

Inspection of an outstanding school: Crossens Nursery School

Preston New Road, Southport, Merseyside PR9 8PA

Inspection date:

29 June 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children relish the plentiful opportunities to learn and discover new things at this vibrant nursery school. They arrive full of joy and are eager to begin their learning. Staff are ready to greet the children with warm smiles and with open arms. Parents and carers said that the nursery is like a little family and that the staff care deeply for their children.

Leaders have high expectations of children. Classrooms are calm. Staff set up activities that invite children to engage in purposeful play. For instance, children develop their mathematical skills while using coins in the role-play shop. They explore the concept of length while learning how to cut wood safely. Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), typically achieve well.

Leaders and staff resolve any issues of bullying or unkindness effectively. They implement consistent strategies to encourage children's positive behaviour. Children know that they should have kind hands and kind feet. They learn to take turns and are respectful towards others.

Children access a variety of exciting activities to enrich their wider development. For example, specialist teachers come into the nursery and provide art, ballet and music sessions.

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

Leaders have placed a strong emphasis on strengthening the early years education that children receive. They have been ambitious in designing a curriculum that is broad, balanced and knowledge rich. Overall, this helps children to learn well.

In most areas of learning, leaders have identified the precise knowledge that children should know and when they should learn this. Nonetheless, leaders are still refining the specific knowledge that children should learn in one or two areas of learning. On rare occasions, this limits how well some children build their knowledge and skills.

Staff work in a close-knit team. They carefully find out about children's interests and address any gaps in their learning. Staff know the children well and understand how young children learn and develop. Their interactions with the children are warm and nurturing. They focus on what individual children need. However, leaders have not made sure that staff have all the skills needed to deliver all areas of learning as well as they could. This occasionally hinders how well some children learn across the curriculum.

Leaders have strong systems in place to quickly identify children with SEND. They work highly effectively with outside agencies and with parents to support these children well. This means that children with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers and benefit fully from all the nursery has to offer.

Leaders and staff provide children with a language-rich environment. Children engage with stories, songs and nursery rhymes throughout the day. They enjoy snuggling up to listen to stories, which staff skilfully bring to life. Staff encourage children to spend time discussing carefully chosen books. Children enjoy taking a library book home each week to share with their families. These initiatives help to promote children's enjoyment and interest in reading. Staff provide effective support to help any children who may be at risk of falling behind in their communication and language development.

Children behave sensibly during group activities and when they play independently with their friends. Staff teach routines from the very start, in the provision for two-year-old children. This helps children to settle well and to develop a firm sense of belonging. In the mornings, parents can spend some time playing alongside their children in the classrooms. This ensures that children feel relaxed and part from their parents with ease.

Leaders provide a varied programme to support children's personal development. They encourage children's independence and self-care skills and teach them about healthy eating. Children learn about the wider world around them. For example, they visit local places, such as the farm and post office. Visitors to the nursery, including from the fire service, help to further develop children's understanding of people who help in the community. Leaders invite parents in to share their languages and their cultures with the children.

Governors are dedicated to their roles. They are skilled and fully understand their statutory duties. Governors work closely with school leaders and provide appropriate support and challenge. Leaders are mindful of staff well-being and have taken action to reduce their workload. Staff appreciate all that leaders do for them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a strong understanding and oversight of safeguarding procedures. They prioritise the safety and welfare of children. Leaders ensure that training in child protection for staff is up to date. Leaders and staff identify issues early and act quickly to protect children and their families.

Staff successfully teach children the language of feelings and emotions, so that they are able to express any concerns that they may have. Children develop an age-appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. For example, they learn how to use woodwork tools safely and how to be safe while crossing roads.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of learning, leaders are still determining the most important knowledge that children should learn. Some staff are not clear on the exact content to teach and the order that this should happen. Very occasionally, this hinders how well some children build their knowledge and skills. Leaders should finalise their curriculum design in these few remaining areas of learning.
- Leaders have not made sure that staff have the skills to deliver all areas of learning as well as they could. From time to time, this limits how well some children learn. Leaders should provide staff with further support to help them to deliver all aspects of the curriculum well.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in June 2017.

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' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	104845
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10240672
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	83
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Martin Sarbutts
Headteacher	Elizabeth Brice
Website	www.crosssensnursery.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 and 21 June 2017

Information about this school

- The school offers provision for two-year-old children.
- A new headteacher and chair of governors have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club for children.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision for children.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in communication and language (taking account of early reading), physical development and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders and visited a sample of lessons. They spoke with staff and with children about their learning. They looked at samples of children's work.
- The lead inspector observed some children sharing books with familiar adults.

- Inspectors observed how children behaved around the school, including outdoors and during lunchtime. There were no responses to Ofsted’s pupils’ survey to consider.
- Inspectors reviewed school policies and procedures relating to safeguarding. They scrutinised documentation, such as the single central record and training records of staff. They discussed safeguarding with governors, leaders and staff.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders of the school. The lead inspector met with governors. He also had a telephone call with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted’s online survey for staff. They spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. They met with parents at the beginning and at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

David Lobodzinski, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sandra Hamilton	Ofsted Inspector

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