

Inspection of an outstanding school: Millfields Nursery School

Lichfield Road, Bloxwich, Walsall, West Midlands WS3 3LU

Inspection date: 8 March 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. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are happy and safe. They enjoy many different activities during their time at nursery. Staff build exceptional relationships with children. This helps children to feel secure within the setting. Staff build strong partnerships with parents and carers.

The nurture and care of children, alongside the range of opportunities for parental involvement are excellent. Leaders have a broad outline of what children will learn in place. However, the smaller steps of learning within each area are less visible.

Parents deeply appreciate the support and care shown by all staff to their child and themselves as a family. They value the many varied opportunities to join in with their child's learning.

Children are caring to each other and to visitors. Poor behaviour is exceptionally rare. All staff know the individual needs of children to a depth that is impressive. Staff successfully tune their actions to help children, support them, redirect attention and give time and space. They deal with children's squabbles and upsets skilfully. This helps these young children know right from wrong and to explore and learn well together.

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

Governors and leaders set the nursery firmly in the middle of its community. 'Playing, learning and achieving together' underpins all that happens across school life. The many strengths of togetherness can be seen and felt in both actions and words. Watching children's faces as they spend time with their keyworker is joyous and humbling. These

connections help children to grow their confidence and independence. Parents rightly note and treasure these developments.

The strong bonds between keyworker and child are nowhere more visible than for children with SEND who receive excellent support for their individual requirements. Leaders' ability to accurately identify additional needs is strong and swift. They are quick to involve external agencies to help diagnose needs, signpost resources and suggest strategies for working together in the best interests of the child. Leaders understand the importance of getting the right help in place as early as possible to aid the child's progress and move into primary school.

The sensory room provides a cosy, small space that helps children with SEND start and end their nursery session in a calm and smooth manner. Leaders' and staffs' knowledge of and provision for individual needs is ensuring children with SEND can fully participate in a way that is right for them. Parents of children with SEND feel supported, helped and listened to. As one parent stated, echoing the views of many, 'The support and guidance they provide is above and beyond.'

Going beyond is a real focus for this setting. Regular visits out of the nursery, as well as visitors coming into the nursery enable children to be part of the community. These experiences help to bring the wider world to life for children. They enjoy visits to the local library. They find out about keeping safe from visits by police and firefighters. Children learn the power of giving as they collect advent calendars for a local charity. They feel the sand beneath their toes and the joy of jumping waves as they visit the seaside with their families and staff.

Leaders are keen to help children learn more words, count with accuracy and find out about celebrations around the world. Leaders have set out an overview of what children will learn about at certain points at nursery. Staff use their regular checks and what they know about the children to provide exciting and engaging activities. However, the smaller pieces of learning needed to help children reach the defined end points are not set out clearly enough across all areas of learning. Children engage well with the activities but are not being helped to share what they are remembering well enough.

Staff give children a secure foundation in the love of stories and rhymes. Numbers, shapes and patterns are linked across learning times and the environment. Parents enjoy the celebration assemblies. They share special moments together, finding out what their child has been learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders check staff are safe to work with children. Leaders train staff well so that they can note concerns and know what and how to report these concerns. Staff know, understand and can explain the range of safeguarding systems in place. They portray a real sense of unity on the processes to follow and why these are important.

Children's behaviour and the way they follow routines is keeping them safe. They use tools outside in forest school safely and sensibly. They can ask for help, through words or actions, if they need it. They learn how the police and firefighters help keep them safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not defined the curriculum clearly enough. As a result, staff are unsure on where current learning sits as part of the learning journey. The learning is not as sequential as it needs to be. Leaders should continue to further develop the curriculum, making sure staff know and understand how each step of learning builds on what has gone before and into what comes next.

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 December 2016.

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	104138
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10205168
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	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Eleanor Boycott
Headteacher	Lynne Emery
Website	www.millfields-n.walsall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school provides before- and after-school care.

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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the nursery teacher and a room leader.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and mathematics. Inspectors visited adult-directed sessions and observed continuous provision, scrutinised curriculum documents and talked with staff about the way these areas are planned and taught.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector reviewed responses to Ofsted's online parent and staff surveys.

- The lead inspector met with the headteacher 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

Karen O’Keefe

Ofsted Inspector

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