

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Parklands Nursery School

Spinney Hill Road, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN3 6DW

Inspection dates:

3 June 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children get off to the very best start in life at this remarkable nursery school. They benefit from first-rate education and excellent personal development. This exemplary early years provision ensures that children have firm foundations for their future learning.

The school has the highest aspirations for every child. Thanks to the passion, drive and determination of leaders, staff and governors, these aims are realised, and children are very well prepared for their next steps.

Children receive the warmest of welcomes every day when they are greeted by friendly, caring staff. These strong relationships ensure that children settle in quickly, becoming comfortable and confident in their surroundings. The rich, safe, nurturing environment fosters children's curiosity and a thirst for learning.

Children behave exceptionally well. They play and learn together happily and cooperatively. Children benefit from excellent staff role models who demonstrate kindness, good manners and empathy. Children mirror these attitudes, treating others respectfully. Well-established routines and expectations help children to sustain their concentration and get the most from the high-quality learning on offer.

Parents and carers are unanimous in their praise for the school. They cannot speak highly enough about the wonderful care that staff provide for their children.

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

The school has given very careful thought to children's learning. The curriculum is designed to develop the characteristics that children need to be successful learners and well-rounded members of society. The knowledge, skills and vocabulary that children must learn are set out in a clear, progressive order. Learning is highly personalised because staff know exactly what children need to know and do next to move forward. Staff check very closely on children's progress through the curriculum. They adapt learning in response to children's individual needs and interests. As a result, children achieve exceptionally well.

At the heart of the school's success sits a sharp and unrelenting focus on speech and language development. From the moment they arrive each day, children are immersed in a language-rich, chatty environment. Staff are experts in developing children's communication. For instance, they narrate children's play skilfully, introducing new words at opportune moments. Staff model 'good talking' and praise children for doing the same. Staff support the growth of children's vocabularies by providing images alongside the words that they are teaching.

Children access high-quality picture books throughout the day. Staff read to children in an engaging manner, building excitement and drawing them into the story. Children enjoy spending time in the comfy book corner with their friends. They like taking books home from the library and reading them with their parents.

A high proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged children and children who speak English as an additional language attend the school. These children thrive thanks to the well-matched care and support that they receive. The school looks carefully at how children behave to identify any additional needs. It provides support swiftly for any child who requires help with their emotional regulation or has gaps in their learning.

The school makes sure that parents understand the importance of high attendance. It works closely with families when children have too much time off. Consequently, children attend well.

Through the school's well-crafted curriculum, staff teach the attributes that children need to be successful in life. Children learn how to take risks, how to be respectful and empathetic, how to be inquisitive and to have a positive view of themselves. Children learn about the world beyond the school by visiting local amenities and taking part in celebrations from different faiths and cultures.

Leaders are relentless in their drive to provide the very best early education for the children at Parklands. Staff training is highly effective. It enables staff to teach the school's curriculum and meet children's needs exceptionally well. Staff feel valued, supported and empowered. Governors support and challenge the school, ensuring that children flourish.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 good for overall effectiveness in November 2019.

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 special educational needs and/or disabilities (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	121788
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10347447
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Cath Draper and Abigail Mosley (Co-chairs)
Headteacher	Lyndsey Lambert (Executive headteacher)
Website	www.ffcnschools.com
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Foundations for Children Nursery Schools Federation, comprising four nursery schools. The executive headteacher and the governing body have responsibility for all four schools.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and children; and considered the

extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons and activities. They observed children's behaviour throughout the nursery, and they spoke to children about their learning.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, as well as a range of staff.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including leaders' self-evaluation of the school, the school development plan and records of governance.
- The lead inspector met with the co-chairs of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the beginning of the day and during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the results of Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspection team

Shaun Carter, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Wendy Gordon

Ofsted Inspector

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