

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Sandbank Nursery School

Elmore Row, Bloxwich, Walsall, West Midlands WS3 2HR

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2023

## **Outcome**

Sandbank Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

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

Leaders at Sandbank Nursery School are highly ambitious for each and every child. Children are happy and safe. They happily come to Nursery smiling, eager to learn and play. This is because it is a brilliant place to be, with adults who show high levels of care. They put children's needs and interests first. Children enjoy trips on the school minibus to new places, such as a farm, woodlands, a castle and an outdoor activity area.

Leaders have extremely high expectations of children's behaviour. They set clear boundaries and ensure that there are clear and consistent routines. Children are polite and kind to one another. They know what is expected of them. Incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are very rare and leaders deal with any issues immediately. As a result, children are exceptionally well behaved throughout the day and over time.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One parent's comments on Ofsted Parent View were typical of many when they said, 'Sandbank is a friendly nursery where children have lots of fun learning. Staff make sure the children explore and learn in a variety of ways. My child always comes out happy and looks forward to returning day after day.'

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

Leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum that is carefully structured and sequenced. They ensure that staff have the training and resources they need to deliver it effectively. Staff tailor the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of children. They swiftly address misconceptions and identify gaps in learning. Adults help children to recall and remember what they have learned, for example talking about displays of recent learning about number and Chinese New Year. This helps children to know and remember more. Leaders check how well children learn the curriculum and ensure that they strive to continuously improve. As a result, children get off to a great start.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are given the highest priority. They receive the care and support they need to be successful in school. Their needs are accurately identified. Effective partnership working with local agencies means that children swiftly get the right support. Suitable adaptations to the curriculum, additional adult support and bespoke resources are provided as required. Pupils with SEND achieve very well.

Reading daily to children is at the heart of this school's work. Adults share age-appropriate books with children throughout the day. Staff are well trained to teach early reading and mathematics effectively. They teach daily phonics sessions well, and in a fun way. This helps children to practise making new sounds. A wealth of exciting and stimulating activities interest and motivate children. For example, children enjoy singing songs and rhymes. They work well together when exploring construction equipment. Outside, children learn and practise new skills such as cycling and climbing. The forest school provides opportunities to explore nature. For example, children create homes for woodland animals and hunt for minibeasts linked to the story 'The Gruffalo'. All of this supports children to be very well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

Leaders carefully plan opportunities for children's personal, social and emotional development. Well-established routines and systems help children to settle well into daily life. Children learn about different cultures and festivals. They know that their opinions and thoughts are valued. Children work and play alongside each other and are very well supported by adults to develop social skills. This helps them to develop an understanding of friendships. Children thrive personally and socially. They behave well and grow in confidence during their time at this Nursery.

Leaders, including governors, want the very best for every child. Governors make rigorous checks on the school's performance. They also challenge and educate themselves to view the school through the eyes of a two- three- or four-year-old. They constantly strive to improve opportunities and experiences so that the Nursery is the best it can be for all children. Staff feel well supported by 'compassionate leaders' who manage their workload and well-being in effective ways.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff attend regular safeguarding training. This means that staff know how to keep children safe from harm. They learn about how to identify and respond to welfare issues that children may experience. Staff record and report safeguarding concerns. Leaders scrutinise records and reports to check that decision-making is robust. The school has strong relationships with external agencies. This helps children and families in need of additional help to get the right support.

Leaders make sure that they undertake appropriate pre-employment checks on staff before they start working at the school.

## 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 September 2012.

## 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>	104134
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	10257045
<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	179
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Barry Dutton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dawn Kelly
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sandbanknurseryschool.co.uk">www.sandbanknurseryschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has federated with another local nursery school.

## 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.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these areas of learning: knowledge and understanding of the world, mathematical development and early reading. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some children about their learning and looked at samples of children's work.
- The inspector observed children in reading activities with familiar adults. The inspector reviewed reading resources.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation on the school's website.

- The inspector scrutinised the school’s safeguarding arrangements. This included examining the record of employment checks on school staff.
- The inspector observed children’s behaviour in lessons and at other times during the day.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, lead teachers, the special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding leader, curriculum leaders, representatives of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View and staff surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Lorraine Lord, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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