

Inspection of an outstanding school: Weoley Castle Nursery School

109 Weoley Castle Road, Weoley Castle, Birmingham, West Midlands B29 5QD

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 June 2024

Outcome

Weoley Castle Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Weoley Castle Nursery School has a very special place in the community, and rightly so. It is a school where children settle very quickly and are confident to leave their parents and carers. This is because of the nurturing and caring staff who ensure that relationships are of the highest quality. This enables children to thrive both educationally and in their personal development. When their time at Weoley Castle ends, they are fully prepared for the move to primary school.

The school places a high priority on ensuring children learn how to communicate their needs. This is done through the use of Makaton, visual aids and real-life objects to help with understanding such as showing lunch boxes, drink bottles and nappies at relevant points throughout the day.

Staff teach children how to keep safe. They use the nursery spaces with excellent levels of care and awareness of others. Staff know exactly when to provide any additional help or support that is needed at exactly the right time while giving children the opportunity to take risks in a careful and appropriate way. Firefighters, paramedics and police officers visit the school to help children understand the ways they can help them.

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

The school has an unwavering determination to provide the very best early years education, and it does. The way the school works with families to support all aspects of development is praiseworthy. Parents are highly appreciative of this. The school provides many workshops that enable all adults to work in tandem to achieve the very best outcomes for each child.

Children are confident, inquisitive and curious. Exciting and varied learning opportunities lead to children demonstrating a level of active learning that is second to none. The high priority on developing communication and language is clear in all aspects of their work.

Staff model language, extend sentences and probe children to explain their understanding at all points of the day. No second is wasted. Again, staff demonstrate their deep understanding of each child's precise stage of development through the interactions and conversations that take place and the varying complexities around these.

Routines and daily structures are highly embedded. Children know what to expect and when. The use of songs and rhymes support children in knowing what is happening and what they can take part in. Much of the learning throughout the day is centred around the children's interests. It leads to learning opportunities that are cleverly woven together to deepen understanding. Children show high levels of engagement and sustained concentration within the different areas of learning. They can talk about what they are exploring and discovering impressively. Problem-solving is clear to see everywhere, whether this be choosing the precise number of large blocks to make a seat that is the right height to be able to access the sand tray in pre-school or deciding which is the best way to join two parts of a model together in Nursery. The well-resourced environments enable this to happen seamlessly and independently.

The provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is exceptional. The school works relentlessly to ensure each child gets the right help at the right time. Targets are precise, achievable and constantly reviewed so no child stands still. Parents are fully involved in these and welcome the support their child receives through a highly individualised approach. The school seeks the support of additional external professionals as and when it is needed to great effect. The progress the children make is exceptional.

Children experience very different opportunities in the different rooms in the pre-school building. All are underpinned by skilled staff who respond to their needs extremely well. It is clear to see the love of books, stories and rhymes at this young age. Children independently choose books and take them to an adult to share or simply turn the pages and relish the photos or illustrations independently. Even at two years old, some children can hold simple conversations about what they see and what they like.

The headteacher and all staff are inspiring. The strength of teamwork is something to celebrate. Leaders are dedicated, passionate and caring, putting children at the heart of everything they do. This is deeply ingrained and sincere. Parents cannot speak highly enough of the school and its staff. They recognise the exceptional offer their children receive and are highly appreciative of it. The school shares their expertise with others, meaning even more children can benefit from the knowledgeable and skilful staff who undoubtedly make this special nursery school the successful place it is.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 December 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' is used to mean pupils with 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	103133
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10294467
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	Two to five
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Natalie Evans
Headteacher	Lesley Harris
Website	www.weoleycastlelenursery.sch.life
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school offers part- and full-time provision to children between the ages of two and five years old.
- The school offers wraparound provision.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in this evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and senior leaders.

- The inspector considered all areas of learning but focused closely through deep dives in these areas: communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and expressive arts and design.
- The inspector met with leaders and staff to discuss their plans for children's learning and development. They observed learning both in the classrooms and outdoors. They spoke with children and staff and looked at examples of children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with three governors, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector observed the behaviour of children throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders and staff; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and information on the school's website. The inspector also looked at records of governors' meetings.
- Inspectors talked informally with staff to gather general information about school life. In addition, they took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff's and parents' views. The inspector talked informally with parents at different times of the inspection.

Inspection team

Keri Baylis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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