

# Inspection of a good school: Phoenix Nursery School

Phoenix Street, Blakenhall, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV2 3JS

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Inspection date: 30 January 2024

## Outcome

Phoenix Nursery School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Phoenix Nursery School is a small, well-equipped nursery school at the heart of its community. The school is a nurturing and safe place to be. Relationships between adults, children and their parents are strong. Parents are extremely positive about the school and the support it provides for its children and families. The view of one parent was typical of many when they commented, 'The school is like a family, and staff are caring and welcoming.'

All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), experience a wide range of activities. They follow routines and learn and play together effectively. Older children support those who have just started school. Most of the support adults provide helps children to achieve well.

Leaders have high expectations of children's behaviour. They have thought thoroughly about their expectations of how children should behave. However, on occasion, staff do not reinforce these expectations consistently.

Children enjoy a wide range of experiences, both indoors and outdoors. They benefit from experiences such as visits to an outdoor learning centre and links to the music department at a local secondary school.

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

The school has thought carefully about its curriculum. Leaders have made it clear what children need to know and be able to do by the time they leave the school. As part of their work, leaders have considered the culturally rich community it serves. In many areas of learning, the school has identified the smaller steps children are expected to learn in order to reach longer-term goals. In mathematics, for example, the school has set out the steps children will follow in order to recognise small numbers of objects without counting. This is helping children to learn well in this area. However, in some areas of learning, these steps of learning are not always clear enough. Consequently, staff are sometimes

unsure about what to teach and when. This means that children do not learn as well as they might in these areas.

Staff help children to build their communication and language skills well. They encourage children to learn new vocabulary and speak in sentences. Children enjoy sharing books and using the phrases they have learned to tell stories. All of this means that children are well prepared for future work on reading.

Staff use much of the knowledge they learn from children's achievements to plan future learning. However, they do not always make sure that the activities they plan are well matched to address gaps in children's learning. This means that, at times, children do not get the most benefit from their learning and play.

Children learn about the diverse world in which they live. They develop their personal and social skills. Children learn to cooperate with their peers and adults from different backgrounds and cultures. The curriculum is planned so that children learn more about people from different backgrounds as they get older. This prepares children effectively for future learning.

The school carefully considers the needs of children with SEND. It makes sure that these children's needs are identified quickly and appropriate support is put in place. Staff support children with SEND well so that they can learn the full curriculum. For example, staff use signs and symbols to help some pupils develop their language skills.

Staff have developed the two school rules of 'be kind' and 'be a good listener'. Signs and symbols are on display around school for staff to use with children. While staff do use and talk about these rules with children, they do not do this consistently enough. Consequently, children do not always understand how to behave and what is expected of them.

Leaders, including governors, make sure that they listen to staff. They engage with staff when looking at ways the school could be improved and are considerate of staff workload and well-being. Consequently, staff feel valued and enjoy working at the school. The school makes full use of the knowledge and skills available across the federation.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In some areas of learning, the school has not precisely identified the content it wants pupils to learn. As a result, sometimes, staff are unsure what children should learn and when. The school should ensure that all curriculum thinking sets out the key content that children need to know, and when, so they can learn well.

- Staff do not consistently plan activities that extend teaching points during learning and play time. This means that, at times, children do not always get the most benefit from their learning and play. The school should enable staff to know how to support children's learning across the day.
- Staff do not always ensure that the school rules are learned and followed by children throughout the school day. This means that children do not always know how to behave and what is expected of them. The school should make sure that staff apply the school rules when working with children so they consistently learn positive behaviours.

## 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104281
<b>Local authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256965
<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	41
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Philip Bateman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Lacey
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.phoenixnurseryschool.co.uk">www.phoenixnurseryschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	5 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is federated with Ashmore Park Nursery School.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

## 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the lead inspector held meetings with the headteacher and four members of the governing body, including the vice-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 pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- An inspector held a meeting with a representative of the local authority. She also spoke to parents and carers at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in communication and language, physical development and mathematics. The inspectors visited adult-directed sessions and observed continuous provision, scrutinised curriculum documents and talked with staff about the way these areas are planned and taught.
- An inspector spoke with members of staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspectors observed children’s behaviour throughout the day.
- The lead inspector considered the responses, including the free-text comments, to Ofsted Parent View. He also considered the responses to the staff surveys.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school’s improvement priorities, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, behaviour records, attendance records and minutes of meetings held by the governing board.

### **Inspection team**

Barry Yeadsley, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Rebecca Cox

Ofsted Inspector

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