

Inspection of an outstanding school: Netherton Park Nursery School

Netherton Park, Netherton, Dudley, West Midlands DY2 9QF

Inspection date: 15 November 2022

Outcome

Netherton Park Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders bring their vision of 'a place where children are at the heart of learning' to life. Staff open their arms and their hearts to children and their families. They wrap dedicated care and support around each and every one, from beginning to end. Parents and carers cannot speak highly enough of all that leaders and staff do for them. 'This is an amazing, caring and nurturing school. It looks after the child and their well-being, and offers support for the families,' was typical of all comments made by parents.

The rhythm of the year, the term and the day supports children's learning. Children are inquisitive and happy learners. They learn right from wrong. Staff do not tolerate unkind words, for example about skin colour. Staff give sensitive support so children have the right words to talk about feelings. This helps children to sort out any squabbles with their friends.

The classrooms and outside areas are extremely well planned to meet the needs of young children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Every minute of learning counts. Children explore, play, problem-solve and think for themselves every day. They concentrate deeply and achieve well.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Governors and senior leaders lead by example. They expect and give the very best of themselves. They demand this of others. Governors and all staff are advocates of, and ambassadors for, children with SEND. 'Leapfrog' and 'Leapfrog Too', the resourced provisions for children with SEND, add a unique and special dimension to the school.

Children with SEND receive highly effective support. Adults have a strong understanding of the difficulties these children face. They tailor activities to match each child's needs. In the words of a member of staff, 'We put them through their paces.' Adults include children with SEND in the full life of the school. These children achieve well.

Leaders have developed a highly ambitious curriculum. It gets straight to the heart of what young children need. It is built around words, stories and rhymes. This is helping children to be ready to learn to read and have a love of books. Adults skilfully use the commenting approach and conversations in a way that fully engages children. No matter where you are, or at what time of the day, staff are equipping children with language for life. This stands true for children with SEND too. They learn to communicate through words, signs and actions so that they can have their voice heard. Children make very strong progress from their different starting points. They develop new skills and deepen their understanding of the world around them.

Leaders take parents on a learning journey with their child. A range of workshops, the SEND café and stay-and-play sessions, along with shared story times, help parents to know how best to help their child at home. A common theme echoed by all parents was how invaluable these moments are, and that staff hold 'a special place in the heart of families'. There is a deep sense of all staff being there for the whole family. From form filling to providing a shoulder to lean on, nothing is too much trouble.

Children learn to care for themselves and others. They enjoy looking after 'Gary the snail'. They learn to consider risks in a safe environment. Staff help children to know how to be fit, healthy and active. Children enjoy spending time and chatting together at fruit and snack time and during lunchtime. Staff make the most of every opportunity for learning during these social times, for example by talking about shapes, fractions, healthy food and respect for individual preferences.

Staff are united in their desire to make sure that children develop into creative, confident and caring individuals. Children's personal development is carefully nurtured. Visits and visitors are back on the agenda following the COVID-19 pandemic. These cover a range of interests, including emergency services, animals around the world and walking to the local shops to buy ingredients for cooking soup. The recent 'Tiger Café' was enjoyed by all.

Staff are intrinsic to this successful nursery. They have survived numerous changes and come through stronger and united in wanting to achieve excellence. Staff recognise and praise the leaders of the school for their care and consideration of well-being and workload. Staff training is valued, as is the support they give each other when dealing with challenging situations. As a parent said, echoing the view of many, 'The staff are wonderful. I know my child is in good, safe hands. They do an amazing job and fully deserve to be outstanding, as that sums them up entirely.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ingrained safeguarding into all that they do. Checks on staff being safe to work in school are thorough. Leaders provide regular training for staff. This works well. Staff report any worries they have about children. Leaders respond rapidly. They are quick to involve external agencies as needed.

Children learn to keep safe in many ways. They sing songs about road and fire safety. They know to put coats on so they do not get wet and cold. They learn that some people can become poorly if they eat certain foods. Children take care of each other.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in March 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	103766
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10240841
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs of governing body	Mary Turner and Susan Cooper
Headteacher	Alison Ward
Website	www.nethertonparknursery.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in June 2021 and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2021.
- The school caters for two-year-olds in its 'Acorn' provision.
- Oak Nursery offers a mix of part-time places of 15 hours per week and 30 hours for working parents. The 15-hour places are taken as either a morning (8.40am to 11.40am for five days) or afternoon (12.30pm to 3.30pm for five days).
- There is a resourced provision for children with SEND. This is called 'Leapfrog'. The children have a range of complex communication needs. The provision caters for 16 children aged three and four. Leapfrog offers eight places within each session and is integrated within the mainstream nursery provision.
- An additional resourced provision for children with SEND moved to the school in September 2022. This is called 'Leapfrog Too'. These children have a range of severe and complex needs. The provision caters for 20 children aged three and four. Leapfrog Too offers 10 places within each session and is a specialist unit based in a building alongside the main nursery school building.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the safeguarding and pastoral lead and several senior leaders and senior early years practitioners.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in communication and language, physical development and mathematics. Inspectors visited adult-directed sessions and observed continuous provision, scrutinised curriculum planning and talked with staff about the way these areas are planned and taught.
- An inspector met with the two co-chairs of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The lead inspector reviewed responses to Ofsted's online parent and carer and staff surveys.
- The lead inspector met with leaders about the school's safeguarding procedures. She reviewed policies and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors observed daily routines and spoke to staff about pupils' safety.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings, a range of policies and information on the school's website

Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gill Turner

Ofsted Inspector

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