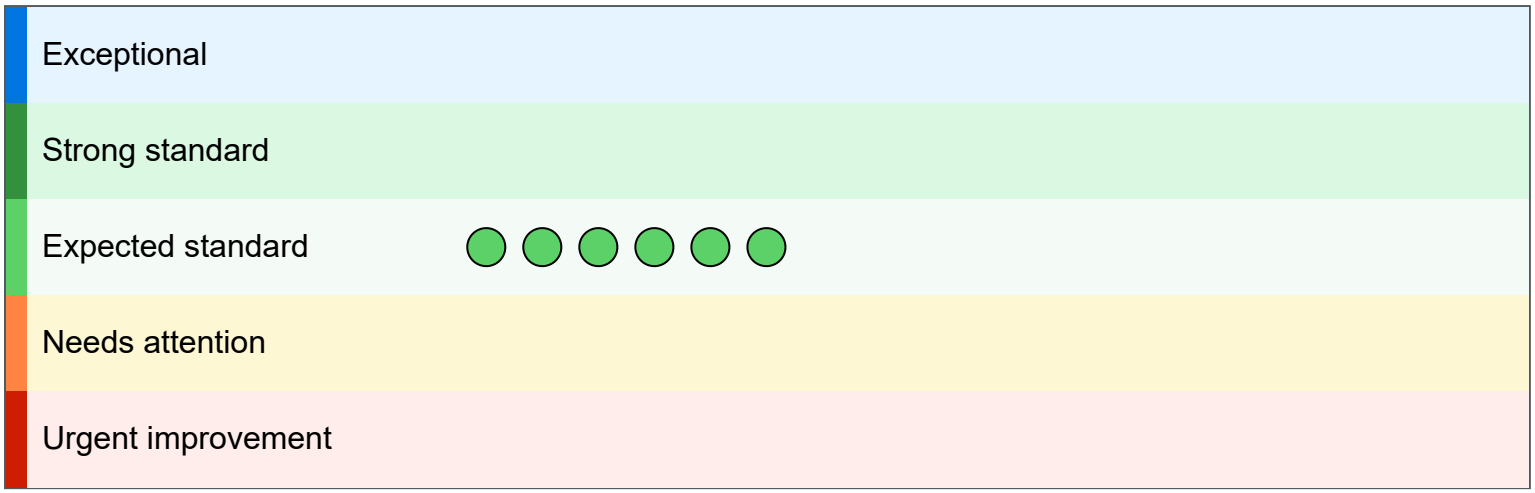
Little Hayes Nursery School

Address: Symington Road, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 2LL

Unique reference number (URN): 108895

Inspection report: 23 June 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Children arrive in the setting with a range of prior knowledge and skills. From their starting points, children make typical progress across the curriculum. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are disadvantaged, generally get the right support to help them achieve well. By the time children leave Little Hayes, they are confident and independent learners. For example, they take responsibility for tidying the outdoor space independently, requiring minimal prompting from adults.

Children enjoy discussing familiar stories and confidently develop an understanding of early number through songs and rhymes. They begin to develop the vocabulary they need to help them share their thoughts. Many children can talk enthusiastically about their learning to staff and visitors. At times, their responses are less well developed when adults miss opportunities to prompt and extend their thinking. When learning independently, children demonstrate sustained concentration on tasks. They persevere if they encounter problems. These ingrained learning habits mean that children are well prepared for the transition to primary school.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Most children attend well. Leaders rigorously follow up children's absence to ensure that children are safe. They promote the benefits of regular attendance to parents and carers. Leaders analyse the causes of lower attendance for individuals. They provide support strategies for families to improve attendance. However, leaders are less clear around attendance for different groups of children. This makes it difficult for them to understand the impact of their actions on key groups of children, including those who are disadvantaged.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. Staff make these clear to children so that they understand the setting's rules well. Key staff carry out home visits before children start to help them understand any additional support children may need in managing their behaviour. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff support these children well. They are calm and patient when children dysregulate. Staff deeply embed routines, such as lining up or washing hands before eating. As a result, children behave to a high standard throughout the setting. There is a calm and orderly atmosphere. Bullying is not an issue. Staff deal with any fallouts between children swiftly and fairly.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Since the last inspection, leaders have improved the curriculum. It now identifies precisely the knowledge children should know from the age of two through to when they leave to start primary school. Leaders consider carefully how and when children learn vital skills, such as communication and language. They have overhauled the way staff make checks on children's learning. These rigorous systems closely align with the content of the curriculum. As a result, staff have an accurate and precise view of how well children are learning.

Leaders have also trained staff to better identify gaps in children's knowledge. These are addressed quickly.

Most staff teach the curriculum well. They model and explain new ideas effectively. This helps children to know what is expected of them. Staff provide engaging activities that develops children's learning in line with the expectations of the curriculum. For example, ‘bucket time' is used successfully to develop children's listening and attention skills. Teachers revisit key ideas and vocabulary to help children embed their learning. Occasionally, a few adults do not engage children in high quality interactions. This limits children's verbal responses.

Staff know which children require extra help or adaptations within the provision. They provide effective support for children who speak English as an additional language.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Inclusion is a strength of the provision. Leaders strive to ensure that they understand the different backgrounds, views and differences between its diverse range of families, including those who speak English as an additional language. This enables the early and accurate identification of children who face barriers to learning. An increasing number of children now have an education, health and care plan, reflecting leaders’ diligence in identifying needs. Leaders carefully identify the most effective strategies to remove barriers for children. They make sure these are shared with all adults, including temporary staff. As a result, most staff provide the adaptations that children need to thrive in the provision. Leaders evaluate thoroughly the effectiveness of this support on children's learning and well-being. They make appropriate changes to this as children's needs develop over time.

Recently, the school has established additional nurture support for a small number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This helps them to receive the support they need to engage more fully in their learning.

Leaders, including governors, use additional funding for disadvantaged children wisely. They use this to provide additional help so that children are supported to learn well in the setting.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders' decision-making is firmly rooted in children's best interests. Staff follow the examples leaders set. There is a clear, shared vision among everyone connected with Little Hayes. Leaders have made improvements across many aspects of the setting's work since the last inspection. They have addressed the weaknesses in the curriculum with determination and urgency. Leaders prioritise training for staff to ensure that they have sufficient expertise to deliver the curriculum, such as mathematics, effectively. They know the nursery's strengths and weaknesses well. Leaders know there is still more to do to improve the quality of some staff's interactions with children. They have drawn upon the support of the local authority appropriately to help them check the effectiveness of their actions.

The united staff team display great pride at working in the setting. They feel that leaders manage their workload well. Staff comment that leaders are approachable to deal with any

professional or personal concerns they may have.

The small but committed governing body fulfil their statutory duties successfully. They robustly support and challenge leaders about how well children learn. Governors make regular checks on the school's work, such as safeguarding. This helps them to have an informed view of how well children are kept safe.

All parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's Parent View survey would recommend the school. They particularly value staff's high level of care and commitment that they demonstrate towards their child. Parents appreciate staff's knowledge of the unique qualities of each child who attends Little Hayes.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Leaders place children's personal, social and emotional development at the heart of their work. Staff typically ensure that they develop children's social skills in both structured and informal learning. For example, staff use lunchtimes to teach children the importance of being polite to one another. Staff explicitly teach turn taking and sharing during group activities. They give extra attention to this when new children arrive in the provision. This helps children to understand how to interact positively with their peers. Staff promote respect and tolerance continuously. They celebrate the diverse backgrounds of its children and families. Children learn about healthy foods through the growing of vegetables on the nursery site.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe. Staff remind children of the importance of drinking water and wearing hats during warm weather. Staff respectfully consider children's dignity and privacy when changing nappies. They model the importance of asking for consent when carrying out any intimate care. Staff develop children's independence in toilet training. They work closely with parents and carers to understand the barriers they may have.

Staff develop children's resilience impressively. While children appreciate the clear routines throughout the school day, they are also highly adaptable to change. For example, when leaders change the location or structure of learning activities, children respond positively. This is because they develop trusting relationships with adults which enable them to manage unfamiliar situations successfully. Staff ensure they are available to welcome children into the setting at the start of the day. This helps to spot any children who are feeling unhappy. Staff use their knowledge of children to use strategies to make them feel better and to settle into their learning.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Little Hayes is a welcoming, homely and nurturing environment for children to learn in. They feel safe and secure. Relationships throughout the setting and within the diverse community are highly positive. Staff forge close, trusting bonds with both children and their parents and carers quickly. As a result, both children and families experience a deep sense of belonging within the setting.

Children develop a love of learning through experiencing a wide range of interesting activities that build upon their prior learning. They typically attend well. Children relish the opportunities to take their learning beyond the classroom into the spacious and well-organised outdoor environment. Here, they enjoy looking for insects and discussing their habitats. Many children develop positive learning behaviours. This is because staff model how to behave well. Consequently, children engage with interest and enthusiasm during both adult-led and independent activities. Staff sort any disagreements or unkindness between individuals quickly. Leaders' positive changes to both the curriculum and the quality of teaching mean that children know and remember more than they did in the past. As a result, they are well-prepared to take their next steps in learning. Leaders and staff know children's diverse range of needs well. Staff support those with special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively.

Children benefit from a range of exciting opportunities to enrich their education. This helps mould children into well-rounded individuals. A visiting musician helps children to develop their listening skills as well as a love of the arts. Leaders regularly invite families to these sessions so that they can celebrate their children's achievements. Children participate in a theatre project which develops their confidence and independence. Walks in the locality give children an understanding of their place in the world. Leaders diligently ensure that all children have the chance to enjoy these.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff consistently provide high-quality interactions so that children’s communication and language skills are developed well across the provision.
- Leaders should strengthen their systems for monitoring attendance so they understand the impact of their work and continue to tackle barriers for key groups, including disadvantaged pupils, those who speak English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Jill Gettrup.

Little Hayes Nursery School is federated with Speedwell Nursery School to form the Little Hayes and Speedwell Nursery Schools Federation.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty’s Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, senior leaders, staff and a representative of the local authority. The lead inspector also met with the governing body, including the chair of governors.

Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments, and spoke to some parents. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

Little Hayes Nursery School is based on a single site which caters for two-, three-, four- and five-year-old children.

The headteacher of this school is the executive headteacher of both schools in the federation.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The data shown in the section, 'facts and figures used on inspection' is the latest published data that was available at the time of the inspection. It is taken from a number of sources at different points in time throughout the academic year. Since the time the facts and figures were published, there have been some changes, as follows: the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals was 58.72%, the percentage of pupils with an education, health and care plan was 7.34% and the percentage of pupils receiving special educational needs support was 38.53%.

Headteacher: Jet Davis

Lead inspector:
Jason Edge, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Catherine Beeks, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

This data is from 23 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

109

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

36.7%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

0.00%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

18.35%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Our grades explained

Exceptional 🔵

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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