

Victoria Park Nursery School

Address: Victoria Park, Parkway, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 1EH

Unique reference number (URN): 109757

Inspection report: 28 April 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 ●

The nursery is a wholly inclusive place where children are treasured. Leaders have established highly effective systems for the early identification of children's needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This process starts prior to children starting at the school. It helps to reduce barriers to learning from an early stage. From day one, children are provided with sharply focused teaching, which includes activities to address gaps in their development. Staff regularly and precisely check the impact of this work. They swiftly adjust the help children receive to ensure they receive the right support at the right time.

A high number of children who attend speak English as an additional language. Their specific needs are consistently reflected within the provision. Leaders and staff use their expert knowledge to help these children make excellent progress in communication and language. For example, staff are trained to adjust interactions to help children build key early language skills and deepen their understanding.

The nursery's use of additional funding for children who face disadvantage or barriers to learning are also highly successful. Staff use these funds to promote early reading skills. This focus is having notable impact, with children developing a love of stories and books from a very early age.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The nursery's provision for children personal, social and emotional development is a strength and closely aligns with its approach to relationships education. Children learn about body boundaries and safety. They develop an age appropriate understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. For example, children can explain why it is important for younger children to have their fruit sliced to prevent choking. Children develop a strong understanding of healthy lifestyles. Staff reinforce the benefits of eating healthy food at mealtimes. This helps to reinforce children's understanding of a nutritious diet. Consequently, children confidently identify healthy food options.

The nursery ensures that different cultures and languages are celebrated. Tolerance and respect is consistently promoted. Children increasingly understand how to wait, share and accept the decision of the majority. Children appreciate that their friends may have different beliefs or come from families that look different to their own.

The nursery provides strong pastoral care for children. Staff know children and their families extremely well and quickly notice when children need extra support. For example, they understand how important it is for children to feel listened to. Leaders support staff to do this by showing them how to give children their full attention, use warm facial expressions and tune in to children's feelings.

Leaders have given careful consideration to the enrichment offer available to all children. This is designed around the needs of the most vulnerable children and is accessible to all. These include activities such as cooking on a campfire, visiting a library and meeting a

range of animals. The nursery also provides a range of inspirational experiences such as working with a local art group and working with artists to help children to develop their talents and interests.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Children generally achieve well across the curriculum. In aspects such as communication and language, they achieve particularly well. Those with lower starting points make swift progress and are well supported to catch up quickly. Those with English as an additional language are very well supported. Generally, children secure the early skills needed in literacy and mathematics. They use new vocabulary in context and share their ideas with confidence. Children develop early mathematical understanding through practical experiences.

Children develop appropriate physical skills through access to the outdoor environment. They build balance and coordination skills accessing the well considered environment and tasks set by staff. Children engage with in their learning with increasing independence, able to use the nursery's many resources and equipment safely. They demonstrate sustained engagement in activities. They work collaboratively with their friends and share toys well. As a result, children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise nursery attendance. They know children and their families remarkably well and support those who need extra help to get to school on time. However, systems to promote positive habits and attitudes to attendance are new and still developing. Leaders have rightly identified that there is more to do to help parents and carers to understand the benefits of establishing consistent routines and it's impact on children's future education.

Children behave very well. Leaders ensure everyone understands the school's behaviour expectations. Staff adapt their approach sensitively to each child's age, stage and individual needs, while maintaining high and clear expectations for all children. Children are well supported to manage their emotions and know who to seek comfort from, if they need it.

Leaders have ensured that routines are well established. This provides children with the sense of security they need to flourish. Staff model respectful behaviour and help children to treat others with kindness. Tidy-up times are calm. Children follow staff instructions well, taking care of the area around them. Staff help children learn to share, take turns and cooperate during play. This supports children to develop positive attitudes to learning and an awareness of fairness.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The nursery's curriculum is broad and engaging. Leaders have carefully designed it to prepare children well for the next stage of their education. They have prioritised the essential knowledge and skills children need to support future learning. Leaders are currently clarifying for staff the key knowledge and skills that children must learn at each stage. Newly introduced systems to check on the progress that children make are generally used effectively. These enable staff to identify children's achievements across all areas of learning. This information, which can be translated into home languages, is shared with parents and carers, who value the insight into their child's learning.

During learning, staff generally follow children's interests to extend their learning and development. They engage children well in play and learning opportunities. Staff also make effective use of group learning experiences to develop children's listening and concentration skills. During storytelling, staff skilfully use props to bring books to life. This helps to strengthen children's understanding of vocabulary. Early number is reinforced well during activities such as snack time which encourages children to count as snacks are handed out. Typically, teaching is consistently tailored to children's age and stage of development. Staff use their knowledge of what children already know and can do to build on learning effectively. However, there are occasions when staff would benefit from additional information to fully maximise learning opportunities across the curriculum, so that learning is consistently purposeful.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear moral purpose to provide a high-quality education for all children. They consistently act in children's best interests and promote an inclusive culture where all children are supported to participate fully. Leaders have an accurate view of the nursery and its priorities for improvement. They have a clear vision for developing the school further. The impact of leaders' actions to improve the curriculum and assessment is supporting children to achieve well.

Governors work effectively with nursery leaders. There has been a period of change in governance with some governors taking ownership of new roles. They have ensured that statutory duties are being met, building on the work of their predecessors. Governors provide close oversight of the nursery and offer effective support and challenge. Through their activities, governors maintain a close oversight of the education of children in the early years and health and safety requirements to assure themselves that children's safety is prioritised.

Staff feel valued by leaders. They welcome the training opportunities to maintain the skills and knowledge they need to be successful. Staff are proud to be part of the team and are advocates of the nursery. They appreciate the steps that leaders take to promote their own wellbeing and manage their workload. Leaders foster highly effective partnerships with parents and carers. In turn, parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the considerate and caring nature of staff at all levels.

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

Children arrive each day happy and eager to learn alongside their friends. They clearly enjoy attending the nursery and confidently separate from their parents and carers, walking independently into the setting. Familiar adults greet them warmly on arrival, which helps them to settle quickly and feel safe. The nursery's broad curriculum that focuses on key skills such as communication, social and physical development, help children access activities with increasing independence.

Children enjoy the activities prepared for them in the exciting and well-considered environment. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children with additional language needs are included effectively and well supported by staff who know them very well. Staff use simple and clear language when they talk to children with limited speech. This enables children to hear the correct pronunciation of words, which helps to build on their vocabulary. Typically, children, including those with additional needs, achieve well.

Leaders establish highly effective partnerships with parents prior to children starting nursery. This embedded approach helps leaders swiftly identify any additional needs to ensure that children get the right support from day one. Leaders and staff consider children's individual circumstances, ensuring that those with limited outdoor space have plenty of opportunities to play in the garden and experience awe and wonder moments in the sensory room.

Children are well supported in the nursery to develop important personal, social and emotional skills by the well-trained staff. Children bring a variety of experiences with them, including diversity in cultures, beliefs and languages. Staff ensure they provide books and resources that reflect this. Staff are highly vigilant to the emotional needs of the children. They swiftly intervene to regulate any unwanted behaviours. As such, any incident of unkindness are swiftly dealt with creating a calm and nurturing ethos.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to refine curriculum and assessment procedures to ensure staff have the information they need to maximise learning interactions across the areas of learning.
- Leaders should continue to build on their work with parents and carers to ensure children develop positive attendance habits in readiness for school.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Maurizia Onori.

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

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, staff members, governors and children during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:
The school does not use any alternative provision.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. There has been a change in school leadership since the last inspection, with the current headteacher appointed in September 2024.

Headteacher : Lynda Shepherd

Lead inspector:

Laura James, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Clare Morgan, 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 28 April 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

122

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

4.10%

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

31.97%

What does this mean?

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

Location deprivation

Close to 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.

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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