

Inspection of Abercromby Nursery School

Falkner Street, Liverpool, Merseyside L8 7QA

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Abercromby Nursery is a wonderfully magical place to be. Children's faces beam with delight when they talk about their newly hatched chicks or are chosen in 'together time' for trying their best.

Children are safe and happy as they excitedly explore the inspirational learning environment and the captivating activities on offer. Staff always have children's best interests and welfare at heart. Children are confident that adults will care for and support them. The exceptional relationships that staff have with children create a warm and secure atmosphere where all children excel.

Whatever their starting points, children are exceptionally well supported in their learning and play by staff who are experts in understanding the needs of young children. In turn, children are inquisitive and happy learners. The excellent start that they enjoy at Abercromby Nursery ensures that they thrive and are fully prepared for their next school.

Behaviour is exemplary. Children concentrate deeply. They are keen to persevere with a task until they get it right. They jump with glee when they learn new skills. Children form strong friendships, and they care greatly for one another. For example, when seeing a child sad another told her 'It is okay, we are all friends here.' Leaders make sure any potential bullying is nipped in the bud.

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

Leaders, governors and staff deliver an innovative and ambitious curriculum to all children. They are committed to ensuring that every child that attends Abercromby Nursery, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are offered the very best foundation for their future education. They are highly successful in making this happen.

Leaders draw on the best early years research and practice to inform their curriculum. In each area of learning, the curriculum is exceptionally well designed. It gets to the heart of what young children need to know and in what order. Staff ensure that the curriculum enables all children to build firmly on what they already know and can do.

Leaders value their staff. They prioritise staff's ongoing training to enable them to become experts in how to deliver the curriculum. This has made a significant and substantial contribution to the quality of education that children receive. As a result of high-quality staff training, coupled with a purposefully planned curriculum, children's achievement is excellent. Children are incredibly well prepared for their next steps in education.

Staff listen carefully to what children say and they observe exactly what children do. Staff check children's learning carefully. They know just when to step in and when to step back. Consequently, children develop their confidence to try out new and challenging activities.

The provision for two- and three-year-olds is a hive of activity and caters exceptionally well for these young children. Staff are experts at teaching this age group. They edge up to children to play alongside them and then make the most of every opportunity for learning. Children relish learning to count while playing with the play dough or painting. They love to listen and join in with the songs that staff sing with them. A wide range of interesting and exciting activities help children to explore their environment. They listen to the sounds around them. They run, climb and learn to express themselves creatively. They learn new skills and deepen their understanding of the world around them.

Throughout the Nursery, staff seize every opportunity to skilfully use their interactions with children to develop their communication and language. This includes children who speak English as an additional language. Adults are quick to build on children's interests and curiosity. They expertly and sensitively add to and reinforce new vocabulary. Children quickly find their voice in the knowledge they will always be heard.

The school day is built around books, songs and rhymes. The enjoyment of reading and storytelling is a prominent feature of school life. Children gravitate towards adults to listen to a story. They were often seen initiating storytelling by taking a book to an adult to share with them and their friends. Staff draw on children's growing vocabulary and knowledge of story language. Children practise their growing knowledge and understanding of stories as they play with puppets and props. For example, outside, children delighted in making a bridge out of crates and planks for the 'Billy Goats Gruff'. Children also enjoy making up their own versions of the stories they have been immersed in. Older children begin to learn the initial phonetic sounds of words, such as in their names, and how to orally blend simple sounds to make words.

Staff are particularly effective at identifying and supporting children with SEND. They expertly use their knowledge of each child to put just the right strategies in place to make sure that children get the support they need. Children with SEND blossom and succeed, alongside their peers.

The school has a small, resourced provision for children with SEND. Children in this provision receive highly effective support from adults who have a strong understanding of the particular difficulties that these children face. Children achieve well and are fully involved in the life of school.

The personal development of children is carefully nurtured. Children, as well as adults, can be heard extolling the Abercromby values such as 'being kind and helpful' and 'everybody is important', for example when they play with each other and when spotting characters in stories that are not sharing or saying sorry. Staff

give sensitive support and guidance to help children talk about and manage their feelings.

Leaders and governors lead by example. Governors hold leaders fully to account for their work. Staff feel exceptionally well supported with their workload and well-being. Staff are very proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff at Abercromby Nursery believe that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Leaders ensure that staff and governors are exceptionally well trained and knowledgeable about keeping children safe. Staff report concerns promptly, and leaders respond diligently.

Leaders are extremely strong advocates for vulnerable pupils and their families. Where safeguarding needs are identified, support is swift. Leaders are quick to engage external agencies when needed. They are not afraid to challenge if they think more should be done.

The curriculum provides lots of opportunities for children to learn about safety. For example, children learn about playing in the woodland area attached to the school and how to use tools such as drills safely when making holes in wood.

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	104507
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10277484
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	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sue King Say
Headteacher	Tamara Bennett
Website	www.abercrombynurseryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 July 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. She took up post in September 2016.
- The school offers provision for two-and-three-year-old children.
- Within the school, there is a small resource base for children with SEND. These children have education, health and care (EHC) plans for either speech, communication and language needs or for autism spectrum disorder.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher. She was also the special educational needs coordinator. They held discussions with staff, which focused on the well-being and the safeguarding of children.
- An inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the vice chair of governors. An inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to school improvement, safeguarding and the checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the responses received via the free-text facility. They considered the responses to Ofsted’s staff surveys. They also spoke to children throughout the inspection.
- An inspector talked with children about their favourite books and stories. The inspector also observed children sharing a story with an adult.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, communication and language and personal, social and emotional development. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teaching staff, observed children and spoke to some of them about their learning.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Pamela Potter

Ofsted Inspector

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