

Inspection of an outstanding school: Alumwell Nursery School

Primley Avenue, Walsall, West Midlands WS2 9UP

Inspection date: 28 November 2023

Outcome

Alumwell Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children are happy and safe. They are inquisitive and interested learners. They have exceptionally strong attachments with their keyworker. This allows them to settle quickly. Children explore the many varied learning opportunities on offer, both indoors and out. They do so safe in the knowledge that they can return for reassurance if needed.

Children are bathed in language from the moment they start at the setting. Conversations, chats and communication happen naturally throughout the day, promoting children's language development exceptionally well. Children receive regular individual attention from an adult. This is key to the strong progress that they make.

Parents and carers who spoke to an inspector were overwhelmingly positive. They praised the support that the school provides, as well as the quality of their children's learning. They have much to be positive about. The school goes above and beyond in offering an extensive range of parent workshops and signposting support.

Children enjoy many opportunities to extend their learning. A nativity with real animals is the upcoming highlight. Alumwell adventures are a regular part of the routine. Visiting vets, blind dogs and zoos bring learning to life for children.

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

Leaders truly bring their vision to life. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive in this setting. From the earliest age, children learn to see themselves as confident learners who can set the direction of their learning.

Staff are extremely skilled at tuning into each child's interests, needs and wishes. Step by step, staff guide, help, teach and share a child's learning journey. There is a true sense of staff and children being at one with each other. To see children stay at an activity for sustained periods is special and powerful. This was seen many times during the inspection.

Staff may follow the child's interests, but they are also following a clear curriculum. The school has set out the smallest steps of learning in a very organised manner. Staff training is tied into making sure staff understand child development. Alongside this, training supports staff to continually hone and refine their practice. The success of this investment in training is clear to see. A few moments within the setting allows you to glimpse the deep knowledge, pride and expertise that staff bring to their role. These combine to ensure that all children progress well. Children with SEND have their needs rapidly identified. The school is quick to put the right support in place. Staff are extremely skilled at giving just the right amount of help while promoting children's independence. Children with SEND flourish here.

Children gain a love of language through the intrinsic work that happens through stories, songs and nursery rhymes. These are integral to the curriculum and the rhythm and routine of the day. The school has given deep thought to the stories that are read throughout the day, week and year. Children choose to read stories for themselves. They listen, enthralled, as adults read stories to them. Not a moment is wasted during this time. Children gain a deep knowledge of story sequence and characters. They are introduced to worlds beyond their experience. For example, when baby bear flies to the moon or empathising with owl babies waiting for their mum to return. The school helps children to carry this love of books home with them. Children choose books each week to share with their family. They experience the joy of receiving books as special gifts.

The school is understanding of family circumstances but unwavering in helping children to be in school every day. The partnership with parents is positive. Children enjoy being in school. The environment, coupled with the astute teaching, engages and excites children. Add into this, the variety of additional activities, visits and visitors, and you have a powerful and vibrant learning community. Children actively learn to live within and make sense of the world around them. The adventures at Alumwell abound.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 January 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](#)' 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	104140
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10290540
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	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Shazi Khan
Headteacher	Armela Patel
Website	www.alumwell-n.walsall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the vice-chair of the governing body.
- During the inspection, the inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: communication and language, physical development and mathematics.
- Inspectors met with leaders and staff to discuss their plans for children's learning and development. They observed learning both in classrooms and outdoors. They spoke with children and with staff and looked at examples of children's learning.

- The inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. They also considered the online staff survey.
- An inspector talked to parents at the school gate.

Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sally Noble

Ofsted Inspector

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