

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Gracelands Nursery School

Grace Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham, West Midlands B11 1ED

Inspection dates:

15 October 2024

Outcome

Gracelands Nursery School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Every morning, children skip into this school with joyful, big smiles on their faces. They are eager to see their friends and to make a start with their learning. Children feel safe and confident because of the exceptionally strong relationships they have with the adults at the nursery. Parents and carers are highly positive about the school. Most describe it as 'one big family' and appreciate how well staff care about their children.

Staff have high expectations and prepare learning that meets the needs and interests of children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school takes the approach of designing activities that are 'the right thing, for the right child at the right time'. This is highly successful, and children make strong progress in all areas of their learning.

Routines are well established, and children behave well. They share and take turns without a fuss. Children learn about the rights they have and how to treat each other with respect and kindness. They enjoy the opportunities that they have to learn about the wider world, for example by celebrating cultural events and going on educational visits such as to the zoo and the train station.

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

Staff at Gracelands are experts in early education. They make sure that children benefit from a superbly designed curriculum that meets their needs and interests consistently. Children, including two-year-olds, learn well and grow in confidence. This means that, by

the time they leave for Reception Year, they are academically, socially and emotionally ready for their next steps in education.

Adults ensure that communication and language development is at the heart of the curriculum. They have thought carefully about the vocabulary that children will learn to recognise, understand and use in a wide variety of topics. This learning is well-sequenced so that children build their knowledge of the language and vocabulary they can use to express their thoughts and ideas confidently. Children who find speech difficult are supported to communicate in other ways, including through meaningful play and opportunities to interact with others.

Adults check how well children have learned what they have been taught and use this information to plan the next steps in learning. There are regular opportunities to revisit important learning so that children deepen their understanding. For example, there are daily opportunities to practise counting and matching numbers to a set of objects.

The school ensures that the environment, both indoors and outside, is organised to encourage children to be inquisitive and creative. Children learn skills to help them become more independent, for example they know the importance of putting on waterproof coats and wellies before playing in the wet activity areas outside. Children enjoy the activities on offer and show high levels of concentration on what they have chosen to do. Reading is promoted in all areas of the school. Children show great interest in listening to stories and joining in with familiar rhymes and songs.

The school identifies the needs of children with SEND as soon as possible. Adults work closely with parents. They provide them with effective support to help their children make as much progress as they can.

Relationships between adults and children are a strength. Children behave well and respond promptly to instructions given by adults. For example, they move to their key adult groups when they hear the bell, and they are quick to tidy up when asked to do so.

The school plans carefully for children's personal development. Children learn about making choices to be healthy, how to keep themselves safe and what to do if something does not feel right.

Staff are very happy at the school. They are clear that leaders are mindful of their well-being and help everyone to have a good work-life balance. Governors want the best for the school, the children and the staff. They provide appropriate levels of challenge and support for leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness 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	103135
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10343723
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sean Delaney
Headteacher	Samantha Richards (executive headteacher)
Website	www.grclands.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is one of nine nursery schools that form the Birmingham Federation of Maintained Nursery Schools.
- The executive headteacher is also responsible for another nursery school within the federation.
- The school provides full- and part-time places for children aged two to four years old.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.

- During the inspection, inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the SEND coordinator. The lead inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone, and she also met with three members of the governing body.
- The inspectors focused inspection activity on the following areas of learning: communication and language, early reading and mathematics, and personal, social and emotional development and understanding the world. For each group of subjects, the inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to children about their learning and talked to adults about the planned activities.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and parents; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.
- Throughout the inspection, the inspectors met with groups of staff. They also considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- Inspectors met some parents at different times of the day and had regard to the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the free-text comments that were submitted.

Inspection team

Jo Evans, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Martina Abbott	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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