

# Inspection of a good school: Chestnut Nursery School

Magnolia Avenue, Exeter, Devon EX2 6DJ

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Inspection date:

23 November 2023

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding 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?

Chestnut Nursery School is a buzz of activity where children love to play and learn. Children are happy and safe. Relationships between staff and children are strong. Staff know children exceptionally well. This helps them to thrive. Children love coming to school. Parents agree. One parent commented that, 'Chestnut Nursery School is a wonderful setting. The staff are knowledgeable and clearly care about the children and wider family.'

The school places a strong focus on supporting children to develop positive behaviours and attitudes. Well-structured routines and expectations guide children to make the right choices and decisions such as developing respect for others. Children learn to be kind and considerate to one another. They are confident and independent. For those who require additional support to communicate, the school ensures bespoke systems are in place to enable children to manage their feelings and emotions.

Staff support children exceptionally well in their learning and play. Children show extremely high levels of concentration. They develop new knowledge through a range of active, hands-on learning experiences. They are happy to try new things. Children trust adults to help them. Even when children find things hard, they keep trying until they succeed.

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

The school is highly ambitious about what it wants children to learn. It uses children's interests and individual starting points when designing the curriculum. The curriculum also considers children's speech and language needs. The school rightly prioritise children's communication, social, emotional and physical development.

The school is highly effective in supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff use their positive interactions to develop children's language and vocabulary. Staff carefully break down and adapt the curriculum into small steps with planned targets so children can succeed. The school uses assessment well to support children with specific communication delays.

Reading and language are highly prioritised. Even before children join the nursery, the school works with families to help them understand how books can support their child's learning. Children learn songs and nursery rhymes to extend their vocabulary. Staff ensure talk and highly effective questioning enables children to build on what they already know and can do. The school ensures staff take every opportunity to read with children. Children happily select books of their own choice and want to share books with adults.

The school routinely identify opportunities for children to use mathematics. Children enjoy counting numbers in their groups at the start of the school day and finding the correct digits to match to the register. Adults are adept at reinforcing children's understanding. Children develop mathematical language, such as taller, bigger and deeper, through their play. The school is meticulous in checking what children have understood.

Staff act as positive role models of behaviour in their interactions with one another and children's families. Relationships are highly prioritised. Individual key workers know the emotional needs of children very well. They are nurturing and caring. Children are taught about the difference between right and wrong. As a result, they behave well, show positive manners and develop high levels of understanding towards each other.

The school weaves children's personal development through its curriculum. This goes beyond the nursery gates. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for children to explore different cultures and religions through hands-on experiences such as food tasting and opportunities to be involved within the local community. For example, children take part in litter picks to learn how to look after their environment.

Children demonstrate high levels of independence. Carefully designed learning experiences develop children's fine motor skills. For example, children independently slice bananas or use tongs to collect their carrots at snack time. They are not afraid to have a go. The school has given careful consideration to the nursery environment to enable children to develop these skills.

Governors know the nursery very well. They are highly ambitious for the children in their care and provide regular support and challenge. The school invest time into staff development. This enables staff to use their learning to support their work with children. Staff value the training they receive. They work in a culture where they feel guided in developing their own knowledge and expertise.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## 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 on 5 and 6 December 2017.

## 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>	113050
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10269249
<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	55
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	David Simpkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Baker
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.chestnutnursery.co.uk">www.chestnutnursery.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	5 to 6 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Chestnut Nursery School is a local authority-maintained nursery. It is federated with West Exe Nursery School.
- The school does not use 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, the lead teachers, the special educational needs coordinator and those responsible for governance. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these areas of learning: communication and language, mathematics and physical development. For each deep dive, inspectors held

discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of nursery sessions, spoke to staff and looked at examples of children's learning.

- 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.
- Inspectors considered the 11 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including seven free-text responses and eight responses to the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Heather Barraclough, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tracy Hannon

Ofsted Inspector

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