

Sandbank Nursery School

Elmore Row, Bloxwich, Walsall, WS3 2HR

Inspection dates 13–14 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Children's well-being is at the heart of everything the nursery does and, as a result, children settle quickly and are very confident in relationships with adults and each other. The nursery is indeed 'A special kind of place where we play and learn together'.
- Children make exceptional progress in all areas of learning and their achievement is outstanding.
- The thorough understanding by teacher and other adults of young children's needs means that exciting activities are planned and expertly delivered. These build on children's interests and so promote curiosity and a real love of learning.
- Children are provided with excellent resources in a secure and safe environment, including a well-resourced outside area.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. They are helped to understand how to share and play well with other children.
- Leadership and management are outstanding, with all leaders and managers, together with other staff, committed to ensuring the very best for all children.
- Leaders, including members of the governing body, are very effective in using robust processes for self-evaluation and performance management. Consequently the quality of teaching and provision are continually evolving, while being sustained at an exceptionally high level. As a result, children's outstanding achievement has been sustained over the period since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.
- The inspector spent time in 10 sessions and saw 11 members of staff teaching and working with the children.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and looked at the school's development plans, the governing body minutes, the school's records of children's progress and their learning journeys.
- As well as informal discussions with parents or carers at the start of sessions, account was taken of the five responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Jenny Batelen, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sandbank has the equivalent of 60 full-time equivalent places. Children attend the school after their third birthday and attend either morning or afternoon sessions.
- Children are mostly from White British backgrounds with a very small minority from a range of other minority ethnic groups.
- At the time of the inspection there were no children with disabilities or with special educational needs, nor any with statements of special educational needs.
- There are no children in receipt of the pupil premium.
- The school is visited by other providers and schools as an example of best practice.
- The school provides all-day care in Playcare which has been inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend learning opportunities through exploring the use of outside adventure activities in order to further enrich the learning and development opportunities for children.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The majority of children enter the nursery with skill levels that are well below age-related expectations, particularly in reading, writing, recognition of numbers, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and dispositions and attitudes.
- School tracking shows how all children, including the very small number from other minority ethnic backgrounds, make rapid and sustained progress in all areas of learning. This in turn demonstrates the school's success in ensuring equality of opportunity. By the time they leave the nursery, the majority of children have skills that meet age-related expectations, with some exceeding these, especially in personal and social skills. Consequently, they are very well equipped to make the transition to primary school.
- This tracking also ensures that any children who may have particular difficulties in learning are quickly identified and the highly effective individual support is tailored to meet their needs.
- The development of early reading and writing skills is of a high standard. Children enjoy being read to in family group times and individually during activity times. Mark-making is encouraged and is on display throughout the nursery. There is an extensive library and children take books home to share with their parents and carers.
- Early number skills are developed through counting and number recognition at all opportunities.
- Each child is considered as an individual and activities are accessible by all and meet children's needs and interests. As a result, boys, girls and children who may have particular needs make similar excellent progress.
- Skilled questioning encourages children to develop their thinking and their exploration. Oral skills are also developed as the questioning encourages extended answers from the children.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- All members of staff are focused on improving every child's skills in all areas of learning. They have high expectations, consider each child as an individual and thus ensure excellent progress for all children.
- The arrangement of children in family groups and also their free access to all areas for activities means that children have a range of adults to support them in their learning.
- High quality resources, used inspirationally, enable children to have rich learning experiences. This was demonstrated when children engaged in exploring sounds, using the musical instruments available. The area was set out to entice and invite curiosity. Adult intervention allowed children to develop their understanding of the different sounds that could be made and their delight was apparent by the big smiles as they heard the different tones from a wood block.
- The outside area reflects all areas of learning as well as allowing for experiences such as caring for plants and animals. The school is exploring how to extend outside opportunities further with the use of the school areas and other spaces in the locality for adventure activities.
- The development of early reading and writing skills is a high focus. One child's interest in writing was encouraged as she explored, with an adult, the sound her name begins with and how to write this sound. Sustained concentration led to two pages of 'writing'.
- Learning to count and recognise numbers is constantly reinforced in all activities. Children 'fishing' for magnetic discs were encouraged to count how many they have and also name the colours. When celebrating a birthday, children were helped to count to four and find and recognise the number four.
- Modern technologies are used effectively to support learning. The story of *Goldilocks and*

the Three Bears was listened to and watched using the interactive whiteboard. A group of boys then became the three bears with the help of teddy bears and a rag doll, Goldilocks. They developed their understanding of the story and of how to use their voices effectively to be the different bears.

- Ongoing observations of children are used very effectively to inform planning. Children's interests are planned for, and through these, they are encouraged to explore and develop skills. Activities are freely available, with resources easily accessible. Children have the opportunity to take part in adult-led activities, such as making porridge, as well as initiating and following their own interests.
- Assessment is ongoing and is recorded with text and photographs that create a dynamic record of the child's development during their time in the nursery.
- Staff constantly interact with children, questioning and participating in their activities. They understand each child's uniqueness and adapt questioning and activities when necessary.
- Adults constantly comment on and praise children's work and, as a result, children feel their work is valued.
- Learning for all children is strengthened by the way staff engage with parents and carers, informing them of their children's progress and also ensuring that they have an excellent understanding of the work of the nursery.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children behave exceptionally well. They are helped to settle quickly and to build strong relationships with all staff in the nursery.
- The high quality provision ensures that children are extremely well engaged in their learning.
- They learn to play well together through the family group times and activities that encourage the sharing of resources and space. Adults manage these times exceptionally well, respecting children's emotions and stage of development and guiding them to develop appropriate behaviour.
- The very few children that might have difficulty playing successfully in a group are helped through consistent strategies used across the nursery and the close relationship with parents and carers, which means there is a constant sharing of information. The very strong links with the Playcare provision, where there is often linked play and social times, ensure further consistency. As a result, children settle well and cope with the social environment.
- An anti-bullying policy is in place, but the individual nature of working with children means that there is no bullying and children behave safely towards each other.
- Children learn to keep themselves and others safe. This was clearly demonstrated when children jumping from apparatus waited their turn so as not to land on their friend.
- Parents and carers are completely confident in their children's safety while at the nursery and also agree with the inspector that behaviour is excellent. The nursery involves parents and carers in helping the children to understand how to keep themselves safe, for instance, on the road. Consequently, there is a shared, effective and consistent approach.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher leads a highly committed staff team. There is a drive to ensure excellent provision for the children entrusted to the nursery. As a result, the previous high levels of achievement of children are being maintained successfully over time.
- Constant review of daily practice ensures that adjustments are regularly made so that children's needs are met in the best way possible.
- There is a commitment by all leaders and managers to ensuring the very best in resourcing, both equipment and staff, which has resulted in an exciting and nurturing learning environment.

- Leaders have highly effective systems for improving teaching and learning. The appraisal system includes all staff and there is excellent support for those new to the school or new to their role. Training needs are identified through discussion and performance management. Staff share their training experiences effectively with each other.
- The curriculum provides many rich experiences for the children. The wide range of visits to local areas enhances children's understanding of the world they live in, including different ways of travel and the experience of the wide range of cultures in the locality. The children shared with other nurseries experience of a large stadium and the making and waving of flags of different countries as they were helped to understand what the Olympics was about. Partnerships with musicians and artists enrich their cultural experiences.
- Many opportunities within the school day encourage the children to be curious about their surroundings and to value their own work and also that of other children.
- There are excellent induction procedures and parents, and carers speak highly of how this is managed and of how staff are very approachable. They described how this supports them as well as their children in settling into the nursery. They also praise their full involvement in understanding how their children are progressing.
- Transition to the primary schools is also very effectively managed and nursery staff are proactive in ensuring that all children will be able to settle quickly into their new environment.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this outstanding school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is knowledgeable and very well informed about the nursery. They visit and monitor regularly to ensure that they understand how the nursery operates and how young children learn. As a result, they are highly effective in giving strong support and also challenging the school to ensure the best opportunities for the children.
- They have rigorous and effective controls to ensure the best use of finances. Statutory responsibilities, including safeguarding, are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupil's needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupil's needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104134
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	400686

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rebecca Humpage
Headteacher	Jenni Ward
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 June 2010
Telephone number	01922 710132
Fax number	01922 408488
Email address	postbox@sandbank.walsall.sch.uk

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