

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

Brantfield, Queens Road, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4PH

Inspection date: 28 January 2025

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Children thoroughly enjoy attending this remarkable school. They engage in a broad range of exciting learning experiences. The extensive outdoor environment evokes awe and wonder in children as they become completely absorbed in their learning. For example, children have thoughtful discussions with their friends as they play together under the trees. They use their well-developed creativity and problem-solving skills to transport sticks and rocks in wheelbarrows to build a house and to design their own maps. Children challenge themselves to climb, slide and run up steep banks. They develop high levels of confidence and become fiercely independent at this school.

Staff support children to feel safe and help them to understand their emotions. Children behave exceptionally well and are incredibly respectful towards each other. They consistently take turns and share with minimal support from staff. Children understand, and confidently follow, the school's embedded routines.

The school is aspirational for its children. Since the last inspection, the school has further strengthened many aspects of its work to ensure that it continues to provide an excellent quality of education to all. Children develop a rich body of knowledge and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

The school provides children with an ambitious, progressive and highly engaging curriculum. Staff get ongoing support and training to ensure that their knowledge and expertise continue to strengthen over time. This enables them to put the curriculum in

place effectively. Staff consider children's prior learning when designing activities and when interacting with children. They carefully match children's learning experiences to their interests and to the essential knowledge that the school has identified they should know. Staff ensure that children have opportunities to revisit and to apply their prior knowledge, while also widening and deepening their understanding of new concepts.

The school has refined its systems and processes for checking how well children are knowing and remembering more. The school considered staff's workload when implementing these changes. Staff meticulously identify any gaps in children's knowledge and focus on addressing these in subsequent learning. This ensures that children's learning develops securely over time.

The school provides highly effective support to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It works with a range of external agencies to ensure that children's needs are identified swiftly and met. Staff carefully review the impact of its support for children and make further adaptations to the provision where necessary. Children with SEND achieve well from their starting points.

Children's communication and language development is promoted exceptionally well. Staff sing rhymes to children as they play the piano. Children eagerly join in, and subsequently repeat these rhymes independently. Staff introduce ambitious vocabulary to children and provide clear explanations about their meaning. Children use these new words in their play. For example, children spoke about 'confectionary' while talking about ice-cream. Staff support children who are at the early stages of language development. They engage children in two-way, meaningful conversations. Children rapidly become confident communicators.

The school fosters a love of reading in children. Each class has a wide range of high-quality books that children delight in exploring with their friends. Staff read to children in an animated way that fully immerses them in the story. Children enjoy working collaboratively to create characters and plot in their own stories. They demonstrate a mature understanding of the structure of stories, beyond what would be expected for their age.

Children develop extremely positive attitudes to learning. They sustain concentration for long periods of time and demonstrate high levels of resilience. For example, children kept trying as they chipped away at ice to release the penguins that were inside. The school ensures that parents and carers understand the importance of school attendance. It supports families to overcome any barriers to attending school.

Children have many opportunities to broaden their experiences. They meet people from different professions and find out about their jobs. For example, children watched a sheep being sheared. The school celebrates diversity. It extends children's understanding of differences in families and introduces them to festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. Children are encouraged to engage in the community. They go on outings to explore the local area and interact with older people in the nearby care home. Children are very well prepared for life beyond the school.

Governors know the school well. They undertake their roles effectively and have ensured that the school has continued to build on its strengths since the last inspection.

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 to be 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 October 2014.

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	112091
Local authority	Westmorland and Furness
Inspection number	10348085
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	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Veronica Broyd
Headteacher	Alyssa Dobbs
Website	www.brantfield.com
Date of previous inspection	3 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides educational provision for two-year-old children.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school operates a breakfast club and after-school provision.
- At the time of the inspection, an acting headteacher was temporarily leading the school.

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 leaders, governors, and staff at the school. The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors visited lessons in the indoor and outdoor environments. They also spoke to children about their learning.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and carers and considered their written feedback, including the free-text comments made on the online survey Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors spoke to children and to staff to gather their views. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted’s online surveys for staff and children.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.

Inspection team

Liz Dayton, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Sarah Gower-Jones

Ofsted Inspector

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