

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Tarnerland Nursery School

Sussex Street, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 0GR

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Inspection date: 20 September 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. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Children are treasured at Tarnerland. They are greeted every day with a smile and are exceptionally well cared for. Children settle so quickly and delight in the school's 'open air' learning environment. They play happily in the 'meadow' and are inquisitive about the natural world. Parents echo how well their children flourish.

Behaviour is excellent. The school's deliberate and precise routines ensure everyone knows what to do through the school day. Relationships are one of trust and adults' well-timed interactions enable children's personal, social and emotional development to thrive. The familiarity of each day supports this exceedingly well.

The school has high expectations and staff work together to provide a rich and broad education for children. Staff know children inside out and key workers are closely attuned to children's interests. Children become deeply engrossed in what they do and enjoy learning and playing together. The curriculum really thinks about what children will need when they move on to primary education.

Eating together as a family is a daily highlight. Children learn table conversations and mealtime etiquette. They take turns to serve food and check everyone has what they need. Staff positively role model these interactions.

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

The school sets a clear vision for wanting the very best. It strives to spread excellence to benefit not only children at Tarnerland, but other schools and organisations in Brighton and beyond. Governors demonstrate a clear strategic oversight of priorities. They have been astute in managing the change to a new headteacher. They have checked in with staff, so that everyone feels a part of the school's next chapter.

Staff have worked collaboratively to develop the curriculum's 'big ideas'. Deciding what to teach when and where takes into account children's typical starting points, especially since the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes a secure understanding of knowledge gaps that children from disadvantaged backgrounds might have. The school's local area and landmarks strongly feature in the school's thinking. However, curriculum planning does not identify and expertly sequence all the small steps of knowledge within each area of learning. This means children are not yet learning as much as they could.

Wholeheartedly, adults know their pivotal role in interacting with children. The school's training focus has resulted in exceptional practice when adults teach children. Here, children benefit from structured activities with a clear purpose. Staff pose questions to check children's understanding and help children gain more knowledge and words. Nevertheless, when children are engaged in independent play the impact is less strong. At times, it can be unclear what staff want the children to practise and what learning needs to be further reinforced.

Communication and language are intricately woven throughout the school day. Talk is the number one priority. Staff make exceptional use of opportunities to speak to children. Ambitious vocabulary can be heard as adults model and expand children's speech. Stories, rhymes and songs feature prominently and children love joining in. For example, children eagerly acted outside 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' with aplomb. Furthermore, adults make great use of phonics as children hear the sounds they speak. The school works very well in supporting children who speak English as an additional language. Books reflect the diversity of the school community.

Knowledgeable staff ensure children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the care and education they need to excel. The school works highly effectively with parents. Assessments, such as the progress check at age two, help leaders swiftly pick up possible needs.

Children's wider development is of huge importance. The school's rich experiences foster independence and respect in children. These include celebrating festivals, meeting special visitors and accessing nature. Children learn to keep active, develop resilience and be tolerant. Children demonstrate independence in many ways.

Children are respectful, showing kindness and happiness to one another. Staff are skilled at helping children learn to manage emotions. Children take turns, move around sensibly and are eager to express excitement at their learning.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum does not yet clearly identify and then coherently sequence the precise knowledge that children need to learn. This means staff can sometimes set activities that do not enable children to practise the knowledge they need. The school should ensure that in each area of learning, knowledge builds sequentially from when children start at the school to when they finish.

## 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 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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114350
<b>Local authority</b>	Brighton and Hove
<b>Inspection number</b>	10287853
<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	89
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Ella Turner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Louise Collings
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.tarnerland.brighton-hove.sch.uk">www.tarnerland.brighton-hove.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2023.
- The school has a separate early years registration for children aged under two. This provision is inspected separately. Its most recent early years inspection was in July 2022.
- Tarnerland runs wraparound childcare from 8am to 6pm for 50 weeks of the year.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, nursery manager and staff. The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair and vice-chair. He also met with a school improvement adviser from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these areas of learning: communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and expressive arts and design. To do this, they met with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, had discussions with staff, spoke to children, visited classrooms and outdoor learning environments and observed children learning, playing and interacting with staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and children; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children’s interests first.
- The views of staff and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted’s online surveys. The team inspector spoke to parents on the gate on the morning of the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school’s self-evaluation and school improvement priorities, policies, curriculum documents, behaviour records, information about pupils with SEND and minutes of governors’ meetings.

### **Inspection team**

James Broadbridge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Neil Small

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
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