

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Scartho Nursery School

Pinfold Lane, Scartho, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire DN33 2EW

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Inspection date:

9 November 2022

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Strong relationships and good routines established by staff ensure that this is a place where children feel secure and happy. Parents and carers are positive about the care their children receive. Classrooms are calm. Right from the start, adults help children to manage their behaviour well. Children and adults speak kindly to each other. Children listen to what others have to say. They take turns and are keen to ask questions.

Adults in the classroom know the children and their families well. They can spot when something is not quite right and respond to it quickly and effectively. They know what to do next for children to keep them safe in school and to help them learn. However, some of the ambition that leaders have for children is not always realised because they have not set their expectations out clearly. Some of the arrangements for safeguarding children and for the curriculum are not as up to date as they should be.

Children get a good grounding in the basic skills. Communication, language and mathematics are woven into activities and conversations throughout the day so that children get a good grasp of number and broaden their vocabulary.

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

Changes in leadership arrangements over time, challenges in ensuring that there is the right number of staff supporting children, and financial pressures have had an impact on the school's overall effectiveness. Leaders have created a positive, secure and purposeful environment for children to learn. However, some systems and arrangements at a leadership level are not up to date. Sometimes, aspects of the school's work are left to chance because there is uncertainty about roles and responsibilities.

Adults with a good understanding of the expectations of the early years curriculum know their children well. They know the next steps children need to take to be successful across areas of learning. There is ambition in the vocabulary used by adults, the expectations in behaviour and in children becoming independent. However, the expectations of what children will learn and when over their time in the school are not clearly defined. Adults in the classroom adapt their teaching well to the interests of children and day-to-day events and celebrations, but sometimes important learning is missed.

Adults use a wide range of appropriate activities to support children in all areas of learning. Careful adult questioning in these activities helps children to make progress and gain confidence. However, because the curriculum expectations are not clearly set out at each stage, systems to check how well children are gaining the knowledge they need to be ready for primary school are limited. The checks are not always matched to what children are taught. Learning is not broken down into the small steps of progress individual children make.

Stories, songs and rhymes are part of school life. Adults use them skilfully and seamlessly throughout the day to establish good routines and revisit what children have learned. For example, in a mathematics activity, children enthusiastically join in with, 'One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive.' They count on their fingers as they sing to help them count in a dice game.

The provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has been carefully considered. Each child's needs have been taken into account to ensure that they are successful in the Bluebell Room. Regular communication with the local authority's child development centre representative has supported staff in planning the next steps for these children.

Governors rightly celebrate the positive and nurturing relationships in the school. They have given their attention to financial challenges. They understand decisions that have been made to support children with SEND. Beyond these aspects, they have limited knowledge to provide effective challenge to school leaders. They have not been involved in the school leaders' evaluation of the school, so have limited understanding of what aspects most need improvement, for example in the curriculum on offer.

Staff feel well supported by leaders in managing their workload and well-being. Staff have had some recent essential training but, other than that, professional development opportunities have been sparse. Leaders have identified that opportunities to work together and develop a better understanding of new expectations in the curriculum, for example, are needed.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Children are kept safe because the staff who work with them take appropriate action when they spot a sign that something might be wrong. Adults engage with other agencies when necessary to support children. However, some of the delegation of duties and

responsibilities of leaders, at all levels, are not clear. There has not been a strong strategic oversight of this essential part of the school's work.

Leaders' knowledge of, and checks on, the expectations for safely recruiting staff are not as strong as they should be. Some aspects of the school records and procedures had to be updated and improved during the inspection.

Children are taught a range of ways to keep themselves safe, often in response to situations or topics that arise over the course of the school year. Similar to other areas of the curriculum, expectations of exactly what children will be taught are not set out. It is unclear whether or not children have been taught some of the aspects that leaders consider most important for children to know about keeping safe.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders' strategic roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe are not well enough defined or understood by leaders at all levels. All staff have appropriate training that helps to protect children. However, training of the designated safeguarding lead, governors and school leaders has not been updated regularly enough to ensure that they are clear about current expectations in the Department for Education's statutory guidance. Leaders should urgently ensure that they know exactly who is responsible for what, including who will check on the school's arrangements and when.
- There is no clearly defined curriculum that sets out what children should achieve at each stage and how this will be checked on. The curriculum that children receive relies on the expertise of classroom practitioners. This means that the content that leaders consider important in each area of learning may sometimes be missed. Leaders should ensure that they set out the most important content that children will learn and how they will build on this knowledge over their time in school. Leaders should use their checks on this curriculum to inform staff about what children need to learn next and to inform leaders which aspects of the curriculum may need further development.
- The governing body and school leaders have not worked effectively enough together to ensure there is a clear and shared understanding of the aspects the school most needs to improve. Leaders should work together to establish effective ways to check the effectiveness of the school and prioritise actions for improvement.

## **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 judgments 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 2013.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117700
<b>Local authority</b>	North East Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211254
<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	37
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Craig Sharpe
<b>Head of school</b>	Sarah Bate
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.scarthonursery.co.uk">www.scarthonursery.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is federated with Western Primary School. There is one governing body across the two schools. The executive headteacher is also the headteacher of Western Primary School. The head of school is also the acting headteacher of Great Coates Village Nursery School.
- Children attend for morning or afternoon sessions or for the full day.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met regularly with the head of school and the executive headteacher throughout the inspection. They also met with staff, representatives from the governing body and a representative from North East Lincolnshire local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these areas of learning: communication and language; personal, social and emotional development; and mathematics. For each

deep dive, inspectors met with leaders and spent time in classrooms observing the curriculum in action, as well as observing routines and interactions with adults.

- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, documentation and procedures. They spoke to staff, parents, the local authority representative and governors about the arrangements in place to support their evaluation of safeguarding in the school.
- The views of parents were considered from their responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and by speaking to them.
- Inspectors spoke to staff and reviewed their responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Kate Rowley, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Elaine Watson

Ofsted Inspector

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