

St Edmund's Nursery School & Children's Centre

Washington Street, Gillington, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD8 9QW

Inspection dates 4–5 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The exceptional executive headteacher continues to effectively lead the team in their aspirational goal of nothing but the best will do for the children, families and staff.
- The strong foundations of the outstanding outcomes from the last inspection have been effectively maintained and robustly built upon by the strong leadership team, in the quest for continuous improvement.
- The highly skilled and knowledgeable governors know the school extremely well and rigorously check the work of the nursery, challenging it to make sure it remains outstanding.
- Children's behaviour is excellent. Expectations are very high and as a result, children quickly learn to respect each other and work together.
- Children's safety is excellent. Children and parents feel very safe in the nursery. As a result, children learn rapidly how to keep themselves safe and are ready to take on new challenges.
- Teaching is outstanding. Thoughtfully planned activities mean each child learns to the best of their ability. Exceptionally well-delivered small group activities promote excellent early reading and mathematical skills.
- Achievement is outstanding. The majority of children move on to their primary schools with skills that are in line with and often above those expected for their age in almost all areas of learning. They are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Partnerships with parents are outstanding. All the parents who spoke to the inspector or completed the parental questionnaire fully recommend the nursery. The support to enable them to fully participate in their child's learning is exceptional.
- The provision for disabled children and those with special educational needs is extremely well led. However, on a very few occasions a small number of staff are less confident when working with children who have profound disabilities. As a result, they are not able to provide the support needed to ensure that these children make maximum progress in all activities.
- These children generally receive first-class support enabling their full inclusion in school life. They receive this help through high quality, individual programmes which are skilfully taught. This means the vast majority make the same excellent progress from their starting points as other children.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 sessions across the school, including two jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the lead of the resourced provision, staff and the governors. Written evidence from the local authority was also considered.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents including the school improvement plan, the school's own review of its performance, data on children's progress and planning records. They also checked records of the work of the governing body, reports on teaching, and documentation relating to behaviour and safeguarding.
- The inspectors looked at a sample of children's work and focused in detail on the learning experiences of different groups of children.
- The responses of 23 parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, were scrutinised, as was the outcome of the school's own parental survey. In addition the views of 34 parents interviewed were taken into account.
- The inspectors took into account the views expressed by the staff in the 20 questionnaires they returned.

Inspection team

Geoffrey Dorrity, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Katharine Halifax

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized nursery school. It offers 80 full-time equivalent places. Currently, 151 children are on roll and attend part time.
- The school provides specialist resourced provision on behalf of the local authority. This is provision for up to 20 children who are disabled or have special educational needs. Currently there are 16 children on roll. They are fully integrated into the school.
- About one in four of the three- and four-year old children is disabled or has special educational needs, including those in the specialist provision. This is above average.
- Most of the children are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Although the majority of these are of Pakistani heritage, the proportion of children from other ethnic backgrounds, particularly from Eastern Europe, is increasing.
- Almost one half of children are at an early stage of learning to speak English when they join the nursery.
- No children are eligible for the pupil premium due to their age. This is the additional government funding available for disadvantaged pupils.
- The nursery is integrated with the children's centre and also provides registered childcare to families from 7.45am to 5.45pm. Neither of these provisions are part of this inspection. A separate report for these are available on the Ofsted website.
- The school holds the Inclusion award, the Engaging Families award and the National Quality Standards award for work experience.
- Since the last inspection:
 - the nursery has become a National Teaching School, the lead school for the Bradford Birth to 19 Teaching School Alliance, and a National Support School
 - the executive headteacher has become a National Leader of Education, and the deputy headteacher and lead practitioner both Specialist Leaders of Education
 - the executive headteacher is working as the executive headteacher of Lilycroft Nursery School. This did not form part of this inspection. A separate report is available on the Ofsted website
 - there is a new lead teacher in the resourced provision for children with disabilities and special educational needs, and a new teacher in one of the classes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide additional training and support to ensure that all staff have the same high levels of confidence, knowledge and skills of the majority, when working with those children with the most profound disabilities and special educational needs.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The executive headteacher provides very clear and strategic leadership to the nursery. She is extremely well supported by the very knowledgeable deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. They have very successfully built on the strengths identified at the previous inspection. As a result, all staff are ambitious for the school, the children and their families.
- The culture of high expectations for excellence and achievement along with the drive for continuous development and improvement, ensure that overall children achieve to the best of their ability. The effective integration of the nursery, the children's centre, the provision for children with disabilities and special educational needs, the daycare and the role of the teaching school is a strength of the school. As a result, all children and families have swift access to any support they may need.
- Staff have an excellent and improving understanding of how young children learn because they are able to attend high quality training. As part of a Europe wide project, they research into different aspects of teaching and learning, and use their learning to good effect. This means that children are receiving an exceptionally high standard of teaching at all times.
- The strong support for career progression can be seen, for example, in staff who have progressed from the role of early years practitioner to being a lead teacher, taking on responsibility for an area of curriculum development in the nursery.
- Middle leaders are highly effective in monitoring how the high quality teaching and achievement are maintained in their area of responsibility. Through the many research initiatives all staff are effectively contributing to the development of the nursery.
- The impact of the leadership's approach to ensure equal opportunities for all children fosters good relationships and is reflected in the outstanding progress made by all groups of children. There is no discrimination evident in the school.
- Staff are held to account for the progress children make. High quality observations of teaching and learning regularly challenge the staff to reflect and improve on their performance. This means that the standard of outstanding teaching has been maintained and improved. Checks are made on how well children are learning and the progress they are making. Therefore, adults can spot anyone at risk of falling behind early and provide skilled support or extra challenge so that children make maximum progress.
- The curriculum is rich and exciting and promotes all aspects of literacy and numeracy extremely well. Children's physical health and well-being are promoted especially well through the use of the outdoor area, and the nearby forest school. The nursery supports children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. At their own level, children are helped very actively to understand British values.
- The curriculum is further enhanced by the work of other professionals who work with the nursery, such as a community artist. This results in many moments of awe and wonder for the children and great pride in their many artistic creations. In an outstanding music session observed during the inspection, parents were made welcome and learned alongside their children how to develop an understanding of rhythm. This additional provision helps to improve even further children's confidence, resilience, creativity, knowledge and understanding.
- The school's work with parents is particularly strong. The involvement of parents in their children's learning is seen as a priority. For example, the workshops on 'Sharing Stories' have been extremely well attended and have had a marked impact on parents' confidence in reading with their children. This has resulted in a rapid improvement in the progress and achievement children make in literacy. The children's learning journals are shared every term with parents, who really value the opportunity to talk with staff about their child's progress.
- Parents are involved in the writing of the development plan for the nursery. The majority of parents attend the 'Better Together' planning day once a year with staff and governors, where the achievements of the previous year are reviewed and areas for development identified. The parents therefore have a strong sense of 'ownership'.
- Policies and procedures for safeguarding are extremely robust and reviewed regularly by the headteacher and the governing body. They ensure that all aspects are considered, that children are fully protected and statutory requirements are met.
- The leadership of the resourced provision as well as for other children who are disabled or who have special educational needs is outstanding. The lead teacher is an excellent role model to colleagues as a practitioner. Though only in post for a short time much has been achieved. However, a few staff are less confident when working with children who have the most complex needs. Very occasionally children are

removed from the activity rather than supported to make maximum progress. Staff have embraced the new Education and Health Care Plans. Meetings with parents to develop these are very professional while keeping the needs of the child at heart. All children have access to everything the school has to offer.

- Through the teaching school status, the nursery effectively supports 10 schools and a number of other early years providers, sharing their expertise to raise outcomes for all children in the area, and beyond.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for the school and considers the outcomes for children and the leadership and management to be outstanding.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly effective in carrying out their role. They know the school extremely well because they visit regularly, and receive detailed reports and data from the headteacher. They look really carefully at these and ask challenging questions with a focus on maintaining and improving the quality of teaching and all nursery provision. They have a good mix of skills and specialisms, which they keep updated through regular training. Their knowledge in financial management and curriculum development ensures the nursery is effectively and efficiently resourced. They fully understand the link between performance management and pay. They work with outside consultants when setting targets for the headteacher and know how they would tackle any underperformance. They ensure that all statutory safeguarding requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Their confidence and their self-esteem are raised because they know that they are valued as individuals and because they are made to feel unique. As a result, they not only value themselves, but also respect the feelings of others. They learn through skilful teaching and questioning to think about how others may feel. For example, when singing about five little ducks, they think about how the mother might feel once all her ducklings have flown away.
- Behaviour is very well managed by staff. Children have very positive attitudes to learning inspired by the outstanding teaching, stimulating activities and exemplary modelling of good behaviour by adults. During the inspection all children were observed learning either independently, or with adults, and none were ever seen 'off task'.
- Although children's attendance is not statutory at this age, the school has made a deliberate effort to improve attendance because leaders have noted that more frequent absence had slowed down the learning of some children. By successfully working with parents and children's centre staff, attendance is now at a level expected for the nursery. There are few unauthorised absences because staff respond extremely quickly to any unknown absences and contact parents straight away. Children are eager to attend because they feel secure and enjoy learning.
- Parents report that children behave well and easily settle at the beginning of each session. The nursery reports no exclusions, bullying or racist incidents. Nevertheless, the systems are in place for managing such incidents, should they happen.
- Behaviour in the resourced provision is equally outstanding. Children demonstrate really high levels of concentration and determination. Children with physical difficulties show remarkable perseverance and determination. Their huge levels of enjoyment and their pride in their achievements are clearly evident in their reactions.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school's work, in partnership with the children's centre, with vulnerable children and their families is exemplary. Children feel safe and their parents agree. Staff and governors are very well informed about safety arrangements.
- The children use equipment sensibly. They use cutlery correctly at lunchtimes. They are encouraged to take well-managed risks in the range of activities offered. For example, when balancing on the crates, planks and tyres or learning how to land safely when using the climbing equipment.
- Children respond well to the calming 'Tick Tock' song at the end of sessions and take responsibility for putting equipment away safely and sensibly, working together well.
- Arrangements for the personal care of children who are disabled or who have special educational needs and to preserve their dignity are sensitive and ensure children are safeguarded and protected.
- Staff regularly inspect the nursery and grounds to check on safety and security. Safety training for staff and governors is regular and thorough.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding over time and never less than good. Staff create a vibrant and positive environment and foster nurturing relationships with all children. As a result, children feel valued and are confident learners. Adults have very high expectations of all children. School records, as well as evidence in children's learning stories and planning, confirm that teaching is of consistently high quality.
- There is a strong focus on developing children's communication and language skills right from the start. Staff are exemplary role models, describing, asking, questioning and giving children time to think and respond. This means children rapidly learn to speak and understand English.
- The vast majority of staff are highly skilled in responding to children's interests and individual needs and, as a result, most groups of children make outstanding progress and demonstrate very high levels of enthusiasm and engagement in their learning.
- Staff ensure that children are challenged in their learning and take every opportunity to develop their communication and language skills through discussion, questioning and role play.
- The teaching of early reading and writing skills is very effective. Children enjoy the many opportunities they have to write and make marks, for example, when writing down the results and readings from the instruments in the outdoor weather station, or writing the names of characters from a story. They have lots of opportunities to share books. They enjoy looking at them and talking about what is happening. Parents are successfully encouraged to share stories with their children. Staff are skilful in questioning children to extend their understanding such as when reading Goldilocks, the teacher asks the children why does she have that name? Children are asked to sequence and record their stories.
- Children work regularly in smaller groups to develop their early phonic skills in a systematic way. This is the teaching of the sounds that letters make. Teachers make these sessions fun, so children engage in them very readily. During the inspection, children were observed enjoying playing a game sorting rhyming words. The most able children, who know their initial sounds and blends, are given more challenging tasks, such as segmenting words into the different parts and spelling them correctly.
- Early mathematics skills are taught extremely well, with adults taking many opportunities to reinforce children's skills during their play. Activities that are closely directed by an adult are well planned and organised. Children are encouraged to use their problem solving skills, for example, during an activity where they needed to share buns out between them. By the teacher using every possible counting opportunity, children made excellent gains in their understanding of 'more than' and 'less than' in a practical situation.
- Adults ensure that all children have a wide range of opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills, not only through mathematical activities, but also through their exploration of the world. For example, when making electric circuits children are challenged to work out and explain how to make a light bulb glow.
- Children are encouraged to become independent learners. When working in the bug house they have to find the right resources to enable them to find and collect the bugs. They select the magnifying glass and collecting jar that are needed and successfully capture the insect for further detailed observation.
- Teaching for children in the resourced provision is overall outstanding. This is because as a result of training the vast majority of staff have an excellent understanding of the very wide range of medical conditions and special needs. Care is taken to ensure that every adult is clear about the individual programme for each child, how they learn and any special equipment that may be needed. Most adults use signs and photographs very effectively to aid communication and understanding. This allows the children to make rapid gains in their knowledge and skills.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Many children start in nursery with skills that are often below that typical for their age, particularly in aspects of communication and personal development, and in their early literacy and mathematical skills. A few children start with skills which are much lower than those typical of their age. By the time children leave for primary school, they have made excellent progress, and most have skills and understanding that are similar or better than those typically seen in children entering Reception. They are very well prepared for primary school.
- Senior leaders ensure that all staff are involved in the moderation of assessments and as a result, all staff have a shared view of the strengths and areas for improvement in every child's learning. Assessments are moderated both internally and externally with other schools both locally and nationally. This means the school is secure and accurate in its judgements as to progress and achievement.

- The school ensures that all children make rapid progress. The children from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well. Boys and girls achieve as well as each other.
- The most able children do extremely well and build effectively on their relatively strong initial starting points. This is because they are challenged by the well-designed activities adults set for them. Adults are equally careful that their conversations with the most able children continue to be just as demanding when they choose activities for themselves and they encourage them to think hard; consequently, they learn a lot.
- The careful use of learning activities that are designed to meet each individual's specific needs, are helping the children who are disabled or who have special educational needs make outstanding progress from their often very low starting points. Most staff working with these children have a very good understanding of how children with disabilities and special educational needs learn. Other professionals, such as speech and language therapists, work closely with the nursery so that precise programmes are developed. Outstanding links are quickly established with parents. Training for parents enables them to contribute significantly to their children's progress and achievements.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	107190
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	449536

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	151
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mairead Hinchliffe
Headteacher	Anne-Marie Merifield
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2011
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