

Ashmore Park Nursery School

Griffiths Drive, Ashmore Park Estate, Wolverhampton, WV11 2LH

Inspection dates 11–12 February 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- This is a warm and friendly school where everyone is welcomed and valued.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been highly successful in sustaining and continuing to improve the excellent teaching and outstanding achievement for all children since the last inspection.
- Teaching is outstanding because staff know the children in their groups extremely well and have an excellent understanding of how children learn. They use their knowledge of individual children's development and interests to ensure that the children make rapid progress in their learning and acquire skills quickly.
- Children are excited and enthusiastic learners. The heartfelt care of staff helps to nurture children's love of learning. Their high expectations and well-established routines support children's outstanding behaviour. Children feel very safe and secure.
- The nursery promotes children's spiritual, social, moral and cultural development exceptionally well with many opportunities to help and value others.
- The focus on developing children's communication and literacy skills, as well as their personal, social and emotional development, means that children leave the nursery able to express themselves confidently and work well, both on their own and with others.
- The nursery has developed excellent partnerships with parents. Parents are actively involved in their child's learning. They know that the school and the staff keep their children very safe.
- All children achieve exceptionally well in all areas of learning. Most children move on to their primary schools with skills that are at least in line with, and often above, those expected for their age in all areas of learning. They are very well prepared for their next stage in education.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven sessions across the school, including two jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, the governors, a representative from the local authority and staff.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents, including the school improvement plan, the school's own review of its performance, and data on children's progress and planning records. He also checked records of the work of the governing body, reports on teaching, and documentation relating to behaviour and safeguarding.
- The inspector looked at a sample of children's work and focused in detail on the learning experiences of different groups of children.
- The responses of 37 parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, were scrutinised. In addition, the inspector spoke with six parents, and took into account notes from parents and the outcome of the school's own parental survey.
- The inspector took into account the views expressed by the staff in the 10 questionnaires they returned.

Inspection team

Geoffrey Dorrity, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized nursery school. The children all attend part time.
- The vast majority of families are from a White British background. Of those from other heritages, there is no predominant group.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well below average.
- No children are eligible for pupil premium due to their age. This is government funding available for disadvantaged pupils.
- The school is involved in a project to develop the use of digital technologies by children in the early years. They work in partnership with three schools within the United Kingdom and six schools in Sweden.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide support to two local schools. They are the acting executive headteacher and acting deputy headteacher for Phoenix Nursery school and are supporting Trinity Church of England Primary School with a bespoke programme of training.
- Since the last inspection, the school has relinquished the management of the children's centre; developed a training centre to share best practice; and established a practitioner post to support the most vulnerable children.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all staff are consistent in the accurate pronunciation of the sounds that letters make.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides clear strategic leadership to the nursery. Together with the deputy headteacher, she continually drives improvements forward. As a result, all staff and governors are ambitious for the school and the children. This ambition, alongside the highest expectations for excellence and achievement, ensures that children progress rapidly and achieve to the best of their ability.
- Strongly supported by the senior leadership team and governors, staff benefit from exceptionally high-quality training opportunities. This means that they have an excellent awareness and deepening understanding of how young children learn. They demonstrate their knowledge and skills in the excellent quality of teaching provided by the nursery. All staff have visited the partner schools in Sweden and benefited from that learning. They can identify how their practice has changed because of it. Staff who have completed first degree courses have been helped to achieve higher-level qualifications so they are well prepared for career progression.
- Other staff with leadership responsibilities are highly effective in monitoring teaching and learning. They lead daily meetings focusing on areas of learning and individual needs. High-quality observations of teaching regularly challenge staff to reflect and improve on their performance. The relentless focus on learning behaviour and outcomes for children has resulted in the standard of outstanding teaching being maintained and improved upon since the last inspection.
- Checks on how well children are doing are highly refined and the performance of all groups of children is tracked and analysed extensively. This means that leaders and managers can immediately identify any children who might be at risk of falling behind, or any groups of children who may not be progressing as fast as their peers. The progress made by the most-able children is never less than outstanding, with the nursery having high aspirations that all children's progress should be greater than expected.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are well supported. Additional staff have been employed to make sure that these children are included in everything the nursery does, and that they can access all that the nursery has to offer. These children typically make rapid progress and begin to catch up with their friends by the time they leave for primary school.
- The nursery values all children individually and celebrates their differences and similarities effectively. There are many opportunities provided through a programme of visits in the local area, trips to the theatre, and events such as drumming at Diwali, when children are given the space to say what they think things mean to them. This ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well and that their experiences are continually extended. This all contributes significantly to the excellent promotion of equality of opportunity. There is no discrimination evident in the nursery.
- The projects children follow are rich and exciting, such as their study of growth and decay. They promote all areas of learning equally well. The whole nursery is supported effectively by the regular challenge from an outside consultant who works individually with staff to develop their thinking about learning and how they can make the experiences for the children even better.
- Children discuss and make the rules for good behaviour to be followed inside and outdoors in the nursery. They review each other's work and learn to accept that people have different points of view. This prepares children very well, at an age-appropriate level, for life in modern Britain.
- Nursery staff form positive trusting relationships with parents during the highly effective transition arrangements when preparing the children to start school. Through a well-organised programme of visits to home, and from home to school, children and parents are relaxed and settle quickly to nursery routines.
- Parents' engagement in their children's learning is exemplary. Informal information exchanges at the beginning and end of sessions, formal reviews of their child's progress and attendance at workshops are regular activities. In addition, there is a high-quality written dialogue between the school and parents

through the 'learning folders'. Parents find the questions that the school asks help them to think deeply about what their child is learning and how they can help them.

- The governing body ensures that the nursery's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. There are effective checks on all adults who work with children. Training for staff and governors is thorough and up to date. Staff inspect the nursery inside and outside every day to make sure that it is safe for the children. All adults visiting the nursery are identified and must sign in. Parents state how they like the fact that no mobile phones or cameras can be used, and that they are reminded of that by the notices in the public areas. They feel their children are kept very safe.
- The local authority knows the school well and gives support and guidance as requested. It is very confident in the quality of leadership and management. It was at the local authority's request that the governors agreed that the headteacher and deputy headteacher could act as executive headteacher and deputy headteacher for another nursery school in the area.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has an excellent overview of the school's work. Governors know how well the school is performing and the ways it can be even better. They are highly effective in their role. They have a good understanding of the data showing how the children are doing, and this means they can contribute to the school's development. They support and challenge leaders in just the right proportions to ensure that the nursery continues to improve. For example, from the data, they were aware that progress in a particular area of learning was not as rapid as in others. They asked why this was, and then released the required budget to enable the resourcing of that area. They closely monitored the outcomes of this on children's progress in learning to evaluate the success.
- Governors use their individual expertise and knowledge well to carry out their responsibilities. They manage finances very carefully and are mindful of the need to reward those members of staff who are very effective, including the need to ensure that they maintain a high level of performance. They have effective procedures in place to manage underperformance. Consequently, arrangements to manage the performance of staff are effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is outstanding. Their confidence and self-esteem are raised because they know they are valued as individuals. Their work and thinking are carefully recorded and displayed to reinforce this. As a result, they not only value themselves but also respect others.
- At review times during the day, they sit and listen carefully to what each has done and then contribute their own ideas. For example, an adult questions a child in depth about a model he has made, asking about the people inside and how and why they are there. Other children in the group make more suggestions, and each idea is accepted as a valuable contribution and agreed or disagreed with.
- Children have very positive attitudes to learning, inspired by the exemplary modelling of good behaviour by adults. During the inspection, all children were engaged in learning at all times, either with adults or on their own.
- The rules for behaviour and safety, both indoors and out, are developed by the children. This means they have a very good understanding of what good behaviour looks like and why it is important to act in a safe manner.
- Children are polite, friendly and treat each other kindly. They try to help each other when they can; for example, when sorting numbers. Many are developing very good collaborative skills. They work well together when building a tower with wooden bricks, or making up stories of travelling to the shops in a car.
- Responsibilities for helping are given daily. One child is chosen to help their group by doing tasks such as handing out fruit and milk. They rush to the noticeboard to see whether it is their turn, and take pride in

carrying out their role.

- Although children's attendance is not statutory at this age, the rate compares favourably with other schools. There are few unauthorised absences because staff respond extremely quickly to any unknown absence and contact parents straightaway. Children are eager to attend because they feel secure and enjoy learning.
- Parents report that children behave well and easily settle at the beginning of each session, happily waving goodbye and rushing off to their chosen activity. The nursery reports no bullying, racist incidents or exclusions but nevertheless has systems in place for managing such incidents.

Safety

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding. Children feel very safe because of the strong bond they quickly develop with the adults who look after them at nursery. Parents agree and say that they feel very confident that the staff will keep their children safe from harm.
- Children use equipment sensibly. They understand the risks involved; for instance, when cutting fruit with a sharp knife, or using a saw to cut discs from a branch. They discuss how you must handle the tools with care, and how you might harm yourself if you do not.
- Children are encouraged to experiment with managed risk, such as balancing along courses they have made with planks, tyres and other resources. Children know the routines well, and tidy up at the end of a session safely and sensibly, working together to put the resources away.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Adults have very high expectations of all children. School records, as well as evidence in children's learning folders and planning, confirm that teaching is of consistently high quality.
- Adults create a vibrant and positive environment and extremely strong and trusting relationships with all children. As a result, children feel valued and are confident learners. Staff take every opportunity to develop children's language and communication skills. They are exemplary role models, describing, asking, questioning and giving time for children to think and respond. This means children continually deepen their learning and broaden their knowledge.
- Early mathematics is taught extremely well, with adults exploiting all opportunities to reinforce skills during play and at more formal gathering times. Children are encouraged to use their problem-solving skills at a group time. They needed to share six pieces of fruit between ten individuals. By skilful questioning on the part of the adult, the children made excellent gains in their understanding of 'more than' and 'less than' in a practical situation.
- Adults ensure that all children develop their problem-solving skills through exploration. A child was observed building a tower. Through questioning, he clearly understood that the tower 'was wobbly because it was tall'. When it collapsed, he drew on this reasoning to apply more stable techniques to rebuild it.
- Children's views are highly valued. When observing growth and decay in the woods, or dissecting a squash, they are not just asked about their knowledge of what something is; for example, a seed. Their thinking is greatly extended by asking how they think the seed got there. Their answers and observations are prized and displayed for all to share.
- The teaching of early reading and writing skills is very effective. Children enjoy the many opportunities they have to write and make marks. For example, they write down an order when playing 'cafes' and design notices for local shops in the wider environment. Children sequence and record their stories then tell them to their friends. The most-able children are able to use the more advanced skills learned to write complete sentences such as 'Please come to my house', spelling the words correctly.

- Children work regularly in small groups to develop their early phonic skills in a systematic way. This is the teaching of the sounds letters make. When learning phonics, the children's interest is quickly harnessed and developed. During the inspection, children were observed playing a game identifying objects that started with the same sound. Additional challenge was introduced with some objects not beginning with that sound. Children demonstrated their learning by being able to sort these. However, on a very few occasions, a small number of staff were not precise and consistent in their pronunciation of these sounds. This makes it more difficult for children to put the letter sounds together to help them read unfamiliar words.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Most children join the nursery with skills that are typical for this age group. The high expectations and exemplary teaching mean that many children make better than expected progress and leave the nursery with skills and understanding that are better than those typically seen in children entering Reception. Children who join the nursery with skills that are below those typical for their age rapidly catch up with their friends.
- Senior leaders ensure that all staff are involved in the moderation of assessments (checking their accuracy). As a result, all staff have a shared view of the strengths and areas for improvement in every child's learning. Assessments are moderated, both internally and externally with other schools locally and nationally. This means that the nursery is secure in its judgements as to children's progress and achievement.
- The most-able children do extremely well and build effectively on their relatively strong starting points. This is because they are challenged by the activities adults skilfully design for them. Adults are equally careful that their conversations with the most-able children continue to be just as demanding in activities that the children choose for themselves, and they encourage them to think hard. Consequently, they learn a lot through their own experimentation, from adults and from reviewing each other's work.
- Staff who work with disabled children and those who have special educational needs are highly effective. They know well how the children learn and how their specific learning needs may have an impact on this. The support they deliver means that these children make outstanding progress from their often very low starting points.
- Parents are able to contribute significantly to their children's progress and achievement. Workshops to develop their understanding of how children learn, and both written and spoken conversations with staff, mean parents feel very involved in their child's progress.

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	104279
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	449535

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	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Bateman MBE
Headteacher	Susan Lacey
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2011
Telephone number	01902 558116
Fax number	01902 558116
Email address	ashmoreparknurseryschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2015

