

Inspection of a good school: St Paul's Nursery School

12 St Paul's Square, York, North Yorkshire YO24 4BD

Inspection date:

26 September 2023

Outcome

St Paul's Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

It is clear from the motto at St Paul's Nursery School that 'all are welcome'. There is a strong ethos of care and kindness from staff towards children. Staff quickly form strong relationships with children. Leaders actively build positive relationships with parents at the earliest opportunity. Transitional pre-school visits help staff to understand children well, even before they have started in school. Children are well supported to follow routines that help them to develop positive learning behaviours. Even the youngest children move calmly through school. Staff specifically demonstrate to children how to treat each other with respect. For example, children are taught how to share and take turns during snack time. Children develop confidence to play amicably with, and alongside, their peers in a safe environment.

Leaders are ambitious for all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children are taught how to begin to recognise their own emotions and to communicate these to staff in an age-appropriate way. This supports children to develop a strong sense of identity and self-respect. The specially resourced provision for children with SEND (specially resourced provision) is carefully considered by leaders, and children with the most complex needs are well supported to develop their skills to become ready for the next stage of their education. Staff care about children and are passionate about them being successful.

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

Leaders have recently refined the curriculum to prioritise the development of a communication and language-rich learning environment. Children who need support with their communication and language skills, including children with SEND, are quickly identified and supported. Children in the specially resourced provision benefit from a highly personalised and targeted curriculum that is appropriate and responsive to their needs. Some areas of the curriculum are more established than others. For example, curriculum designs for literacy, early reading, speaking and listening and personal, social and emotional learning are well embedded. In other parts of the curriculum, the essential

knowledge, vocabulary and skills that the school wants children to learn are not clearly enough defined or understood by staff. This contributes to staff being less prepared in these areas to precisely match the curriculum and their interactions with what children need to learn over time.

Across school, there is a clear focus on developing children's love of reading. Staff look for regular opportunities to enthuse children by reading exciting stories, poems and rhymes to them. The themes and content of some books have been deliberately chosen to help children recognise, and self-regulate, their emotions. Some areas of the early years curriculum are carefully designed to support children's independent learning skills, self-esteem and confidence through their journey in nursery. The learning environment for children who are two years old offers a calm, inviting and safe space which is appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Leaders understand the importance of giving children a broad range of experiences and opportunities. They give children a chance to learn about themselves and their immediate surroundings and community, before teaching about other places in the world. For example, they teach children about the different cultures and landmarks in York, where they live, so that they can compare other cities and countries. Children benefit from a range of educational visits and special visitors. For example, the recent visit of an owl expert helped children to link facts that they had learned about owls in stories to a real-life example. Children's personal development is also supported by helping children to understand important personal habits such as handwashing. There are deliberate book choices to promote an age-appropriate understanding of concepts such as respect and challenging stereotypes.

Staff feel well supported and fully involved in the school. They feel that their voice is listened to. Leaders respond to feedback from staff to support with staff's workload and well-being. Governors understand their statutory duties. They offer robust challenge to school leaders when necessary. Leaders at all levels have a shared understanding of the strengths of the school and where it can continue to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some aspects of the early years curriculum are not defined clearly enough. As a result, in these areas of learning, children do not build their knowledge, skills and vocabulary in small sequential steps over time to be fully prepared for the next stage of their education. The school should ensure that it identifies the smallest pieces of crucial knowledge and related vocabulary that they intend children to learn consistently across all seven areas of learning.

- There is some variation in the precision and quality of how staff interact with children and facilitate their learning. Sometimes this limits the opportunities to develop children's vocabulary and understanding when they are learning. The school should ensure that staff are supported to enact the curriculum through their interactions, activity choices and the resources that they set up in the learning environment.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2018.

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

Unique reference number	121266
Local authority	York
Inspection number	10290074
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	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Siobhan McGrellis
Headteacher	Claire Rigden
Website	www.stpaulsnurseryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is maintained by York local authority.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for eight children with SEND.
- The places for the specially resourced provision are allocated by the local authority.

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 spoke to senior leaders, including the headteacher and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils and considered

the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in literacy, communication and language, and personal, social and emotional development.
- Inspectors evaluated responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey. They spoke with some parents who were bringing their children to school. Inspectors also evaluated the responses that staff and pupils made to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Liam Colclough, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Adrian Fearn

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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