

Redcliffe Maintained Nursery School

Spencer House, Ship Lane, Redcliffe, Bristol, BS1 6RR

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2014

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.

- Leadership is outstanding. The headteacher is an inspirational leader who has an exceptional understanding of early years practice. She is supported by a group of highly talented staff and governors who share her high expectations for excellence in all aspects of the nursery's work.
- All children achieve exceptionally well. From their often lower starting points, they make rapid progress. By the time they leave the school, most have attained the expectations for their age and a third exceeds the expected levels.
- Teaching is outstanding because adults know the children in their groups exceptionally well. They use this knowledge to plan activities that are individual to each child.
- The nursery promotes children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well through an exciting curriculum securely based on an excellent knowledge of how children learn.
- Leaders have developed a highly effective system to check the progress children make and this has ensured that the school has maintained its long track record of excellence.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Children clearly love coming to nursery because staff care deeply about each and every one of them. They blossom in this warm, safe environment and become confident, happy and inquiring learners.
- Children know how to keep themselves safe in the nursery and when at the woods or their allotment. They are kind, thoughtful and caring towards each other, following the staff's excellent example.
- Parents are very positive about the school. They feel totally involved in the nursery's work and appreciate the staff's patient dedication.
- Governors provide strong support and are very proud of the fact that virtually all the staff are engaged in research and professional development, so that they are fully equipped to provide exciting learning experiences.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 sessions across all areas of the school, most of which were conducted with the headteacher. She also observed the children eating lunch, enjoying a visit to their Forest School, cutting and chopping in their food project work, tidying up and taking part in focused language and mathematics support and play activities both indoors and outdoors.
- Discussions were held with members of the senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The inspector took account of 16 staff questionnaires.
- There were insufficient responses to the online Parent View survey. However, the inspector spoke to several parents and carers when they brought their children to school.
- The inspector looked at many documents including those relating to safeguarding, the monitoring of teaching and learning, the nursery's development priorities, records of the children's attainment and progress, governing body minutes and children's learning journeys, learning stories and portfolios.

Inspection team

Joyce Cox, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Redcliffe Nursery School and National Teaching School is an average-sized local authority education and day care provision managed by an executive headteacher and a governing body. It operates from ground floor premises located in the middle of a local authority housing complex close to Bristol city centre. There is also a children's centre on site, managed by the headteacher and governing body. However, it did not form part of this inspection.
- The school and children's centre provide extended day care throughout the year for children from two to five years, as well as 58 full-time equivalent nursery places for three- and four-year-olds.
- Of the children, 62% are from minority ethnic backgrounds; many are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. The largest ethnic group is Black Somalian.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs supported through early actions is average. The proportion supported at early action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school does not use alternative provision to support any of its children and is not eligible to receive pupil premium or sport funding.
- The nursery has an allotment at a local city farm which is visited every week by the children and staff. Fruit and vegetables from the allotment are used in the nursery's Food Project, which recently won a Local Hero Food Award. This national award celebrates the success of the staff's work in encouraging young children to explore and experiment with food.
- Since 2011, Redcliffe has been part of a consortium of four nursery schools in Bristol, which is one of sixteen nationally-recognised Early Years Teaching Centres that provide training for staff and governors and work to support and improve early years provision in other schools.
- In 2013 the school became one of the first nurseries to be awarded National Teaching School status. It has three staff members who are specialist leaders of education. Redcliffe Nursery School with strategic partners designs and leads 60 post graduate teacher training places. In 2013/2014, Redcliffe leaders and staff have led professional development for over 600 teachers and staff. The courses range from one day Forest School training to mathematics Masters Degree modules.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure computers are always available and accessible for children.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children start in the nursery with a wide range of skills and abilities. Many children often have lower communication and physical skills compared to others of a similar age. All children make excellent progress across the areas of learning, so that most reach or exceed the levels expected for their age when they start their Reception classes.
- Staff make careful termly checks on children's progress so that any not doing well enough are quickly identified and support is put in place to help them catch up. Disabled children and those with special educational needs do extremely well. This is because the tasks they are given are extremely well matched to what children know and can do. There is a system of early, rigorous identification and highly-effective sensitive support in place. Children at an early stage of learning English achieve exceptionally well because of accurate early language assessments, staff's use of children's home language, where possible, and small group sessions to develop English vocabulary. In addition, a strong emphasis on developing children's language skills through signing, symbols and music enables all children to enjoy all the activities.
- All children have access to all activities, with adaptations made to support their individual needs wherever possible. The work of a bilingual assistant is particularly successful in enabling Somali children to participate in group activities.
- More able children are challenged through problem solving. Skilful adult questioning and use of resources which extends their ideas ensure that they make excellent progress. For example, children were successfully encouraged to develop skills in measuring depth and volume with standard units through exploring stones and water.
- Wide access to a range of books of different genres, regular story sessions and work on letters and the sounds they make promote reading development and a love of books extremely well. Parents love the fact that books are available in the nursery entrance hall where they can sit together on comfy sofas to share books with the children at the start of the day.
- Children enjoy mark making and use it in most of their activities, for example when 'recording' which child has brought which type of fruit for snack time.
- Early morning 'talk time', where children and their key-person gather in their 'key nest' areas, are carefully planned to reflect children's current interests and to introduce new vocabulary and mathematical topics such as size, weight and capacity. One parent wrote, 'I am always impressed by the staff's individualised understanding of each child. Only days after telling the staff we were moving to Thailand there were pictures of Bangkok drawn by my child on the wall in his group room.'
- Children make outstanding progress in developing their physical skills, which are very important as many of the children live in flats with no garden. Therefore, they love the numerous daily opportunities to run, jump, balance, plant, and dig, explore and investigate in the nursery grounds, city allotment or Forest School. In these settings they can take risks, increase their stamina and gain considerable confidence in their physical abilities.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Outstanding teaching over time has ensured the nursery continues to provide high quality education for the children in its care. Adults skilfully plan for each child's distinct needs and interests.
- All staff have an excellent understanding of how children of this age learn and plan excellent indoor and outdoor activities that provide challenging and enjoyable experiences. As a result, children demonstrate high levels of engagement, independence and concentration in all their activities. Staff are very skilled at knowing precisely when to intervene to extend children's language, play and development.
- Adults have high expectations for what children can achieve and regularly assess their learning

through daily meetings, weekly planning and review meetings, and ongoing observations of children's learning. There are also termly meetings to review information on children's progress and set clear goals for any child not doing well enough. Excellent use of Learning Stories, where a child is tracked through a special interest over time, provides very useful information on the learning that has taken place.

- Effective questioning by staff deepens children's knowledge and understanding. This, coupled with a strong emphasis on encouraging children to think for themselves and learn from their mistakes, ensures very effective learning.
- Activities planned are purposeful and capture children's interest and ensure sustained concentration. For example, a group of children were totally absorbed in cutting up lemons, watermelons, oranges and mangoes. They persevered exceptionally well and squealed with delight and fascination when raspberries and blueberries whizzed around in the liquidiser to make a dark purple drink!
- Early reading, writing and mathematical skills are taught exceptionally well, so that children learn important skills and new vocabulary through their play. For example, a group of children were completely engrossed in experimenting with various plastic resources and different cochineal colours in a water tray. From this activity they learnt new words such as 'pipette' and 'syringe' and correctly counted and recorded the number of containers, syringes and pipettes they had used to ensure that none had been lost.
- Children have many opportunities to develop certain aspects of their understanding of the world, such as excellent trips and visits. There is evidence in children's learning diaries that the children have enjoyed experimenting with typewriters, programmable toys, telephones and cameras. However, there are not enough opportunities for children to use computers in their learning and play.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children's behaviour is outstanding. Children have very positive attitudes to learning and are very eager to take part in all the exciting and interesting activities planned for them. They learn to take turns and share nicely, which ensure successful learning and a calm environment.
- There are excellent relationships between staff and children. Adults are excellent role models and manage the children exceptionally well. Any minor lapses in behaviour are swiftly and calmly dealt with and quickly forgotten. Consequently, children work and play together extremely well, taking turns, sharing resources and investigating and exploring happily together.
- Excellent induction arrangements, including home visits, help children to settle quickly. Additionally, many of the children attend the on-site children's centre or day care provision prior to starting in the nursery so are already very familiar with their surroundings.
- Staff, including the chef, eat lunch together with the children in the school's attractive food project room. This helps children to develop excellent social skills and a love of healthy food. They learn to have good table manners and to try different food.
- Children's independence is developed exceptionally well. For example, children register themselves in the morning and select, collect and tidy away their own resources.
- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding. The key-person system ensures that children develop a close relationship with at least one adult, who they can go to anytime should they feel anxious, upset or tired. Children know how to respond to behaviour they do not like. One child said, 'You say I don't like that, and tell an adult if doesn't stop.'
- Children know exactly how to keep safe. For example, when visiting their Forest School in Leigh Woods, one child informed the inspector that 'you need to stand very still if you see a dog coming'. The children learn to climb, balance and swing, and to take risks safely in their exciting outdoor learning environment at the nursery.
- The school encourages regular attendance and children attend very well, demonstrating how much they enjoy coming to school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The inspirational leadership and management of the headteacher, supported by a highly committed and talented team of senior and middle leaders, have ensured that the school has sustained the high levels of achievement and outstanding practice seen in the school's six previous inspections and subject reviews.
- The very strong commitment to promoting equality and preventing discrimination is clearly shown by the school being highly effective in ensuring that all groups of children make outstanding progress.
- The headteacher and senior staff have successfully developed a very stable and creative staff. All the adults are highly supportive of the school and the opportunities they have to conduct research and continuously improve their practice. One staff member wrote, 'The head is passionate about early years education and extremely dedicated to continually providing magical experiences that enhance childhood.'
- There are very effective systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning that draw on a wide range of evidence, for example the quality of the learning and display environment in the children's 'key nest' areas. Leaders focus relentlessly on how the children are learning.
- The local authority knows the school well and provides light touch support. It is justifiably very proud of the nursery's Teaching School status and the fact that the nursery staff support other colleagues in improving early years practice. For example, 50 early years teachers and practitioners were attending mathematical subject leader training during the inspection.
- The curriculum prepares children exceptionally well for their Reception classes, and strong links are established with local schools. The school makes excellent use of the city's facilities, such as open top bus rides, river boat trips, museum visits and the airport. Children also love their city farm allotment and their weekly Forest School visits to Leigh Woods where they experience camp fires, paddling in the stream and tree climbing.
- The school has excellent links with parents and carers who have total confidence in the nursery and feel very involved in all aspects of their children's learning. For example, parents and carers spoken to said, 'Weekly music sessions with Bill, the music man, have inspired a love of music from across the world. Forest School has built an inquisitive approach to exploring nature, and my children are always eager to get involved in the kitchen as a result of the food project.'
- Parents say they are very pleased with the way that the nursery staff 'build bridges across all different cultures and break down barriers right from the word go'. All cultures and backgrounds are celebrated and valued. For example, staff involved in the Food Project have produced an impressive International Celebration Cook Book, containing recipes from parents from a wide range of cultures.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring an extensive range of skills and experience to their roles. They know the school well and make sure they are fully informed about children's achievement so they can hold leaders to account. They fully understand the quality of teaching and the link between pay and performance. They manage finances efficiently and ensure equality of opportunity, as evidenced by the outcomes of children who attend the school. They are fully supportive of the school's involvement in academic research into how children learn, so that staff are continually kept abreast of current thinking. They are not afraid to challenge leaders. For example, they asked searching questions when senior staff wanted to apply for Teaching School status, as they did not want any adverse effect on the quality of provision for the children.
 - Governors undertake appropriate training to ensure they are kept up to date with any new initiatives. They ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met in order to ensure staff and children are kept safe. They are involved in setting targets for the management of the headteacher's performance and know that there is a similar process in place for staff.

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 pupils' 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 pupils' 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	108904
Local authority	Bristol City
Inspection number	439939

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Thomas
Headteacher	Elizabeth Carruthers
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 June 2011
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