

Ilminster Avenue Specialist Nursery School

Ilminster Avenue, Knowle West, Bristol BS4 1BX

Inspection dates

24–25 April 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The acting headteacher has ensured that the school has stabilised after many changes in staffing. Together with his senior team, he has tackled many of the recommendations from last year's inspection successfully. However, the effectiveness of middle leaders needs more time to become fully embedded.
- The Nursery is at the heart of the community and serves its children and families well. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the staff and the school's effectiveness.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the Nursery and know what needs to be done to move the school forward.
- The acting headteacher has ensured that the curriculum is particularly well planned to help the children develop their communication and language skills and to support their emotional, social and personal development.
- Leaders make effective use of additional funds to provide specialist support for those children who are disadvantaged. These children make good progress.
- Staff provide a high standard of care and welfare for children. Safeguarding procedures are well known, understood and implemented consistently. Children are taught effectively how to keep themselves safe.
- Children's behaviour is good. They work and play happily together and develop confidence as they learn. Relationships between practitioners and children are warm and nurturing.
- Early years practitioners know well how young children learn. Consequently, children make good progress.
- Practitioners make effective use of observations to evaluate how well children are developing. On occasions, assessment information to identify what children need to do next to progress in their learning, particularly in writing, is not used to best effect.
- The school places a high priority on developing children's early reading skills. Children listen attentively to stories, enjoy sharing books and consequently make strong progress in developing a wide vocabulary and a love of books.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive highly effective support. As a result, they make significant progress against their specific targets.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious for the Nursery and have high expectations for its future. However, although very clear about the strengths of the Nursery, governors are less secure about the areas of the school's work that need further development.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing governors' skills in challenging and holding leaders to account for the effectiveness of the school
 - increasing the effectiveness of middle leaders in supporting practitioners so that children continue to make strong progress.
- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by refining practitioners' use of assessment to strengthen children's progress, particularly in their early writing skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders have worked determinedly to tackle the actions from the previous inspection. Many aspects have been tackled successfully.
- The acting headteacher has developed a committed team of middle leaders, who are knowledgeable and experienced. However, middle leaders' work to support other practitioners' practice is in its early stages. There are many strengths across the school, but there is a lack of coordination and consistency.
- The acting headteacher has a clear vision for the school, which is supported by all leaders and staff. He has proved extremely resilient during his time in post. Even during a period of turbulence in restructuring and changes in staffing, he has focused relentlessly on ensuring that the children are well served. His determination to push changes through for the benefit of the children is widely praised by the staff and parents.
- Leaders have enhanced the school's curriculum and develop children's curiosity, concentration and confidence in using their own ideas. As a result of this work, children are resilient learners and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Leaders and governors see continuous professional development as a priority for the staff. Staff really value this, and comment on how the acting headteacher proactively supports them in this. Teaching is strong across the Nursery.
- Senior leaders are developing a more accurate system for identifying what children know and can do and checking their progress. This has enabled the swift identification of any slowing of progress and the introduction of effective interventions.
- Leaders make effective use of additional funding to ensure that any barriers to children's education are minimised.
- Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural learning is strongly promoted through the varied curriculum. Children learn about British values and what it is like to be a part of their local and national communities. Leaders make good use of the environment and families from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds to enrich children's experiences. Cultural celebrations in the school are often led by children and their families.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very clear about the strengths of the Nursery. They recognise the crucial part it plays within the local community through the support it provides for families and the safe and nurturing environment. Visits to the Nursery and reports from leaders help governors to gain an understanding of the school's effectiveness. However, the governing body is still at an early stage of challenging leaders and holding them to account for continual improvement.
- The recent appointment of a chair of governors who is also a national leader of governance has strengthened the effectiveness of the governing body. The recent

drive for governors to undertake training has ensured that governors are now well placed to carry out their statutory responsibilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders keep a careful overview of potential issues about children’s protection and welfare. School safeguarding records are maintained to a high standard.
- The Nursery works well with external agencies to meet the needs of all children, particularly the most vulnerable. Referrals to other professionals are prompt and appropriate.
- Leaders have tackled weaknesses in the administration of the recruitment and selection of staff. There are comprehensive procedures in place to ensure that staff know and understand the school’s procedures to keep children safe.
- The school works well with parents and other stakeholders to ensure that children are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- All staff are involved in assessing children, and robust moderation procedures ensure that assessments over time provide an accurate picture of children’s successes. Practitioners make effective use of their sound knowledge of child development to interact with children and plan activities to extend children’s learning. However, practitioners are less adept at using their observations to evaluate and develop children’s early writing skills, compared to other areas of learning.
- Practitioners’ planning takes account of children’s interests and the things they say and do. Links to playing and exploring and children having and testing their own ideas are strong. Consequently, children sustain their concentration and make good progress in these areas. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- In all classes, relationships are warm and enabling. Consequently, children behave well and engage positively in their learning.
- Activities capture children’s interest, and so they sustain their concentration for extended periods of time. Children develop social skills that enable them to play cooperatively.
- Teaching interventions are used extremely well to enable those who need to catch up to do so. Children with SEND are well supported by staff so that they too can access all the opportunities the Nursery offers, alongside their friends. Advice and guidance from other professionals are eagerly adopted by staff to ensure that these children progress well towards their individual targets.
- Adults actively engage in activities with children. Through questioning and modelling, they extend children’s learning. For example, children learn to listen carefully, beat out a rhythm and stop and start on cue when playing instruments.

- All staff make effective use of the school's resources inside and out. Equipment is safe and well cared for. Children's imaginations are fired by the creative use of everyday materials and resources.
- Staff share accurate information with parents about their child's progress. Positive relationships with parents are a strength of the school. There are many opportunities for parental involvement, including parents joining classes for singing and story-time sessions. Parents say that staff really help them to support their children's learning at home and are happy that their children are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Children are happy, secure and confident. They arrive excitedly at the start of each session and join in eagerly with the settling-in activities. Children show sustained levels of concentration.
- Children are encouraged to take care of nature and their surroundings and respond well to this. For example, in a settling activity, children handled live snails, taking great care.
- Each key person knows their children exceptionally well. Staff pay excellent attention to children's welfare. The site manager and other staff are meticulous in ensuring that both indoor and outdoor environments are safe places for children to learn.
- All children receive high-quality care. Where children have disabilities, staff liaise effectively with external agencies and follow their guidance well. Consequently, children are safe and happy and receive high-quality medical care and support.
- Staff make effective use of the good resources, including the school library, to develop children's early reading skills.
- Parents are happy that their children are safe and well cared for in the Nursery. Parent-staff relationships are trusting and respectful. Parents consider the Nursery 'goes the extra mile' and that the support their children receive is 'priceless'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is good.
- Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. Children know their routines well and are clear about how they should behave. As a result, children develop good social skills and make positive choices.
- Leaders promote the good attendance of children effectively. As a result, most children come to the Nursery very regularly. You work closely with the small number of parents whose children do not attend as often as they could, so that the attendance of these children increases.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- All children make good progress in their learning and development, regardless of their starting points. The school is particularly successful in improving children's progress in communication and language, and in personal, social and emotional development.
- Children develop good early reading skills and learn to enjoy books. The strong focus on developing children's vocabulary is highly effective. Inspectors observed children eager to share books and retell stories. Children who have English as an additional language make very good progress, as a result of the school's rich language environment.
- Those children who are in receipt of the early years pupil premium make good, and sometimes better, progress than their peers in all areas of learning. The funds are used effectively to enrich the children's experiences and support their language development.
- Two-year-olds have a good start to their learning and make strong progress. This is a result of well-planned and sensitive support which enables them to develop their skills and grow in confidence.
- Children with SEND demonstrate good progress and integrate well into the life of the Nursery. The one-to-one interventions are correctly focused on the child's individual needs, meaning they achieve their bespoke targets.
- Children who are disadvantaged make rapid progress from their individual starting points and any gaps in their attainment compared with that of other children are soon closed. This is because the additional funding provided by the government is targeted very appropriately to give these children the additional support they need.
- Transition arrangements are effective. Parents state children settle swiftly into their new school because of the foundations set in the Nursery. Parents appreciate the time taken by staff to support their children and how this means children are confident to move on to their next school.

School details

Unique reference number	108896
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	10052891

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	2 to 4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Moorhouse
Acting headteacher	Matt Caldwell
Telephone number	0117 9030255
Website	www.ilminsterchildren.com
Email address	ilminsteravenuen@bristol-schools.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 January 2018

Information about this school

- The Nursery is an average-sized Nursery. There has been considerable change since the last full inspection in July 2014. Further changes in staffing have taken place since the school's inspection in January 2018. The Nursery was linked with a children's centre on the same site, but the children's centre has now closed.
- The school has retained its name as a 'specialist' Nursery for pupils with SEND and currently has one specialist class supporting children with complex and profound learning and medical needs.
- The Nursery offers both full-time and part-time places for three- to four-year-olds and also provision for two-year-olds. Following consultation with parents, it was decided that all children with 15 hours entitlement should attend for two-and-a-half days consecutively.
- The majority of pupils are of White British origin.

- Approximately one sixth of the children at the start of the Nursery Year are entitled to the early years pupil premium.
- The number of children with English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for SEND is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed children learning in all classes.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body and a local authority officer.
- The lead inspector met with the acting headteacher to review the school's latest assessment information, as well as safeguarding and attendance records. She also reviewed school policies and the school's evaluation of its work.
- Both inspectors met with teams of teaching staff to discuss the school's curriculum and the professional development they receive.
- An inspector observed children at lunchtimes and spoke with staff about individual children's needs.
- The responses of 33 parents and carers who completed the online survey Parent View were analysed, along with 33 additional free-text responses. The views of many parents were considered through informal discussions during the inspection.

Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alison Cogher

Ofsted Inspector

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