

Inspection of an outstanding school: Douglas Valley Nursery School

Turner Street, Off Greenough Street, Wigan, Lancashire WN1 3SU

Inspection date:

2 February 2024

Outcome

Douglas Valley Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children are very settled and happy. They benefit from the expert support from kind, friendly staff. The school has established itself as a calm place to learn, where children and adults profit from many genuine, respectful relationships. When children, parents and carers arrive at the start of the day, they are greeted with gentle conversation and a warm welcome by staff.

Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make lots of friends. Staff include children successfully in activities. Children, including two-year-olds, settle with ease into the school's routines, such as at story time and tidy-up time. They learn how to manage their own feelings and behaviour and how to respect other people, toys and resources. Children feel safe and behave exceptionally well.

Children achieve highly. They benefit consistently from the school's remarkably well-thought-out curriculum. Leaders and staff use their superb understanding of how children learn to provide them with engaging and rewarding learning activities. Children are so enthused by their learning that they want to spend even more time at school. They develop much important new knowledge. For instance, they talk with confidence about their thoughts and ideas as they climb, run and crawl in the school's well developed garden and outdoor play areas.

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

Leaders, governors and staff have a deep knowledge of educating young children. They use their expertise to develop, review and refine their work very effectively. The school provides children with an exceptional early years education. It has sustained this excellent work for the last decade. During the inspection, parents told the inspectors that the school's well established reputation is a major reason they choose to send their child here.

The school's ambitious curriculum thinking draws on up-to-date educational research and the advice of national experts. It identifies the essential information that it wants children

to know and when. Beginning in the classroom for two-year-olds, staff support children to use words, control their feelings and be physically active and coordinated. Children learn this foundational knowledge very well. Staff broaden children's learning skilfully across the rest of the curriculum. Children gain a first-rate start to their education.

When delivering the curriculum, staff help children to build connections with the key knowledge they have learned before. Staff use assessment strategies very carefully to check that children know and remember the content of the curriculum. They identify the needs of children with SEND promptly and accurately. Staff tailor their delivery of the curriculum competently to meet these children's needs. Staff benefit from the school's actions to reduce their workload when completing paper-based assessments of children's learning. Children build secure knowledge due to staff's skilful support.

Learning activities, such as at group time, are free from unnecessary disruptions because children learn to be very sensible. Children's frequent attendance at school, together with their excellent behaviour means that they can benefit from the top notch learning that the school provides. Children, including those with SEND, blossom and achieve highly.

The school makes sure that the curriculum includes many fascinating opportunities for children to experience books and stories. Staff select books to read to children with much thought. For example, they consider the words in the books that children need to learn through repeated practice and careful explanation. Children learn important words, rich book knowledge and a love of listening to stories.

The school provides children with highly effective opportunities to support their personal development to the full. For instance, children learn about the importance of helping to tidy their classroom when needed. They learn to be polite yet inquisitive with visitors to the school, such as with inspectors. Children develop excellent personal, social and emotional skills.

The school provides staff with regular training to deepen their knowledge of the areas of learning in the curriculum. It also provides staff with innovative support and coaching, such as when videoing their work. The school's sensitive, skilful guidance refines staff's educational expertise in very meaningful and long-lasting ways.

Governors are highly effective in their work to support the school. They keep a close eye on key aspects of its current work as well as its long-term priorities. The school works exceptionally well with parents about how to support children's learning at home. Parents are highly satisfied with the quality of the school's work.

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 December 2013.

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	106398
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10291402
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jo Sullivan
Headteacher	Catherine Ardern
Website	www.douglasvalley.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2018, 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 two-year-old children.

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 personal, social and emotional development, communication and language and mathematics. They visited activities about these and some other areas of learning. Inspectors spoke with leaders and staff about the school's curriculum. They spoke with some children about their learning.
- 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 survey for pupils to review.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The lead inspector spoke with some parents at the start of the school day.
- An inspector spoke by telephone with the school's early years adviser from the local authority.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. Some governors attended this meeting remotely.
- 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

David Robinson

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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