

Inspection of an outstanding school: Highfield Nursery School

Wright Street, Chorley, Lancashire PR6 0SL

Inspection date: 14 November 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has high expectations for children's education. It provides them with a wide range of interesting learning activities, indoors and outdoors. Children, including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), usually learn and achieve well. Nevertheless, some of the school's curriculum is less well thought out.

Children at the school are greeted by staff with a friendly welcome. They are calm and happy throughout their day and behave well. Children learn to be kind to one another, helped gently by staff. They also learn to take care of the school's toys and equipment. Children feel valued by staff to be a special member of their class. This helps them to build positive, trusting relationships and to feel safe at the school.

Children, including two-year-olds, learn how to hold back-and-forth conversations with staff. They benefit from the skilful ways in which staff help them to talk about how they are feeling and what they are learning. Children learn how to express their thoughts and ideas well.

Children develop their physical skills, including climbing and crawling, because of the support and activities that staff thoughtfully provide. The school generally helps children to keep themselves healthy. Nevertheless, it does not ensure that the drinks that some children bring to school in their packed lunches are sugar free.

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

Mostly, the school has established an ambitious curriculum for children, including for children with SEND. It provides them with learning activities that develop their curiosity, for instance about books, objects and artefacts. Children become confident, inquisitive learners and develop much new knowledge.

In a few areas of learning, some of the school's curriculum for three- and four-year-olds is less well thought out. Sometimes, children do not learn all that they need to know. In response, the school is strengthening its thinking about the curriculum. For example, it is using insights from educational research and the guidance of external experts. Nevertheless, it is too soon to see the impact of this work.

The school makes certain that children develop their confidence and ability to communicate with words and gesture. Staff recognise and respond skilfully to the individual ways in which some children with SEND communicate their needs, feelings and interests to others. Children learn the many songs and rhymes that the school teaches them.

Staff read often to children from a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. Older children learn about the works of different authors. Children develop their love for, and knowledge of, books and stories.

Staff check carefully whether children know and remember the school's curriculum. They make deft use of such information to improve children's learning. For instance, staff pinpoint important words to teach to the children that they do not already know.

The school identifies the needs of children with SEND quickly and accurately. It consults with other professionals for advice effectively. The school makes certain that children with SEND receive a wealth of support from staff and other specialists. Children with SEND gain a successful start to their learning.

Children respond well to staff's support for their behaviour and stay focused on their learning. Staff can give their attention to teaching the curriculum. Children benefit greatly, helped by attending the school often.

The school's success is enhanced by its attention to helping each child to feel good about themselves and their lives. Children also learn to be kind and caring towards others. The school teaches children about the importance of staying healthy. Nevertheless, it does not ensure that the drinks that some children bring to school for lunchtime are sugar free. This means that some children's oral health is not assured.

Governors are ambitious for the school and bring much expertise to their roles. They attend a range of training to keep their education and safeguarding knowledge up to date. The governing body reviews the school's work thoughtfully, including in relation to the curriculum, provision for pupils with SEND and finance.

The school acts to reduce the workload of staff. For instance, it has reduced the amount of paperwork that it expects staff to complete. This means that staff use their time efficiently to support and extend children's learning. The school considers the well-being of staff carefully. Staff feel respected and take delight in their work.

The school communicates well with parents and carers, including the parents of children with SEND. It discusses with them their children's learning at home and at school. Parents

feel that the school values and respects their own insights about their child's needs, interests and development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some of the curriculum, the school's thinking about the knowledge that it intends to teach three- and four-year-old children is less clear. This means that, at times, children do not learn as much as they might. The school should make sure that all its curriculum is equally well considered.
- Sometimes, the school allows some children to drink sugary drinks. This limits its actions to develop children's healthy teeth and gums. The school, including the governing body, should ensure that children's oral health is promoted fully.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 in July 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	119067
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10272855
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Liz Klavins
Headteacher	Susan Conron (Executive Headteacher)
Website	https://highfieldnurseryschoolchorley.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision for children.
- The school provides some places for children aged two years.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has federated with another local nursery school. An executive headteacher and one governing body are responsible for both schools. Since September 2023, a head of school manages this school on a day-to-day basis.
- Half of the staff are new to the school since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors completed deep dives in communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, and mathematics. They met with leaders, visited learning

activities and spoke with some children. The inspectors also spoke with staff about the curriculum.

- The inspectors considered information about the curriculum in some other areas of learning.
- The inspectors reviewed the responses to an Ofsted staff survey and spoke with staff about their work at the school.
- The inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The lead inspector spoke with a group of the parents of children with SEND.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The lead inspector met with five members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. Some governors attended this meeting remotely.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Victoria Burnside

His Majesty's Inspector

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