

Inspection of an outstanding school: Royal Spa Nursery School

Park Hill, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 0BT

Inspection date:

8 May 2024

Outcome

Royal Spa Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children adore coming to Royal Spa Nursery School, where their days are filled with joyful play and fascination. Children eagerly engage in the many opportunities they are given to learn. This includes waiting to see if their butterflies can fly, to observe nature, or learning how to roll down the hill. Laughter, singing and a happy hum of activity is seen across the setting. Carefully chosen resources help children to extend their play or there are take-home prompts to help them share the rhymes and stories they are learning with their parents or carers.

Children enjoy nurturing relationships with staff who know them well. Adults model kind, polite language and children mirror this. If children find being together or sharing more difficult, staff gently guide them so that play is generally harmonious. As a result, the nursery is a happy place where children feel safe and secure. Any additional learning needs are quickly identified. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) flourish. All children make strong progress from their starting points and are very well prepared for their next steps.

Parents are very positive about the nursery. They appreciate the care and kindness that help their children to feel comfortable, secure and make strong progress. A parent summed this up by saying, 'This is a very special place for children to be.'

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

The school is ambitious for all its children. Staff are experts in early education. They use their knowledge to deliver a carefully sequenced curriculum. The learning that is broken down into small steps helps children grow in both confidence and knowledge. Staff check that children are on track and moving towards long-term goals. Any gaps are quickly identified and explored so that extra help can be given when needed.

Children are provided with a rich learning environment, which is full of interesting opportunities for play and exploration. The curriculum promotes curiosity and is highly engaging for children. They become immersed in activities such as recording minibeasts, planting seeds or rolling wheels.

Every child is welcome. The school is passionate about including and supporting each child to give them the very best start. Staff work closely with parents and, where necessary, other agencies, to fully understand children's needs. Children with SEND are expertly supported so that they can thrive.

Communication and language development is at the heart of the provision. Staff use language carefully to help all children, including the very youngest, to develop their understanding. Words are built into phrases and sentences, with new vocabulary being introduced to support children's interests. For example, when talking about bluebells, staff highlight words such as 'stem' or when exploring butterfly pictures children are helped to explore ideas around colour and symmetry.

A love of books and stories is promoted right from the start. Children relish the stories, rhymes and songs that are much loved parts of their day. Parents appreciate the 'Play, Chat and Read' information that goes home to help them share this learning with their children.

Children are confident in stating what they want alongside reflecting on their learning experiences. It is evident children know they will be listened to by the adults who care for them. Those children who need help to communicate are supported to use picture prompts or sign language. Children and staff enjoy being together. Smiles abound and relationships are warm and full of fun.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is carefully considered. Staff both support children and encourage appropriate independence. Children are able to sustain focus and concentration for increasing periods due to the thought put into the engaging activities. They develop resilience, perseverance and enjoyment in their learning.

Children benefit from the clear routines in place and support from well-trained staff. Help is also provided to ensure that children and their families know the importance of regularly attendance. As a result, children attend well. Children are also helped to identify and begin to manage their emotions. Staff know when children need individual support or comfort systems, such as special toys or blankets. They quickly spot if children are overwhelmed, tired or hungry. The nursery provides a high standard of care that readies children for the next stage of their education.

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 November 2018.

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 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	114351
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10321788
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	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Emma Bennett
Headteacher	Mary Ellinger
Website	www.royalspanurseryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with school leaders. The lead inspector also met with the representatives of the governing body and had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication and language, personal and social education and knowledge and understanding of the world. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited sessions to observe children learn and play, and spoke to practitioners about children's learning.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders and staff; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children’s interests first.
- The inspector reviewed responses to Ofsted’s parent and staff surveys. An inspector spoke to some parents at the beginning of the day.
- An inspector talked to staff to gather their views about the school, including their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Matt Batchelor

Ofsted Inspector

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