

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

Blakenall Heath, Blakenall, Walsall, West Midlands WS3 1HT

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Inspection dates:

25 and 26 March 2025

## **Outcome**

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

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Children flourish at Valley Nursery. The school lives and breathes by its motto of 'Ambition for all'. It is a fantastic place for children to start their school experience. There is particularly high ambition for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Their needs are very well met. Children thrive educationally as well as personally and socially. By the time they leave children are extremely well prepared for primary school.

Staff focus extensively on children's personal, social and emotional development. As a result, children love to come to school, are happy, and enjoy the exciting activities they do. This school nurtures children. They are safe and well cared for. Adults have high expectations for how children should behave. Children behave very well, reflecting the calm and respectful ethos established across the school. Parents also feel that this impacts on their child's behaviour positively at home.

There is a determination to broaden children's horizons. The school provides opportunities for children to experience the wider world through trips on the school's minibus. For example, children visit an air force museum and a cathedral. Children learn about different jobs such as firefighters, artists, shop workers and health workers.

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

The school has designed an ambitious, high-quality and exciting curriculum. Every decision staff make is based on a secure understanding of how young children develop. For all areas of the early years curriculum, leaders have set out clear sequences and expectations. From the two-year-old provision children's learning builds very well over time. For example, in mathematics, they experience activities such as counting how many children are in their group. Children then continue to count and then learn to read and write numerals in small group work and in their play. By the time they leave many children confidently read and write numbers to 10.

Staff understand the curriculum very well. They carefully link learning throughout the day so children can see how things fit together. In addition, children learn specific knowledge and skills which they then practise in their play. If necessary, they benefit from targeted support so that they are ready to learn and take part in activities confidently. Consequently, children learn extremely well over time.

With current children in mind, adults consider and refine every detail of provision. They are very skilled at checking how well children are learning and using this information to plan next steps. Staff ensure children routinely talk about and review their learning. There is nothing left to chance at this school.

The development of children's communication and language is a priority. Interactions between staff and children are of a high quality. Staff use 'talk time' with the children to model and develop language skills. They plan interesting activities across the school to further extend children's vocabulary. For example, children are keen to talk about and describe the chicks hatched in school. Staff then extend vocabulary using stories about eggs, learning about a 'platypus'.

Songs, rhymes and stories permeate the environment. Staff use books to engage children's interest in their play. For example, children use a book about dinosaurs when playing independently with small dinosaur toys. Staff provide opportunities for children to listen to and identify sounds in words. This prepares children well for future phonics learning.

Staff are vigilant and skilled in identifying children with SEND. They identify their specific needs at an early stage. Children with more complex needs receive tailored support, while still being able to play and learn alongside their peers.

Leaders work effectively with families to ensure that they understand the importance of regular attendance. Staff teach children important routines and independence skills which ensures that they settle into school quickly and behave very well.

The school's provision for children's personal development is exemplary. It is woven into all aspects of school life. Children are motivated and interested learners. Adults encourage children to develop independence. For example, they 'self-register' when they enter school and learn how to put their coats on correctly when they go outside. Children experience many cultural events such as Holi and Eid. Staff share and celebrate their talents and interests from home. These interests are then extended through visitors into

school such as jugglers, drummers and dancers. Consequently, children develop into well-rounded individuals.

Since the previous inspection the school has further improved and refined many aspects of its work. Governors have enabled this work to be effective. Staff 'share the load' and work together effectively as a team. They feel very well supported by 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 third ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in March 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104137
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	10378214
<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	176
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Barry Dutton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dawn Kelly (executive headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sandbankvalleyfederation.co.uk">www.sandbankvalleyfederation.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	5 and 6 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school has provision for two-year-old children.
- Children attend the nursery either part-time or full-time. Those who attend full-time bring a packed lunch.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school operates a before-school club.
- Since the previous inspection the school has federated with Sandbank Nursery 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken this into account in his evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the curriculum leader and groups of staff.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chairs of the governors. The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with children about their learning and looked at evidence of children's work.
- The inspector observed children's behaviour in lessons and around school.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the online staff survey. The inspector spoke to parents at the end of the school day and met with a group of parents in school.

### **Inspection team**

Barry Yeadsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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