

# St Paul's Nursery School

12 St Paul's Square, York, North Yorkshire YO24 4BD

## Inspection dates

26–27 June 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The new headteacher swiftly identified areas for improvement on her arrival and is relentlessly driving a process of change, with a clear focus on improving outcomes for children.
- The governing body holds senior leaders to account. They give effective challenge and support to the leadership team. Governors have an excellent understanding of the nursery.
- Children enjoy their time at the nursery, and their physical and mental welfare is of the highest priority for the staff.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled and experienced. They know the children well, and accurately observe and assess children's learning.
- Children who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged make very good progress.
- All children make good progress in all areas of learning. However, critical thinking skills are sometimes not developed well and this prevents children from making even better progress, particularly the most able.
- Children behave exceptionally well. They know the routines to follow and settle quickly to learning and activities. They show respect for each other, work well together and listen to each other's contributions in discussions.
- Relationships with parents are very strong. Parents know exactly what their children are doing and how well they are progressing, because of regular communications from the nursery.
- Lead practitioners need to develop their leadership skills further to influence better the quality of teaching, planning and assessment.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Enhance the use of questioning to ensure that all children are consistently challenged to develop their critical thinking skills, particularly those who are most able.
- Further accelerate children's learning to ensure that the majority of children make even better progress from their different starting points.
- Develop the skills of lead practitioners so that they have a better impact on school improvement, planning, delivery and the work of the support staff.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The recently appointed headteacher has a clear vision for where she wants the nursery to go. With her drive and determination, she has inspired the staff to follow her on this journey of change and improvement. Leading by example, she has developed a dynamic culture in the nursery. As one parent testified, 'It is clear that the headteacher has the drive, vision and ability to enhance the nursery still further.'
- Already, in the term and a half since being appointed, she has improved communication with parents using social media. She has taken on board the recommendations of the inspection last term, commissioned a new website to ensure that this meets requirements, and worked with staff and governors on redesigning and refreshing the outdoor area.
- Her focus and organisation mean that the evaluation of the nursery is accurate. She knows precisely where the nursery could be better, and has correctly prioritised actions in the development plan to secure rapid improvement.
- The headteacher and governing body have high expectations of staff and children, in behaviour, welfare, progress and attainment. Staff are aware of this and are rising to the challenge. The headteacher's observations of teaching are focused on learning and progress. She is very clear in feedback to staff exactly what areas are strong and which need further improvement. This means that there is a culture of continuous improvement evolving in the nursery.
- Staff have access to a wide range of training opportunities and are very keen to take advantage of these. They all have trained in speech and language delays or difficulties, and other additional needs such as autism. They observe each other and visit different settings to share good practice.
- The headteacher has identified that the role of the lead teacher is not yet embedded across the nursery, so she is developing this role to encourage them to take a more active part in the leadership and management of the school. Since the inspection last term, she has already begun to progress in this area of improvement. For example, the lead teachers have looked at how well children are progressing and reported on this to the headteacher. However, lead teachers cannot say how their actions are having an impact on the quality of the planning and delivery by support staff and the learning outcomes of the children.
- Children enjoy their time in the nursery because of the wide range of interesting activities that are provided, from twinning with pre-schools in Poland and Sweden to visiting the planetarium as part of a project on space. The annual review of the curriculum demonstrates this wide breadth, alongside a focus on preparing children for life in modern Britain.
- The headteacher and governing body ensure that any additional funding received to support disadvantaged children, and for children who have more complex SEN and/or disabilities, is used wisely to address their individual needs. They monitor these children's progress intently, and ensure that they are making better progress because of the actions being taken.

- The role of the emotional literacy support assistant is very successful in addressing the emotional needs of some children. The work they do to support children in overcoming any individual concerns is excellent. Through exploring and discussing emotions they enable children to manage their own feelings. They have also reviewed the environment and redesigned the toilet area to address the concerns of some children and so develop independent self-hygiene practices.
- Relationships with parents are now much improved due to better communication through the establishment of a social media site. They feel that the school is well led and managed and, as one parent stated to the inspector, they 'have seen great improvements since the new headteacher arrived'.

### **Governance of the school**

- The governing body provides extremely strong leadership. The governors come from a wide range of backgrounds, including education, and have identified any gaps in skills they may have. Any new recruitment to the governors seeks to address these, as does governor training.
- Governors know the school well. They challenge and support effectively, using both information received from the headteacher about children's progress and their own knowledge from focused visits.
- Governors see that improving outcomes for children lies at the heart of all they do. For example, they challenged the nursery regarding outcomes in personal and social development, behaviour and welfare and encouraged the headteacher to develop the role of the emotional literacy support assistant further.
- They now rigorously monitor the school improvement plan to ensure that there is positive progress. For example, following a parental survey it was found that parents wanted better communication. Following a challenge from the governing body this has now improved.
- They are aware of how well teachers are meeting the targets set for them and so have a clear view of the standard of teaching in the nursery.
- They ensure that the arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements as a minimum, and that their own knowledge is up to date.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Records for children causing concern are assiduously monitored so that, should concerns escalate, there is a straightforward evidence trail and referrals can be made swiftly.
- Where a referral has been made, relationships with other professionals have been quickly established. There is excellent partnership working to ensure that the most vulnerable children are safe.
- All staff have regular update training to ensure that their knowledge is up to date. They regularly discuss any concerns in staff meetings and decide the most appropriate

course of action to ensure that children remain safe always.

- The site is well maintained, and access to teaching areas and other entrances are securely locked. Parents say that they use a password system should anyone different than usual be collecting their child.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Support staff are extremely knowledgeable and skilled in developing children's learning. They use their observations to inform their assessments. These are then used to identify the next steps for each child. The 'records of achievement' composed for each child are of good quality and demonstrate well where the child is at. The nursery has recognised that this could be even better and is introducing a new computer-based assessment process to enable instant access and contributions by all adults, including parents.
- While all staff expertly question children to ensure that they are secure in their understanding of concepts, some opportunities are missed to enhance their critical thinking skills further through more detailed questioning. For example, when challenged as to why water would not run into a tube a child offered the fact that water always runs downwards, but there was no further challenge as to why they thought this happened.
- Teaching by the lead teachers is effective in ensuring good progress for the majority of children, but does not consistently challenge the most able. For instance, children were observed learning new initial sounds. However, those who quickly grasped this, or already had that knowledge, were not stretched to apply their learning.
- Support for children who have SEN and/or disabilities is highly successful. Specialist staff question and challenge these children to stretch their understanding further. For instance, when playing a target game trying to land on a square in order, a child fired their beanbag too far. Immediately the member of staff used this as a learning opportunity and asked what number they thought that would be. Having given an excellent estimate, the child then was given an additional task of finding a number seven in the environment.
- Staff ensure the integration of children who have SEN and/or disabilities, by adapting activities and supporting children individually so that any adult-led learning is accessible to them. For example, in a phonics session, a child was effectively given additional support by making the activity more practical, with animals to identify initial sounds.
- Staff have taken on board the findings of the previous inspection and have focused on the provision of opportunities for writing and literacy across the provision, with a focus on boys' literacy. This is having some success. During the inspection three boys were observed playing detectives, as part of the community superheroes theme. They were tracking down a criminal and were using a clipboard to record answers to their questions. Another boy talked to the inspector about the book he was using in the construction area. Parents talked of how their children were reading and writing at home and could talk about the various aspects of a book, such as the author and the 'blurb' on the back.
- An innovative approach to story-writing has captured children's imagination. During the

inspection children were eagerly writing their superhero stories. They could confidently talk to the inspector about the different elements of their story, such as characters, issues and resolutions. They are proud of the stories they write, and fluently read them aloud to others.

- Parents were as one in their praise of the staff and the progress that their children make during their time in the nursery. An example of a typical response is, 'My child is happy, safe and has made lots of progress in their learning and development. Both indoor and outdoor activities planned stimulate my child, they come home excited and chatting about what they have done during the day.'

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The emotional literacy support assistant is highly effective in her role. She works with small groups and individuals to develop their understanding of their own and others' feelings and needs. She also successfully reviews the nursery environment and adapts this to ensure that children overcome any phobias or fears. For instance, the toilet area has been redesigned to be less clinical and more child-friendly, to support better children's development of self-care and hygiene.
- Parents spoken to all commented on the positive, caring and nurturing environment that staff have developed, instilling those qualities in the children. The whole ethos of the nursery and the highest expectations for behaviour mean that there are no forms of bullying and indeed no incidents are reported. As one parent stated in response to the parent survey, 'My child talks regularly about the values they are learning at nursery, how to share, treat others kindly and gently, how to listen and ask questions.'
- Staff ensure that there is always a healthy snack and water freely available. Children are encouraged to drink during hot weather and to wear protective clothing. In the breakfast and after-school club, lists of allergies are prominently displayed to ensure that children are safe. Staff promote independence during breakfast time, with children pouring their own drinks, and using knives correctly to spread butter on their toast.
- Children are taught to keep safe from abuse. They are effectively taught about the right to personal space and that they can say 'No' if they do not feel comfortable during peer massage.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- They show great respect for differences between themselves and others, for example including children who have SEN and/or disabilities, in their play. This is because staff set a very clear and positive example to them of how to behave.
- Children work together on tasks and activities and understand the distinct roles within a team. One group was observed boat-building, with one child taking the lead, and

others working under their direction to complete the task efficiently.

- They listen to adults and to each other in a respectful manner and follow instructions perfectly. All children know the routines and are mainly engaged in their learning. Any low-level disruption is well managed and has no impact on learning.
- When working with their learning pairs in an adult-led phonics activity, children were observed listening hard to each other and helping each other to succeed in the task.
- Leaders check and follow up children's absences thoroughly and promptly. There is no persistent absence from school. Attendance is excellent. Clear messages are shared with parents about the importance of attendance as helpful preparation for primary school.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Good

- Most children start in the nursery with starting points that are in line with those found typically for children of their age. All children are building effectively on what they could do when they started at the nursery, regardless of their starting points. However, few make particularly rapid progress.
- Disadvantaged children make at least as good progress as their peers, if not better. This is the result of the highly effective spending of the early years pupil premium funding.
- Children who have SEN and/or disabilities, including those in the resource base provision, make excellent gains in their learning against their individual targets. Parents typically describe their progress as 'coming on in leaps and bounds'. This is a result of exceptional teaching and support. This ensures that the differing needs of this group of children are met, in a sharing and inclusive environment.
- There is no gap between the outcomes for boys and girls. Data is scrutinised on a regular basis. Since the last inspection a wider and more interesting range of writing activities has been provided, both indoors and outside, to engage the interest of all children, but most notably boys. As a result, outcomes in reading and writing are now improving.
- Overall, children leave the nursery happy, confident and well prepared for their transition to Reception or the next stage of their education.

## School details

Unique reference number	121266
Local authority	York
Inspection number	10051886

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 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julia Hedley-Jones
Headteacher	Claire Rigden
Telephone number	01904 622291
Website	<a href="http://www.stpaulsnurseryschool.co.uk">www.stpaulsnurseryschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:st.pauls.nursery@york.gov.uk">st.pauls.nursery@york.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2018

## Information about this school



- This is an average-sized nursery school.
- The headteacher took up post in January 2018.
- Children attend on a flexible part-time basis, mornings, afternoons or full days. The school also offers a breakfast club and after-school club.
- Children join the school after their third birthday and some consequently spend five terms with the school.
- Almost all children are of White British heritage.
- There are a small number of children who are eligible for the early years pupil premium.
- The school has up to 12 places of enhanced provision for children who have SEN and/or disabilities.

### **Information about this inspection**

- The lead inspector carried out joint observations of teaching and learning with the headteacher, both indoors and outside, looked at examples of children's work and spoke to children.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher and middle leaders. He also talked with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. He spoke with a representative of the local authority over the telephone.
- The lead inspector scrutinised the school's website and a range of documentation, including records of assessment and children's progress, planning for improvement, monitoring of teaching and learning, governors' meetings and those relating to attendance and safeguarding.
- The lead inspector considered the 36 responses made by parents to Parent View and spoke with three parents.
- Additionally, the lead inspector looked at the nine responses to the staff questionnaire and spoke to members of staff.

### **Inspection team**

Geoff Dorrity, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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