

Inspection of a good school: The Limes Nursery School

Johnsons Road, Whitehall, Bristol BS5 9AT

Inspection date: 23 May 2023

Outcome

The Limes Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The Limes Nursery School is a lovely, calm place to learn, and is full of fun and laughter. Relationships between staff, children and their families are a real strength. Everyone is included and valued here.

Staff skilfully support children as they learn to play alongside one another. Children are shown how to manage their emotions as they discover how to share, take turns and play together. Reliable routines help children feel secure and confident in their environment throughout the day.

Children thrive as they explore the wide spaces that make up a variety of garden areas. They design and build fantasy houses, wash the bikes and make mud pies for Red Riding Hood's grandma. Inside, the youngest children measure ingredients and knead dough to make bread for their friends. Children learn important knowledge, while also being encouraged to think for themselves and to contribute their own ideas. Consequently, children are prepared well for their next steps.

A parent summed up the views expressed by parents and carers, when they said, 'The school teaches my daughter how to keep safe, problem solve, ask for help and to be a good friend. She has blossomed since starting at The Limes.'

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

Leaders are passionate about creating strong opportunities for every child. They know exactly what they want children to learn. The curriculum is relevant and interesting. It helps children to become successful young learners and to flourish.

Learning at The Limes is based around rich core experiences such as baking bread, gardening, reading books and telling stories. The progression of learning for each core experience sets out how knowledge builds over time. There is a strong focus on extending

vocabulary and learning through first-hand experiences. Staff adapt the learning environments to bring the curriculum to life. Children arrive at the Nursery bursting with curiosity, ready to explore today's activities.

Developing a love of language through books and stories is at the heart of the curriculum. Leaders have identified the high-quality books they want children to experience. Children hear rhymes, stories and songs throughout the day. As a result, children confidently retell parts of fairy tales and sing nursery rhymes such as 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' as they play. The very youngest children are surrounded by high-quality picture books, carefully displayed to entice them. As a result of this rich introduction to learning to read, a few children are ready to move on to naming and writing the sounds they hear. Some staff, however, are not confident to support children with early phonics knowledge.

Staff purposefully extend children's mathematical knowledge during play activities. When filling buckets with water, adults ask, 'How many are empty; how many are full?' During snack time, they ask, 'How many children have a slice of apple?'

Staff build a picture of each child's interests, strengths and how they interact through a system of focused individual observations. They use this precise knowledge to support children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to move on to new learning. As adults play alongside children, they model new language and listen attentively, encouraging children to contribute their own ideas.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is supported well. Adults help children to recognise emotions such as feeling nervous. They encourage them to make their own decisions. Staff ask, 'Would you like your coat on?' and 'It's snack time. Are you hungry?' Staff are skilled at helping children resolve any conflicts that arise, such as how to share toys. They show children strategies such as using timers to know when it is the next person's turn.

A strength of the school is how well the whole-school community, including the governors, work together to ensure that the school continues to go from strength to strength. Staff love working here and appreciate how well leaders support them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff form caring relationships with children and listen carefully to them. The designated safeguarding lead ensures that staff receive appropriate training and updates. Staff understand how to recognise and report any concerns about a child's well-being. Leaders work closely with a range of agencies to ensure that families receive the support they need to keep children safe. Governors understand their roles regarding safeguarding. Recruitment checks on new staff are appropriate.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not have the knowledge they need to support children with early phonics awareness. This means that a small number of children who are ready to say and write the sounds and words they can hear do not get precise support to develop their early reading skills. Leaders need to ensure that all staff are able to support children to learn early phonics.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 good in June 2014.

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	108905
Local authority	Bristol City of
Inspection number	10287455
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Aderyn Zajicova
Headteacher	Catherine Bolam
Website	www.limesandrosemary.com
Date of previous inspection	20 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school entered a federation with Rosemary Nursery School in September 2022.
- In October 2022, the deputy headteacher assumed the role of acting headteacher.
- The school includes care and education for two-year-olds.
- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the acting headteacher, assistant headteacher and groups of teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in communication and language, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to

leaders and staff, visited lessons with leaders, spoke with children and looked at their work.

- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start and end of the day.
- Inspectors reviewed documentation and spoke with leaders and staff to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding. Inspectors reviewed attendance records and the school's behaviour and bullying records.
- The lead inspector considered responses to the online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. The responses to an online staff survey were also considered.

Inspection team

Tonwen Empson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Martin Greenwood

Ofsted Inspector

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