

Inspection of an outstanding school: Ethelred Nursery School and Children's Centre

1 Gundulf Street, London SE11 6BG

Inspection date:

11 July 2024

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?

There is a happy and purposeful atmosphere in this school. Overall, staff encourage and cultivate children's learning and development effectively. Children's key persons foster warm and supportive relationships with the children and their parents and carers. These key persons are adept at finding out what interests and motivates each child. They use this knowledge to help children quickly get to the point where they gladly wave goodbye to their parents. Children readily join in with learning because the activities planned engage and excite them.

Children learn the expected behaviour routines. They behave in a polite, considerate and kind manner. Staff model and reinforce expectations with children, such as the need to say 'please' and 'thank you'. They support children in how to resolve disagreements in an amicable way. Children learn to get along well and make friends. For example, children invited others to join them in play and made room for others at the table during snack time.

The school strives to ensure that children gain the knowledge and social skills that they need to make a successful start in the Reception Year. Children's development benefits well from all the school has to offer. However, the school has rightly been working on further improving several aspects of its provision. The school is determined to ensure that all children will routinely achieve their potential.

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

The school's arrangements for assessments are well established. It checks children's starting points and their progression over time. Key persons know their children's

strengths and needs really well. This is achieved through initial home visits and daily discussions with parents, for example. Staff also make their own observations, including through their frequent interactions with children. Staff use this information effectively to plan teaching and learning activities that build on and expand children's interests.

Staff are knowledgeable in the learning and development requirements of the early years. Adults engage children in lots of back-and-forth conversations. This helps children to build up their vocabulary and gain new knowledge. Even so, some teaching and delivery of the curriculum does not focus on helping children to progress in their learning. The school has begun work to address this. For example, this year, staff have agreed a set of end goals, across all areas, that they want children to achieve by the time they leave the provision. However, the school is at an early stage in thinking about the exact knowledge and vocabulary that they want children to master in each area of learning. This means that, sometimes, children do not achieve as well as they could.

The school chooses core texts, which form the basis for a range of teaching activities. Children enjoy being read to during story time, especially when staff use puppets and other props to help to make the story time engaging. Staff also use stories to develop children's knowledge and language. For example, children worked with an adult to bake a 'Gruffalo crumble'. They learned to follow a recipe and to take turns. They also practised weighing ingredients and mixing the dough, and they were taught new vocabulary like 'simmer' and 'pinch'.

The school's systems for identifying, assessing and planning for the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are well established. Staff are well trained in how to cater for the needs of children with SEND, including those with more complex needs who attend the 'nurture room' provision. This provision provides appropriate resources to meet children's specific needs. The well-planned and delivered speech and language support is very effective. Children with SEND achieve well.

The school has high expectations for children's behaviours. Staff have had training and discussions about approaches to dealing with challenging behaviours. This has brought about more consistency across the school. Children are attentive, play well together and share resources. Lunch time is orderly. Children know how to clear up once they have finished eating. The school does much work with parents to encourage them to get into the habit of ensuring that their children attend school every day. Children's positive behaviours and keenness to attend contribute well to their success.

The school does much to promote children's wider development. For example, there are many opportunities for children to get involved in music-based activities, making artwork and sewing. Children visit a local wildlife garden often. They get to explore and learn about the natural world, including mini beasts, pond life, beekeeping and the seasons. The school also takes children to the theatre, the local library and supermarket, for example. Visitors come in to share their cultures and celebrations, like Diwali.

The school has very strong working relationships with parents. Parents value the support that they and their children receive. Staff said that workload expectations are reasonable and manageable. They said leaders are approachable and care about their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not given enough thought to the step-by-step component knowledge that it needs to teach children so they can achieve securely all the goals the school aspires for them to attain. Children do not routinely gain as much overall knowledge as they could. The school should quickly implement its plans to identify exactly what knowledge, including vocabulary, it wants children to gain and the logical order in which this knowledge should be taught.

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 January 2015.

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	100552
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	10345659
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Siobhan Turner
Headteacher	Luke Page (executive headteacher) Melanie Miah (head of school)
Website	www.ethelrednursery.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 April 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Lambeth Nursery Schools Federation, which includes four other nursery schools.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a large turnover of staff. The current head of school was appointed in September 2021. She is also head of another school in the federation. The executive headteacher started his role at this school in April 2022. He is the executive headteacher of all the federation's schools and is also head of another nursery.
- In May 2024, the school opened a local-authority-funded specialist provision for children with SEND. It is funded for up to five full-time equivalent places. These children have a variety of complex SEND needs.
- The school does not use 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these areas of learning: communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and understanding the world. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders and staff, visited classrooms and the outdoor provision, looked at examples of children’s learning, visited story times and spoke to children as they played and learned. Other areas of learning were also considered as part of this inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with the head of school, executive headteacher and other senior staff. They also spoke with the chair and two other governors and the local authority school improvement adviser.
- 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.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation and had formal meetings with staff.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of parents. They also considered the responses to Ofsted’s surveys for parents and staff.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Sophie Healey-Welch

His Majesty’s Inspector

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