clear progress between playgroup and the end of Nursery. The school is working to further strengthen the curriculum in some areas. This is helping to increase the ambition of the curriculum further and ensure that staff build on children's existing experiences more effectively.

Personal, social and emotional development is a strength of the school. Children behave very well. They understand the routines and expectations that are in place. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour. Children play cooperatively together. They actively share resources and show respect for each other. Children can sustain concentration at activities for long periods of time. They show perseverance and resilience when they are unable to do something the first time.

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

Children benefit from a broad curriculum that is coherently planned and sequenced in all areas of learning. The school has recently introduced 'milestones' which set out skills and knowledge that children must learn. These are helping to personalise the curriculum. They match the needs of the children and build on their existing experiences. Staff from across the federation work together to make improvements to the curriculum. For example, they are currently working on reviewing the curriculum for expressive arts and design.

The curriculum is not always taught as leaders intend. There is variation in the quality of the interactions between adults and children. Staff do not consistently use what they have learned from training in practice. While the interactions between adults and children are positive, sometimes they do not have the impact on children's language and learning that is necessary for children to achieve highly.

The school uses carefully chosen books to support learning. For example, some books are chosen because they include rhyme or repetition. Others are chosen for their themes, such as diversity. The use of these books helps to foster an early love of reading. Children frequently choose to look at books in the setting, both inside and outside. For example, one child was enjoying counting the fruit in the book 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar', while another was pretending to read a story to a friend in role as a teacher. Adults encourage children to listen to the initial sounds in words and to join in with songs and rhymes. Doing this helps to prepare children for formal phonics teaching when they start Reception.

Since the last inspection, the school has worked to improve the provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There is a determination to secure the support that these children need so that it is in place when they start primary education. While children with SEND are settled and happy in the school, the support plans that they have are not precise enough. This means that they do not achieve as well as they potentially could.

The school offers children some experiences beyond the academic curriculum. They have regular sessions with an external music teacher. These give children an early understanding of pitch and rhythm, as well as some knowledge of musical instruments. The extensive gardens offer a wealth of opportunities to develop citizenship skills, such as litter picking and planting. Children take part in charity events. The school considers how to teach children about fundamental British values and the protected characteristics at an age-appropriate level. For example, the school uses stories that show families with different structures.

Leaders have a clear vision for the school. Those responsible for governance offer challenge to leaders and understand their statutory duties. Staff are committed to the school. They speak positively about working here and appreciate the sense of comradery that exists.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is variation in the quality of the implementation of the curriculum. Sometimes adults miss opportunities to extend children's language and learning, despite having been trained in how to do this. This means that children receive an uneven quality of education. The school should regularly check the quality of the provision to ensure that all staff implement the training they have received.
- The support plans for children with SEND are not sufficiently precise. Targets are too broad and are hard to measure. Consequently, they remain on plans for long periods of time and children do not achieve as well as they could. The school should work to refine support plans so that targets are precise, measurable and achievable.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	108427
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10322956
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Darren Kidger
Headteacher	Anne Humble and Kay Mills (Co-headteachers)
Website	www.ashfield.newcastle.sch.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	28 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of a federation with two other nursery schools. There are two co-headteachers who share responsibility for the three schools in the federation.
- The school admits children from the age of two.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the co-headteachers and senior teacher, representatives from the governing body and the head of school improvement and inclusion from the

local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, expressive arts and design and understanding the world. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited the provision, spoke to staff and spoke to some children about their learning. They also reviewed some children’s learning portfolios.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders and staff; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children’s interests first.
- Inspectors considered how the school caters for children’s personal development.
- Inspectors observed children’s behaviour when accessing both indoor and outdoor provision.
- Inspectors considered the responses from parents to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, as part of the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with some parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Philippa Kermotschuk, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Roger Ward	Ofsted Inspector

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