

Inspection of a good school: Ashgate Nursery School

18 Stepping Lane, Derby, Derbyshire DE1 1GJ

Inspection date: 29 March 2023

Outcome

Ashgate Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly and inclusive nursery school. Children feel safe here. Adults know the children and their families well. It is one of the reasons why many families with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) choose this nursery.

Children quickly learn routines and follow adult instructions well. They learn to empathise and help each other. When they need support, adults gently provide reminders of what is appropriate. This helps to create an environment that is productive and purposeful.

The youngest children learn to explore their surroundings well. They build secure relationships with their key adults. Older children learn to make links in their learning. They use the resources and equipment well to connect their ideas and solve problems. Occasionally, some of the older children's learning slows because they do not receive precise support.

Leaders provide lots of opportunities for children to learn outdoors. They have achieved awards in recognition of this work. Children enjoy regular visits to their local allotment. With their families, children recreate recipes to put into a cookbook. This represents the traditions and cultures of all those that attend the nursery. Many parents and carers expressed concerns about the future of the nursery.

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

The recently redesigned nursery curriculum has the needs of the children and the local community at its heart. Leaders recognised that the curriculum needed opportunities for children to revisit the same concepts and knowledge regularly. The ten curricular goals help children to develop a deeper understanding of early concepts and knowledge. They revisit these in a variety of ways. Leaders are ensuring that all staff have the same level of expertise to deliver this curriculum.

Leaders are ambitious for children with SEND. Adults seek to understand each child's holistic needs. They quickly build effective relationships with families, even before their children start at the nursery. Many parents of children with SEND appreciate the support their child receives. As one parent commented: 'The environment is great, and the support is fantastic.'

Children enjoy reflecting and sharing books about their families. It helps them to talk about how they have changed over time. This is underpinned by leaders' ambition to develop children's language and understanding. Children experience a range of songs, rhymes and stories throughout the day. Most adults ensure that conversations and interactions are meaningful. This helps children to develop their spoken language. Adults skilfully support children with SEND to express their needs through different communication methods.

Children enjoy their learning. They relish using the well-organised outdoor area. Adults skilfully support children in their play by asking questions and by extending children's understanding and development. For example, when using the climbing equipment, after some initial support, younger children independently repeated the activity with increasing confidence and success.

Most children engage very well with their activities. They learn to be independent, take turns and share. Adults support children by modelling and giving them strategies to work and learn together. 'Together times' with their key adults help children understand how to listen to each other's ideas. This prepares the oldest children for their transition to school well. Occasionally, some of the indoor activities and provision do not closely match the needs of the oldest children in the setting.

Leaders are passionate about providing children with rich experiences to help them to understand the wider world. They ensure that children explore the community through visits to museums, the library and other local landmarks. They involve parents in the school visits to the farm and the seaside. Forest school sessions help children to work together and learn to take risks.

Governors make regular checks on the work of leaders. They are passionate about improving the life chances for all children in the nursery. Leaders and governors support staff well-being and workload. Staff share leaders' vision of putting children at the centre of everything they do.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular information that might help them to identify concerns about a child's welfare. They are vigilant. Leaders ensure that safeguarding records are accurate and that all information, no matter how small, is recorded. Where needed, leaders involve other agencies to get the right support for their families.

Right from the very start, adults teach children about what makes a healthy friendship. Children tell adults when something worries them. Leaders have supported families to add filters to their devices when they noticed that some children had unsupervised access to online sites.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, some of the indoor activities are not as well matched to children's abilities or stage of development as they might be. This slows down children's learning. Leaders must ensure that all staff have the knowledge and expertise to provide precise and meaningful activities that meet the developmental needs of all children in all aspects of the nursery's provision.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 good in February 2013.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	112479
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10211634
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	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Christine Merrick
Executive Headteacher	Helen Fearn
Website	www.canschoolsfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The nursery is part of the Central Community and Ashgate Nursery Schools' Federation. The executive headteacher and the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) provide leadership across both nursery schools.
- The nursery school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- At the time of this inspection, a consultation was underway to close Ashgate Nursery School.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the SENDCo and a range of other leaders and staff. The lead inspector met with representatives of the local governing body and the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these areas of learning: communication and language, physical development and understanding of the world. For each deep dive,

inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders and spent time observing in the classrooms. Inspectors also talked to staff and children and observed activities to determine the impact of the curriculum and teaching methods on children’s learning and development.

- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders’ self-evaluation, improvement plans and documentation relating to attendance and behaviour.
- The inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the records of pre-employment checks. They also considered records that leaders held for children’s safeguarding and welfare.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s parent and staff questionnaires. They also spoke to a sample group of parents while on site.

Inspection team

Shaheen Hussain, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Janis Warren

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023