

Cambridge Nursery School

Address: Cambridge Road, Bootle, Liverpool, Merseyside, L20 9LQ

Unique reference number (URN): 104847

Inspection report: 2 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ 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.

Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders and staff want the best for children and their families. They fully understand all children's previous experiences and home lives. Leaders and staff build a deep knowledge of how children can sail forward with the right support. The school sees education as a shared voyage that draws on the combined knowledge of parents and carers and health, education and social care professionals.

Leaders make sure that they and staff take action to reduce anything that might get in the way of children thriving. When children are known to social care, the school seeks to understand any difficulties and link closely with the local authority and, where appropriate, foster carers. For children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), staff consider carefully the support required. For example, staff find individual ways to adjust how they welcome and support some children with SEND when they arrive at school. The school uses any extra funding, such as for disadvantaged children or those with SEND, adeptly. This has a significant and positive difference on children's learning and wellbeing.

Leaders review the school's work astutely to identify any changes needed to better support children and families. Children who face difficulties in their lives have an equal chance to take part in school life and reach new horizons in their development, achievement and welfare.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

In general, children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, sail forward from their starting points through the school's curriculum. Two-year-olds develop many essential physical, communication, language and personal skills, on which the rest of their education can build. For instance, they learn to cooperate, follow a routine and listen to what adults say. Typically, 3- and 4-year-olds become confident, inquisitive and resilient learners. They develop a suitable knowledge of early mathematics, writing, talking and reading in preparation for the demands of more complex learning at primary school. For example, children learn that fiction books can contain a fascinating world of special animals, characters and events to talk about.

Children who face challenges in their lives, such as disadvantaged children and those known to social care, keep pace with other children in their learning. This is because of the skilful support and teaching that staff provide based on what children need to remember, understand or practise.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Most children attend school often. Leaders help parents and carers to understand the importance of children's full attendance. Leaders act quickly to gain reassurance from parents when children are absent, including if children are known to social care. Leaders work effectively with individual families, and other agencies when needed, to bring about positive improvements in children's attendance. Leaders and governors suitably review the overall picture of attendance to inform the school's work. Nevertheless, some of leaders' evaluation of attendance for different groups of children is not as well developed as it could be.

Children's behaviour throughout the school is very positive. Children are calm, kind and cooperative. They walk indoors and move to the carpet area and tidy resources when staff give a clear signal. Children listen to what staff say and follow the school rules, which staff teach carefully. Leaders and staff help children to understand how to act in group activities, as well as at times when they can choose what and who to play with. If the behaviour of any children with special educational needs and/or disabilities causes concern, they receive expert help from staff to make more positive choices. Leaders and staff know what to do if any discrimination or bullying was to happen.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have charted a well-thought-out curriculum for all children. This means, for example, that staff teach children basic skills in communication and language and mathematics, as well as physical and social skills. This work begins well in the class for 2-year-olds. Leaders use their comprehensive understanding of the impact of the school's work to focus their actions to ensure that the quality of teaching stays on course.

Staff model language carefully to children. For example, they teach 3- and 4-year-olds to use the word 'chrysalis' and the name 'Painted Lady' relating to real butterflies of this species. Staff select and use stories carefully to enthuse children about books and build their knowledge of important words and concepts. On occasion, some staff do not develop back-and-forth conversation with children as well as they could.

Staff build their teaching on a well-informed understanding of what children know, understand and can do. From the earliest possible point, staff celebrate children's strengths as well as spotting any potential difficulties. They promptly provide help for individuals or groups of children to help them to catch up in their learning. This approach particularly benefits children who may face challenges in their learning and development, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

During some of the time since the previous inspection, the quality of the school's work drifted. However, more recently, leaders have identified the right things and acted on these at the right time. They make decisions in the best interests of all children. Leaders have navigated the school onto a clear and ambitious route of development. The result is that the school is successful and improving.

The school's strength is that any child who may face a range of different challenges in their life can feel that they belong here. Wider aspects of the school's work, such as the curriculum, get better because of leaders' careful review and their well-thought-out actions to bring about positive change. To achieve this, leaders draw on their deep understanding of child development, inclusion, curriculum and teaching in the early years.

Parents and carers and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the quality and impact of leaders' recent work. Leaders carefully consider the wellbeing and workload of staff. Leaders model respect and listening to others. Staff morale is high. Teamwork is successful. Leaders make sure that staff receive the professional learning that they need to do their jobs well. Staff in leadership roles all play their part and help the school to chart a way to greater success.

Governors use their considerable skills with positive effect to ensure that they meet their statutory duties. The board challenges and supports the school with attention to detail. Governors collaborate well with leaders to keep their eyes on the horizon in developing the school's work.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders think very carefully about how staff should build children's personal, social and emotional development through the curriculum and their teaching. This results in well-considered support for all children throughout the day, including at times when children learn with staff named as their key person. The school's provision of pastoral care is well considered, such as for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to ensure that they are supported whenever needed. Staff's support for children's emotions is very well developed, starting with 2-year-olds. This includes the expert use of puppets for children to care for and talk with. The school's approach means that staff give children the maximum opportunity to settle, feel good about themselves and make headway in their learning.

Over time, the school has provided children with a suitable programme of activities to support their wider personal skills. For example, when children learn about farms, leaders arrange for the school to be visited by a collection of farm animals. Leaders think carefully how to help children to understand safety. For instance, they make sure that children understand what the dangers can be if they were to go into a kitchen. Staff also teach children to protect their own bodies and about privacy.

The school is determined that children understand fundamental British values, so leaders support staff to model and explain these values as much as possible. For example, staff encourage children to vote for their favourite story book, follow the school's rules and show respect for one another's views and feelings. The school teaches children about respect for difference, such as in the make-up of different families. Staff help children to understand that different communities and faiths may have unique celebrations, for instance Eid or Easter. Although the school suitably builds children's talents and interests, this work is less well developed than it could be.

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

Children benefit from the support of the caring, helpful staff. To be a child at this school means that you are noticed, involved and guided, ready to sail full steam ahead in your education. Children are kept safe because leaders, governors and staff take many careful actions to protect children from anything that might harm them. What children say and do and how they feel is given the foremost importance by all leaders and staff.

Children's individual needs, previous experiences and any obstacles that get in the way of their learning and development are understood and acted on by leaders and staff. Children enjoy their time at school, for example looking at high-quality books and listening to the stories that staff choose carefully and read aloud. Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well from their starting points.

Children behave impressively well, including in the class for 2-year-olds, guided by the gentle, skilful help that staff provide. Children benefit from staff's quick and effective action to make sure that bullying is not a problem. Typically, children attend school often. They learn how to take part and cooperate in activities with other children and staff. This is a school where children enjoy the chance to make new friends as well as to explore, play and discover. It is full of calm, happy children.

Children become responsible, caring and considerate. They are supported by leaders and staff who celebrate and support the success of everyone at the school. Children learn that their views and those of other children and adults matter. Children strive to do their best. They learn to follow the school's rules and respect other people. Children are well prepared for their lives in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should build on their existing evaluation of children's attendance to identify with greater clarity the attendance of groups of children to inform decisions about improvement actions.
- Leaders should strengthen the school's successful personal development programme to develop children's talents and interests to an even greater extent.
- Leaders should further refine how staff engage children in back-and-forth conversation so that children's communication and language and broader knowledge develop even more successfully.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors of this school is Julie Cliff.

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 (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the part-time interim headteacher Suzanne Payne, the acting headteacher/assistant headteacher Jamie Harrison and other staff during the inspection. An inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority about the school's work. The lead inspector held a meeting with representatives of the governing body, including the chair.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

An assistant headteacher was appointed in December 2025. A part-time interim headteacher was appointed in January 2026. For some of each week, the assistant headteacher steps up as acting headteacher, and, at other times, the part-time interim headteacher is responsible for the school.

The permanent headteacher was not present at the time of the inspection.

The school does not use alternative provision.

At the time of the inspection, there were 86 children on roll.

Headteacher: Joy Snowdon

Lead inspector:

Tim Vaughan, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Sue Mills, 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 2 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

90

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)

0.0%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

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

3.33%

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

28.89%

What does this mean?

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

Location deprivation

Above 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.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SpLD - Specific Learning Difficulty, VI - Visual Impairment, OTH - Other Difficulty/Disability, HI - Hearing Impairment, SLCN - Speech, language and Communication, ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder, SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health, MSI - Multi-Sensory Impairment, PD - Physical Disability, MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty, SLD - Severe Learning Difficulty, PMLD - Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

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.

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