

Brunswick Nursery School

Address: Young Street, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB1 2LZ

Unique reference number (URN): 110596

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 ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Children, whatever their age, background or starting points, learn and develop extremely well. As they leave the school, older children are extremely well prepared for their move to primary school.

Children learn the curriculum very well. This is especially the case in the way they communicate with others. For example, older children have the knowledge to take part in discussions with one another. They take turns and express their views clearly. Similarly, younger children use their ever-growing vocabulary to express their needs. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make great strides in their learning from their starting points.

The youngest children learn to control their bodies and movements through a carefully chosen range of enjoyable play equipment. This leads to children refining their movements as they develop, to the point where they use paintbrushes with accuracy and care, painting intricate patterns. Similarly, older children show confidence and accuracy in forming letters, preparing them well for primary school.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders promote high levels of attendance. They instil highly positive habits of attendance before children start formal schooling. Leaders spell out the importance of regular attendance and punctuality to parents and children from the start of their time in school. As a result, children attend very well. If a child's attendance drops, or they miss too many sessions, leaders' astute and well-tailored support for families helps to get attendance back on track. A wide range of well-tailored strategies support families and children. For example, changes to the start of the school day ensure that those children who are a little anxious are welcomed into a calm environment.

Children's behaviour is consistently highly positive. From youngest to oldest, they learn the routines and rules of the school. They follow these extremely well. Children show a high level of independent decision-making in terms of their play and interactions with others. This is because staff model clearly to children how to do this. Unkindness between children is rare. If this does happen, staff apply the agreed rules consistently. However, as children learn and develop, there is less and less need for staff to correct children's behaviour. This is because they display ever more self-discipline and are able to resolve issues themselves.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Children learn a high-quality curriculum. Leaders have set out clearly what children need to know, remember and be able to do during their time in school. Within this, the sharp focus on enabling children to develop and use an ever-growing range of language is at the heart.

Teachers and staff are highly skilled in teaching the curriculum. They have the expertise needed to carefully and deliberately support children to understand language and number,

and to develop their ability to communicate clearly with others. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who receive highly tailored provision to meet their needs well. Staff use assessment wisely to check what children know and can do. They use this knowledge to make adaptations to activities or to their questions to guide children very well.

Staff provide rich and meaningful opportunities for children to practise what they learn. Children are guided to explore different themes and become ever more resilient when they find something tricky. The carefully designed 'projects' enable this. For example, children explore materials such as clay, mud and glue. Children who find shaping and rolling clay tricky, for example, do not give up.

Leaders continue to evaluate and refine the curriculum, and the way it is taught, to bring about even higher standards. This work is ongoing as leaders strive for even greater quality across the school.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

As children join the school, staff quickly and accurately identify any challenges they may face in their learning or development. As a result, children receive highly individualised and precise support. For example, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from carefully adapted activities to help them learn the precise knowledge and skills they need. Children thrive due to the precise adaptations staff have in place. The same can be said for children who join the school speaking little or no English. These children start to grasp English quickly. This allows them to express their feelings and interact with others with ever-growing confidence.

Leaders carefully consider the best use of the additional funding they receive to support disadvantaged children. They spend this wisely, ensuring children who face additional challenges in their lives benefit from rich experiences and additional support in school. Consequently, these children learn and develop extremely well.

Leaders keep a close eye on how children with additional needs are doing. This means that leaders and staff can quickly change what they do to make the provision for individual children even better if this is needed. Leaders' work with a range of external professionals adds further quality to the provision for children who face additional barriers. Staff use the information provided by experts to further refine and improve support for these children.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a deep and accurate understanding of the school. They know exactly what is working well and what can be made even better for children. They have high expectations of all children and provide a curriculum, teaching and experiences that enrich the lives of all. Children sit at the heart of any decision that leaders make. This means their best interests always come first.

The school sits at the heart of the community. Leaders and staff build and maintain very positive relationships with parents and carers. This leads to close working relationships, which means parents are comfortable having open and honest conversations about their

children with staff should the need arise. Staff provide regular and useful support for parents. Themes such as toileting, sleep routines, mealtimes and setting boundaries are a few of the aspects that parents can receive support with. Where more individualised support is needed, this is made available to parents, which they value highly.

Governors keep a close eye on the school. They use the useful information provided by school leaders to understand what is going on. They have created a kind and supportive working relationship with school leaders. That said, they do not hold back from asking challenging questions of leaders to ensure children continue to get the best possible deal.

Staff are hugely proud to work here. Leaders look after their wellbeing and take sensible steps to manage their workload. Importantly, staff receive regular, relevant and high-quality professional learning opportunities to keep their practice sharp. Leaders support staff to continually strive to improve, which they do.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The school has a highly coherent programme that supports children's social and emotional development. All children benefit from this well-established personal development programme. As a result, children are confident, resilient and independent. Relationships between staff and children are warm and caring. This means children feel safe to share any worries they might have.

Children learn how to stay safe and healthy at an age-appropriate level. For example, children learn about their bodies, understanding which parts of their bodies are private. Older children start to understand how to use digital devices safely. They know to share this with an adult if they see something that upsets them online. Children also have an age-appropriate understanding of exercise, healthy eating and how to stay cool in warm weather.

Lunchtimes are calm, sociable events. Children sit appropriately at tables, chatting with one another and staff. Children have very good manners. They understand healthy choices and delight in sharing a range of fruit together when they have their snack during the day.

Regular and rich wider opportunities help children to explore and understand the wider world. Visits from farm animals, hatching chicks and interactions with older members of the community in the local care home help children to start to see the world beyond themselves. As a result of leaders' thoughtful use of additional funding, disadvantaged children make the most of these opportunities.

Children enjoy sharing the similarities and differences between themselves and others. Events such as 'international evening' provide rich opportunities for children to begin to learn about people from different cultures and with different religious beliefs in the local area.

Children's welfare needs are well met. Staff carry out intimate care in a safe, dignified and appropriate manner. Leaders' ambition of ensuring all children are independent in using the toilet by the time they move to primary school is almost always achieved.

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

Children benefit enormously from attending Brunswick Nursery School. The calm start to each day welcomes children into school in a smooth and purposeful way. Children readily park their bicycles and hang up their coats, ready to start learning.

Children lap up the opportunities provided for them in classrooms that are abuzz with excitement. They learn, play and have fun with their friends, all under the watchful eye of highly skilled staff who guide them. Children are highly independent. For example, the youngest children quickly learn to tidy away their own equipment. As they grow older, children understand the need to, for example, wash paintbrushes or rinse cups so they are ready to be used by others the next day.

Children learn and use an ever-growing range of language. This includes those who speak little or no English when they join. These children become proficient in speaking English because staff know the exact steps needed to help them succeed. Language is developed through a range of stories, poems and songs, and through highly skilled interactions between staff and children. Opportunities through 'projects', such as using clay, glue or mud to explore, help children develop knowledge and practise using their ever-growing vocabulary.

Staff quickly and accurately identify any barriers to children's learning or well-being. They are adept at providing precise support to help children overcome these barriers, whatever they may be. Staff know each child as an individual, enabling them to tailor provision to closely match their needs.

Children behave very well, showing compassion and kindness to others. Older children delight in helping their younger friends find their feet as they join the school. A warm welcome greets children who are new to the nursery. Children enjoy finding out about each other, celebrating their differences, whether in the way they look, where they come from or the languages they speak.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should continue to strengthen their already high-quality curriculum and teaching so that ever more children, particularly those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve highly across all areas of learning as they move through the school.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Carolyn Purser.

The school is part of a federation called Cambridge Nursery Federation.

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 HMI.

Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher during the inspection. Inspector also spoke with a wide range of school staff, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a representative of Cambridgeshire virtual school.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

The school provides education for 2, 3 and 4 years olds.

Executive headteacher: Ruth Holman

Lead inspector:

Nathan Lowe, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Rowena Simmons, 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

81

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)

3.7%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

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

2.47%

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

14.81%

What does this mean?

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

Location deprivation

Below 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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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 <https://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 2026



© Crown copyright