

Inspection of an outstanding school: Whitegate Nursery School

Victoria Road, Padiham, Burnley, Lancashire BB12 8TG

Inspection date:

5 December 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 thrilled to be learning and making friends at school. They are keen to get on with investigating and experimenting in classrooms and in the school's wooded garden. Children feel valued because staff treat them as important people. They learn much new knowledge from staff who support and guide their play.

Children learn how to behave sensibly in the many learning activities that staff provide. For instance, two-year-olds begin to learn to share toys and cooperate with other children. In each classroom, children learn helpful ways to manage and resolve the disagreements that they may have with others. Where needed, staff provide children with gentle reminders about the school's expectations of their conduct.

Children are happy and trust the staff. They sit close to their key person at group time, such as to sing nursery rhymes. They tell staff their ideas and observations, as well as their worries. Staff are genuinely interested in how children feel. This helps children to feel safe and settled at school.

Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enjoy learning at school. They achieve well. This is because the school is determined that all children gain a successful start to their education.

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

The school has set ambitious aims for its curriculum, in particular to help children to overcome challenges in their lives, such as poverty or SEND. It strives to inspire children about their education and to help every child to feel included, valued and successful.

Mostly, the school has thought carefully about the information that it wants children to learn. It has also identified the order in which children need to build their grasp of important concepts and vocabulary. In the main, children learn this information well. However, some of the school's curriculum is more focused on the overall approach that staff will take to support learning, rather than the knowledge that children should learn. This is because of a lack of clarity in some of the school's curriculum thinking. Sometimes, this limits how well children build some of their knowledge.

Staff check if children know and remember key knowledge. They use assessment information carefully to decide what to teach children next. The school has reduced the amount of paperwork that it asks staff to collect when they make assessments of children's learning. This has given staff more time to ensure that children learn well.

The school selects carefully which different activities or approaches to use to teach its curriculum. Staff draw on their in-depth knowledge of child development to identify the needs of children with SEND quickly. Where needed, they adapt the way the curriculum is delivered to help children with SEND to learn successfully.

Most of the time, the school makes effective use of its curriculum to help children to learn new knowledge. Children, including two-year-olds, gain many new skills from their learning. Nevertheless, at times, the school's intended curriculum is not used well enough in the support it provides for children's play. At these times, some children's learning of key knowledge weakens.

In each classroom, children experience a curriculum that fosters their communication and language well. Staff model skilfully to children how to listen to other people. Children learn how to use talk to communicate their ideas and feelings. Staff select the stories and nursery rhymes carefully that they will teach to the children through repeated practice. Children develop a love of stories and rhymes. They learn new words because staff use and explain these often.

At the centre of the school's work is a successful focus on children's personal development. Children become keen learners, able to concentrate and explore with confidence. They learn from staff to respect differences between themselves and other people. This helps them to be ready for life in modern Britain.

Due to the gentle, skilful guidance of staff, children behave well. They learn to respond positively to other people, as well as becoming calm and self-aware. Children learn to be kind to others.

The school works with parents and carers successfully. For example, it does all that it can to help parents to understand that children's regular attendance at school is important. The school discusses with parents of children with SEND its additional support for children's learning and development. Parents are well informed about how home and school can work together to support children's education.

The governing body uses a wide range of information to review the work of the school effectively, such as about the curriculum, finance and safeguarding. It challenges and

supports the school, to aid its ongoing development. Staff are successful in their jobs because of the support, training and encouragement that the school provides.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some of the school's curriculum is less well developed. This means that, at times, children do not gain some of the knowledge that they need to know. The school should hone its curricular thinking further to enable children to learn even more successfully.
- Sometimes, the school does not make sure that staff teach the curriculum that it intends. As a result, staff find it harder to build children's knowledge of some important concepts. The school should ensure that staff deliver its intended curriculum effectively.

Background

When we have judged 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 October 2012.

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	119096
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10256236
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alan Perry
Headteacher	Catherine Tasker
Website	www.whitegate.org
Date of previous inspection	14 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school provides some places for children aged two years old in a dedicated classroom. Some children and staff in that class are from Whitegate Early Years Care, which is located on site and separately registered with Ofsted.
- Before- and after-school provision hosted at the school is provided by Whitegate Early Years Care.
- Since the previous inspection the current headteacher has been appointed.

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.
- The inspectors completed deep dives in communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and mathematics. They met with leaders, visited learning

activities and spoke with some children. The inspectors also spoke with staff about the curriculum.

- The inspectors spoke with staff about working at the school. There were no responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey to consider.
- The inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The lead inspector spoke with some parents as they arrived at the school with their children.
- An inspector spoke by telephone with a representative of the local authority. She also spoke with the school's external adviser.
- The inspectors spoke with the mentor and the induction tutor for a new teacher at the school.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Victoria Burnside

His Majesty's Inspector

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