

Inspection of an outstanding school: St Margaret's Nursery School

Margaret Road, New Barnet, Barnet, Hertfordshire EN4 9NT

Inspection date: 4 May 2023

Outcome

St Margaret's Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children are happy, safe and settled. They flourish here. Staff are caring and build strong bonds with children. Because they know them well, they are highly responsive to individual needs. As a result, children are nurtured to develop the confidence to explore, and take risks, within the exceptional curriculum offer that they experience.

The nursery is a delightful space to learn in. There are no limits placed on children's achievements. The curriculum is highly ambitious and exciting. It engrosses children, maximising their learning, both indoors and out. For example, they swing on the monkey bars, go on a 'bear hunt' across the giant tractor tyres, practise counting and recognising numerals, and make crowns with leaves and flowers.

Children are supported to become confident and cooperative. Their behaviour is excellent. The caring, nurturing environment enables all to blossom. Within this, they learn to share, take turns and make new friends. The youngest children often need support to achieve this, but expectations are carefully modelled and structured to enable them to develop their independence and follow routines.

Parents and carers are highly appreciative of the offer they receive. Many praised how well their children are cared for and helped to enjoy school. Parents particularly value that staff are focused on children being safe and learning well.

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

St. Margaret's is a truly inclusive school. Children who need extra help are identified swiftly. The support put in place is highly effective in helping these children to access, and be fully immersed in, the same learning opportunities as their peers.

Leaders have developed a curriculum that is organised around three simple concepts. They want children to know about themselves, the world around them and the world beyond. This curriculum identifies with precision the knowledge and skills that children

need to learn. This is organised to ensure that children practise and embed small steps of learning throughout the planned provision. Daily 'reflection' discussions by staff help to ensure that the play opportunities are continually adapted and enhanced to extend each child's learning. For example, children's physical development is considered carefully both indoors and out. Children build the confidence to master fine and gross motor skills, for example, through pouring water and sand, hammering nails, riding balance bikes and jumping from height. Staff encourage at every opportunity children's eagerness to draw and mark make. They know that this will give children the hand-eye control they need to form letters effectively later on. Children are very well prepared to transition from the provision for two-year-olds to the three-year-olds, and then to start Reception in their chosen primary schools.

Developing children's vocabulary is a priority. Staff are ambitious that all children will build the language that they need to communicate and become independent in their learning. Adults are well trained to make sure that children's communication, language and use of appropriate vocabulary is woven through all areas of learning. The nursery is a language-rich environment. Adults know when to use visual prompts, when to use simple words and when to extend children's language further. As a result, children's communication, including those with the most complex needs, develops very well.

Stories play a key role in the development of language. Core texts have been identified. These are read and re-read, so children can practise them. Immersion in early reading, such as reciting rhymes and poems, helps to ensure that children are well prepared for learning to read in Reception. The 'nurture story' approach has been especially designed to help children with special educational needs and/or disabilities to develop their communication and listening skills.

Routines and expectations are simple and modelled effectively by all adults. This enables children to be ready for and enthusiastic about the learning on offer, such as visits to the local shops and finding out about how to keep healthy. Children are supported to develop independence, responsibility, and maturity.

Staff appreciate the care and consideration that leaders show for their workload and well-being. They said that leaders have an open-door policy and are always there to listen and support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is an ongoing priority. Staff and governors understand their statutory responsibilities because they have been well trained.

Staff are proactive in identifying and reporting any concerns that they may have. Leaders monitor cases rigorously, working effectively with external agencies and following up any concerns, as required.

Leaders make sure that children and their families receive the help that they need as quickly as possible. Working closely with the children's centre is an intrinsic part of this support. Leaders use it as a bridge between the school and community, drawing on the resources available to complement what the school provides. For example, leaders signpost families to extra help available through external services, including the local food bank, housing support or counselling services.

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 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 October 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

Unique reference number	101254
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10269050
Type of school	Nursery and Children's Centre
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gerald Mehrtens
Headteacher	Kelly Brooker (Executive Headteacher) Caron Rudge (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.st-margarets.barnet.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of a hard federation of three maintained nursery schools. The executive headteachers oversee all three schools.
- The school has an attached children's centre that is also managed by the executive headteachers and governing body.
- Leaders do not make use of 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 carried out deep dives in these areas of learning: communication and language, physical development and understanding of the world. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders. Inspectors visited sessions throughout the day. Inspectors talked to staff and children. They looked at documentation, including records of children's learning. Inspectors also spoke with

leaders about other areas of learning, including children's personal, social and emotional development.

- When considering safeguarding, inspectors met with leaders, spoke with staff and children and considered documentation, including the record of pre-employment checks.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of each session. Inspectors considered parent and staff responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Samantha Ingram, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Maureen Okoye

Ofsted Inspector

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