

Inspection of an outstanding school: South Normanton Nursery School

Hamlet Lane, South Normanton, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 2JB

Inspection date: 4 July 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's uniqueness is celebrated and nurtured at this Nursery school. Staff take time to get to know and understand the children in their care. Parents and carers value this. As one parent commented, 'This is a fantastic school with dedicated staff. We are lucky to have such a great start to our child's education.'

'Good learning and keep safe' are the rules which are lived out by the children. Where needed, adults provide gentle reminders. Throughout the day children are encouraged to take ownership of and responsibility for their learning. Leaders have received a national award for their work on developing children's understanding of human rights. This includes the right to play and to be treated fairly. It helps children build their confidence and make choices. It prepares them well for their next school.

The learning environment is calm and purposeful. The well-considered outdoor area helps children to develop in all aspects of the early years curriculum. For example, some children use the 'agility arena' to enhance their physical development, while others learn about minibeasts as they grow strawberries and turnips. Leaders continue to refine the Nursery curriculum so that the small steps of knowledge that children need to know and learn are precise.

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

Leaders have clear ambitions for all children. They have developed a sequence of learning that maps out the important books and vocabulary that the children will encounter in the curriculum. It enhances children's experiences and understanding of the world around them. However, some of this sequence needs more refinement. The knowledge that leaders want children to know is not always clear.

Adults use every opportunity to develop children's language and personal, social and emotional development. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are encouraged to use communication methods that are well matched to their needs. This includes pictures and symbols.

Children relish using the 'Rainbow Room' pass. This is where they go to work in small groups to tell stories, learn to talk in sentences and listen to each other's ideas. Leaders ensure that children are immersed in songs and rhymes throughout the environment. It forms part of tidy-up routines, children's play or even parts of stories they share. Adults take every opportunity to help children, including those with SEND, to sing and learn words through rhymes.

Adults check carefully how well children learn the curriculum. They use this information to support children who may need additional help. For example, in mathematics, adults carefully model key words such as 'first', 'next' and 'last', as well as words that describe position. For children with SEND, adults use images and Makaton signs. It helps these children to understand the same concepts, language and ideas as their peers. When children need support to manage their emotions, adults use characters from the 'Colour Monster' story to help them understand how they are feeling.

Leaders want all parents to understand the importance of early education. They want every child to be 'school ready'. However, some children, including some disadvantaged children, do not achieve as well as their peers. Leaders are working to support these children and their families to understand the importance of routines in readiness for their move to school.

Leaders recognise that some children need extra support to develop everyday routines. For example, children learn to brush their teeth for two minutes at 'Toothbrush Island'. When children start Nursery, every child receives a soft toy monkey. Adults use this toy to build links between home and nursery school. They skilfully use the monkey to teach children about their local community. Children relish seeing photographs of the monkey at local places of interest such as the library or dentist. It helps them to understand what visiting these places would entail.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They appreciate how leaders, including governors, listen to any worries they may have. This includes any concerns about workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Keeping children safe is at the forefront of everything adults do. They ensure that children have an age-appropriate understanding of risks they may encounter. All staff are alert to signs that indicate a child might be at risk of harm. Leaders do not hesitate to contact external agencies to ensure the right help is put in place. Where necessary, they follow up quickly if this support is not forthcoming.

Governors make regular checks on safeguarding procedures. They ensure they have the necessary knowledge and expertise to make these checks.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- What leaders want children to know and remember is not sufficiently broken down into precise steps of knowledge in all areas of learning. This does not help all staff to have an agreed understanding of the order of knowledge that children need to know. Leaders need to complete their work to refine the curriculum. They must ensure that they precisely identify the key knowledge that children need to know in all areas of learning.
- Leaders are keen to work closely with families so that all parents understand the importance of early education. However, some children, including some who are disadvantaged, have not fully established the routines that will prepare them well for compulsory schooling. This does not help them to achieve as well as their peers. Leaders, including governors, should continue their work to promote early years education for all families. They must ensure that all disadvantaged children receive the best possible start to their early education.

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 May 2007.

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

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| Unique reference number | 112484 |
| Local authority | Derbyshire |
| Inspection number | 10211565 |
| Type of school | Nursery |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 4 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 83 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Siobhan Johnston |
| Headteacher | Peter Hallsworth |
| Website | www.southnormantonnurseryschool.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 6 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in governance, including a new chair of governors. The headteacher took up post in September 2019.
- 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 held meetings with leaders to discuss the nursery's curriculum, including the provision for pupils with SEND. The lead inspector met with representatives of the local governing body and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these areas of learning: communication and language; personal, social and emotional development; and understanding of the world. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders and spent time observing in the classrooms. Inspectors also talked to staff and children and

observed activities to determine the impact of the curriculum and teaching methods on children's learning and development.

- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans and documentation relating to attendance and behaviour.
- The inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the records of pre-employment checks. They also considered records leaders held for pupils' safeguarding and welfare.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's parent and staff questionnaires. They also spoke to a sample group of parents while on site.

Inspection team

Shaheen Hussain, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

George Huthart

Ofsted Inspector

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