

Inspection of an outstanding school: St Paul's Nursery School & Children's Centre

Little Bishop Street, St Paul's, Bristol BS2 9JF

Inspection date:

17 July 2024

Outcome

St Paul's Nursery School & Children's Centre continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children are happy, confident learners at this school. When they arrive in the morning, children settle quickly into focused activities. They greet staff and one another cheerfully. Staff warmly support any children who find settling tricky. This sets a positive tone for the rest of the day.

Staff expertly manage routines. This helps children to feel safe. It also gives them the confidence to be independent. Adults verbally rehearse what is happening now and what will come next. This helps children to manage transitions well. Younger children help to put pictures on the now and next board. This visual aid reminds them to be ready for the next activity. Many are able to manage their feelings well.

Children have an exceptional sense of self. The school values each child's 'personal history', which helps children to feel understood. Stories, songs and rhymes from many different cultures deepen children's sense of belonging to the school community. Children benefit from moments of curiosity and wonder. The 'out and about' bus is just one of the ways children expand their understanding of life in Bristol and beyond.

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

This is a thoroughly inclusive school. It constantly seeks to reduce barriers for children, so everyone experiences success and makes progress. Everyone is highly ambitious for children at this school. Staff work in close partnership with parents to match the curriculum to each child. Parents deeply value this partnership. Their views contribute purposefully to their child's success. Where children have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), parents are fully involved in developing the individual plans. These strong relationships are critical to the school's success.

The curriculum is based on the school's values and the St Paul's 'promises'. These 'promises' are a golden thread through children's daily experiences. This means that children make small steps of learning that builds on what they already know.

Staff have a deep understanding of how young children develop. They use this with expertise. As a result, children learn the knowledge and skills that prepare them for life. The interactions between adults and children are crucial to the exceptional learning. Staff use planned and incidental moments for continual learning. Children learn good table manners as well as how to resolve disagreements. The priority given to developing language gives children an extensive vocabulary to use. Adults model using this language during formal and informal teaching sessions. This helps children to build understanding and gives them confidence to use the vocabulary in their play.

Staff use assessment precisely to identify the barriers to learning for any child. They then plan specific experiences or activities to reduce these barriers while maintaining ambition for success. Key workers understand the unique child and tailor learning to meet their needs. They also understand the needs of their group, which then determines the shaping of the curriculum. In this way, children make excellent progress through the curriculum.

Staff subject knowledge is strong. This is particularly the case in early mathematics. Training develops adults' understanding of how young children develop numerical and spatial understanding. Experiences of reasoning and problem-solving are part of children's daily routine. For example, while learning how to make healthy fruit kebabs, children count out ten pieces of fruit to use. Adults help children to do this with accuracy. Adults then extend learning by asking questions about one more and one less than ten. This purposeful activity is typical of how adults help children to use their knowledge in real-life situations.

Governors and the local authority enable staff to work beyond the school and host visiting professionals. This benefits the local early years provision as well as giving staff opportunities to develop. Consequently, staff feel invested in and valued.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in February 2019.

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	108901
Local authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	10322194
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Prue Willmot
Headteacher	Lucy Driver
Website	www.stpaulschildrenscentre.bristol.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has provision for babies and two-year-olds on site.
- The school does not 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication and language, mathematics, and personal, social and emotional development. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of learning sessions, spoke to staff and spoke to some children about their learning.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, curriculum leaders, teaching and support staff and members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors observed children's behaviour during learning sessions, continuous provision and in both the indoor and outdoor environments.
- The inspectors considered responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. They also took into consideration responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation provided by the school.

Inspection team

Angela Folland, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Matt Fletcher

His Majesty's Inspector

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