

Inspection of an outstanding school: Ashfield Nursery School

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

Inspection date: 28 March 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Adults at this school are warm and welcoming. They reassure children when they start school and each morning when they arrive. Children feel safe. They soon settle and are confident to play with toys and take part in activities. They concentrate for longer and longer periods of time.

Adults help children to become independent. Children learn to look after themselves. Adults guide them to complete tasks that become more and more difficult. The youngest children learn to go to the toilet by themselves. Older children learn to go up and down the steep stairs without holding an adult's hand.

The vast majority of children behave well. They learn school routines and listen to each other and to adults during group times. Adults skilfully and gently help children to join in if they become distracted. Adults show children how to sort out disputes, so they do this for themselves.

A very small number of children sometimes struggle to participate in activities. Adults use different ways to help children take part. This is not always successful and can disrupt the session for a short time.

Children take part in good range of new and varied experiences. The curriculum ensures that children learn in a logical order. However, on a day-to-day basis, adults are not consistently clear about the language they want children to learn. Adults miss opportunities to extend and deepen children's knowledge.

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

The curriculum is well sequenced. Leaders prioritise children's communication and language development. The youngest children learn the first 20 words and phrases they need for future success. For example, they learn the word 'stop'. Adults build up children's knowledge in very small steps. They use hand gestures and pictures to help. Adults know when children are ready to move on to the next step. Adults talk as they play with children to deepen and widen children's vocabulary.

As children get older, they learn a wider range of words and phrases. Adults help children how to speak in sentences, take turns and respond to questions. For example, a group of children were playing hide and seek outdoors. The adult wove in new mathematical language using questions, such as 'Is she up in the tree?' and 'Is she behind the wall?' The children used these questions when it was their turn to 'seek'.

Children communicate with each other and with adults in more sophisticated ways. They talk about the cress seeds that they have grown. They use mathematical vocabulary when they are describing the model they have made.

Adults encourage children to play together and to cooperate with each other. They show how to solve a problem when more than one child wants to play with the same toy. Children then try to sort out the problem themselves.

Adults know children well and assess children's capabilities accurately. However, unlike in mathematical development, sometimes adults are not clear about what they want children to learn during an activity. Sometimes, adults use imprecise and inaccurate vocabulary. They choose the wrong activity to support learning. For example, one group watched a screen with calming music at lunchtime. This did not help adults' aim to develop children's conversation.

Nearly all children can control their emotions and follow routines. They behave well. They trust adults to help them. Adults are caring, providing comfort if a child falls over and hurts themselves.

The curriculum for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is variable. Children are successful and build up knowledge in very small steps when they work on their own with an adult. Occasionally, in group times the curriculum is not adapted well enough to help children with SEND take part. Sometimes, this causes disruption. Adults help but it can take time to resolve.

A good range of opportunities broaden children's experiences. Partnerships with organisations enhance musical activities, for example. Children learn about growing and making food. They made egg sandwiches for snack. Leaders ensure that books and stories reflect the diversity of the school community.

Leaders know school priorities. They are aware inconsistencies have arisen because the staff team is new. They check the quality of provision. However, it is not frequent enough

to resolve the lack of consistency. Adults feel well supported by leaders. They appreciate leaders' efforts to bring the team together.

The governing body have good strategic oversight. They understand the school's priorities. Governors support leaders well. They have reorganised to ensure leaders receive the right challenge. However, this is at an early stage of development and has not made a difference.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Systems and procedures to keep children safe are up to date. Leaders maintain accurate records of concerns which arise. Adults know families well and are persistent in making sure everything is done to keep children safe. They work with other agencies when it is necessary.

Adults know the correct procedures to follow if they are worried about a child. There is always someone with responsibility for safeguarding to consult. A number of adults have received more in-depth training to ensure safeguarding is secure.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, one of the first words they learn is 'stop'. Staff encourage children to have a go and guide them how to tackle potential dangers, such as the stairs, safely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Outcomes from some of the tasks adults lead are not identified consistently enough. This is particularly the case in the areas of communication and language, and personal, social and emotional development. As a result, adults are not always clear about what they want all children, including those with SEND, to know and understand. This leads to the use of imprecise vocabulary or the wrong activity choice. Leaders should ensure that adults know exactly what they want children to learn, including the precise vocabulary and language they will use to achieve the intended learning.
- Leaders know that many recent staffing changes have resulted in curriculum implementation being inconsistent. Short term curriculum planning is not precise enough to guide staff. Leaders should increase the frequency of checks to identify any inconsistencies. They should take prompt action to ensure all staff effectively support children's learning and development.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in March 2017.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	108427
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10227045
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Darren Kidger
Co-Headteachers	Anne Humble and Kay Mills
Website	www.ashfield.newcastle.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has become part of the Newcastle Nursery Schools Federation. The three schools in the federation are led by two co-headteachers and one governing body. Some staff in the school work across the federation.
- The school offers places to two-year-old children.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- Many of the staff have been appointed this academic year.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the co-headteachers and senior teacher throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors met with staff, the federation special educational needs coordinator and the chair of the governing body.

- A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these areas of learning: communication and language; personal, social and emotional development and mathematical development. For each deep dive, inspectors met with the senior teacher, looked at curriculum plans, visited different rooms in the nursery and outdoors, held conversations with children, spoke to staff and scrutinised assessments of children’s learning.
- Inspectors also discussed curriculum plans and spoke to staff about other areas of learning.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record. They talked to staff about their views of safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed children’s behaviour indoors and outdoors and at lunchtimes.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including the school development plan and policies.
- Inspectors considered the free-text responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View and the school’s own parental surveys.
- They also considered the responses from the online staff survey.

Inspection team

Susan Waugh, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Julie McGrane

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023