

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: New Mills Nursery School

Sett Close, New Mills, High Peak, Derbyshire SK22 4AQ

Inspection date:

14 January 2025

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff take the time to understand and nurture children at this friendly and welcoming nursery school. They carefully consider each child's individuality, background and starting point. When necessary, the curriculum is adapted to reflect these needs. Staff have high expectations of what children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can achieve. Children thrive at this school. They develop secure foundations in readiness for the rest of their schooling.

The school places a strong emphasis on the development of children's language. Children learn to communicate their ideas and talk about their learning. Occasionally, during independent activities, the school's ambition for what children will rehearse and know is not realised fully.

Children learn how their behaviour can affect others. This helps them to feel safe, self-regulate and manage their feelings. Children learn to be empathetic and trustworthy by taking care of 'Smudge' and 'Velvet', the school's guinea pigs. Staff praise and celebrate the positive attitudes that children demonstrate. Children aspire to be rewarded with 'treasure keepers'. They are proud to share the reasons for their rewards with their parents and carers.

Relationships between staff, families and children are warm and positive. Parents are proud of the progress their children make at this school.

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

The nursery school has been through a period of restructuring. During these changes, the school continued to prioritise high-quality early years education for all children. Staff are

proud to work at the school. They appreciate the training they have received to teach through stories and further support children's language and mathematical development. Staff are determined to provide the children in their care with a strong start to their early education. However, after the recent changes, staff worry about their workload.

The school's curriculum is crafted carefully to plug any gaps in children's early knowledge. The '10 curriculum goals' are key childhood experiences and knowledge that are woven into the curriculum. For example, children learn how mixing colours can create new shades and how to make models out of different construction materials. Staff have a clear understanding of what children should know during their time at the school. Occasionally, during independent learning, some children do not deepen their knowledge of the curriculum. When this happens, children's play becomes repetitive or lacks focus.

Stories are central to the school's curriculum. They help children learn key language and early childhood concepts, such as similarities, differences and patterns. Children with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers because staff make careful adaptations to the activities. During story times, children develop positive learning habits, such as 'listening ears'. They learn how words on a page carry meaning and how the characters are feeling at different points of the story. The school's routines are filled with songs and rhymes. Through these, children learn about rhythm and understand the school's routines. Staff often provide stories that link to children's interests. These help children who need additional support to develop a love of reading.

The school works closely with families to help them understand the importance of coming to nursery every day. Cuddly toys are used to help children capture their experiences and continue their learning should they be away from school for a long period. The nursery works alongside other schools in the area to prioritise children's safety and attendance.

The school plays a central role in its local community. It loans out jigsaws, books and games so that families can continue to learn together at home. Visitors provide children with opportunities to learn more about other communities and roles in wider society. Children are encouraged to express their views. For example, a toy mouse helps children to articulate how they feel as they visit their new schools.

The governing body has a range of expertise that it uses to provide accountability for the school. It recognises that after all the recent changes, staff workload is an area that needs further consideration.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, during independent learning, some children do not benefit from opportunities to extend and deepen their understanding of the early years curriculum. This slows down how well these children learn and secure key knowledge and concepts. The school should ensure that during independent learning, children develop a breadth and depth of knowledge across all areas of the early years curriculum.
- Staff are concerned about their workload. This has an impact on their well-being. Governors should consider realistic and constructive ways of working to ensure that all staff have a manageable workload.

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 to be good 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 third ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in December 2012.

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	112477
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10347336
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	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of trust	Christine Bowen
Headteacher	Claire Inman
Website	www.newmills-nur.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The nursery school has recently undergone a significant restructuring of staff.

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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and groups of staff. They considered a range of school documents.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the local authority and members of the local governing body.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered

the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- Inspectors visited a range of lessons and spoke to children during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and staff expressed through Ofsted's surveys. The views of parents were also gathered on site.

Inspection team

Shaheen Hussain, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

George Huthart

Ofsted Inspector

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