

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Newtown Nursery School

Hockley Close, Newtown, Birmingham, West Midlands B19 2NS

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Inspection date: 31 January 2023

## **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?**

Children are happy and settled at school. They form close relationships with staff, who nurture and value every child. Children are supported well to understand and manage their emotions. If they are upset, adults talk gently to them and coax them to join in with activities. Adults are highly attentive to children's needs and keep them safe.

Leaders and staff want the best for children. They believe strongly that every child is unique. They promote values such as respect, dignity and inclusion to boost children's self-esteem and confidence. This ensures that children's personal, social and emotional needs are met well. However, leaders have not identified the precise knowledge, skills and vocabulary they want children to learn through the early years curriculum. As a result, there is variability and gaps in children's achievement.

Most children behave well. Staff deal with any unkind behaviour effectively. They encourage children to be kind to one another and explain the importance of sharing equipment. On occasion, there is inconsistency among staff in promoting good listening and the importance of good manners.

The school has successfully achieved 'Health for Life' and 'Rights Respecting School' awards in recognition of its commitment to improving children's personal development.

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

Leaders are clear about the standards they want children to achieve by the time they leave the Nursery. These standards are taken from published documents devised for early years practitioners. However, leaders have not broken these broad statements down into smaller steps to create a coherent curriculum. The building blocks that children need to reach these standards are missing. As a result, staff do not have sufficient guidance to

help them gradually build up children's skills and knowledge. This leads to gaps in children's learning.

Staff have a sound understanding of how children learn and develop. They work and play alongside children. Staff watch what children do and listen to what they say. They prompt and guide them when needed to move their learning forward.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in school life. They have small-group time in the 'Daisy room' to work on individual targets but also spend time in the main classrooms. This provides a suitable balance of experiences. However, some staff have not received recent or specific training to fully support individual children. As a result, they sometimes struggle to maintain a child's attention and focus.

Adults support children to learn and use new vocabulary, including children who speak English as an additional language. They encourage children to talk about what they are doing. Adults read daily to children and send storybooks home each week to foster a love of reading. They link books to activities to extend learning. For example, children enjoyed exploring tropical fruits after hearing the story of 'Handa's Surprise'.

Staff draw on children's interests and abilities to create exciting learning spaces. They provide a wide range of activities and resources to allow children to explore, investigate and be creative. Adults give careful thought to the equipment provided to promote children's physical development. They challenge children of different ages and abilities. For example, ramps and ladders are used outdoors to help children develop their stability and balance. Children's fine motor skills are developed through activities such as using clay indoors.

Children learn to care for themselves and others. They are encouraged from the outset to be independent, for example putting on their coats and boots. Children benefit from taking part in forest school and exploring the outdoor environment. They enjoy the creative opportunities provided, such as working with an artist in residence. They learn about the different faiths and cultures of families that attend the school.

Staff are happy and positive about the community spirit in the school. They appreciate leaders' efforts to reduce their workload and consideration given to their well-being. Staff support each other and, as one said, are committed to 'making a difference to children's lives'.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, governors and staff keep children's well-being and safety at the heart of everything they do. Staff constantly check on children's safety. They are quick to act when they see potential hazards or dangers. Parents are confident that the school is a safe environment for their children.

Staff know how to recognise signs of abuse because they are well trained. Leaders ensure that relevant recruitment checks are carried out on staff before employing them. Leaders are quick to seek advice and support from external agencies where concerns are raised and a child is potentially at risk of harm.

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

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

- Leaders have not constructed a robust and well-sequenced curriculum. They have not considered how children will build their learning over time to achieve the end goals identified. Therefore, children lack some of the knowledge they need to be successful at the next stage of their education. Leaders should identify the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary they want children to learn in each area of learning, and provide staff with the guidance needed to implement these.
- Some staff lack the training and guidance needed to support children with SEND. This means that they are not aware of the most effective strategies to use. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the training and guidance they need to maximise the support they provide to children with complex needs.

## **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 some 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 February 2018.

## **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>	103141
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268915
<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	114
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Sean Delaney
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sharon Lewis (Executive Headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.newtown.bham.sch.uk">www.newtown.bham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 January 2018 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school joined the Birmingham Federation of Maintained Nursery Schools in September 2018. It is one of nine nursery schools in the federation.
- Newtown Nursery works closely with Lillian De Lissa Nursery and St Thomas Centre Nursery School in a small cluster. This cluster is served by a 'local committee' but remains accountable to the Birmingham Federation Governing Board.
- There has been a change of leadership since the previous inspection. The current executive headteacher took up her post on 30 January 2023. The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2020.
- The school provides full- and part-time places for children aged two to five years old.
- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher and two members of the federation governing body, including the chair of governors. A telephone discussion was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered all areas of learning but focused closely on communication and language, literacy, mathematics and physical development.
- Inspectors met with leaders and staff to discuss their plans for children’s learning and development. They observed learning both in classrooms and outdoors. They spoke with children and with staff and looked at examples of children’s learning.
- Inspectors met with all teaching staff to talk about curriculum, staff workload, the behaviour and personal development of pupils and provision for children with special educational needs.
- Inspectors talked informally with parents at different times during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed behaviour of children throughout the day.
- Inspectors reviewed arrangements for keeping children safe. This included checking that leaders make sure that all staff undergo all necessary pre-employment checks and talking to the safeguarding leader about systems in place.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents, including the school’s self-evaluation and plans for improvement. Governor reports were also scrutinised.

### **Inspection team**

Heather Simpson, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Karen O’Keefe

Ofsted Inspector

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