

Inspection of a good school: North Islington Nursery School

110-112 Tollington Park, London N4 3RB

Inspection date: 12 January 2023

Outcome

North Islington Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

It is clear for all to see how much children love coming to this school. They arrive with smiles on their faces and an eagerness to get inside to see what is in store for them. Children build strong and positive relationships with staff. They get to know everyone well. New children settle in brilliantly. They soon become familiar with the routines.

Children are safe and very well cared for. They behave well. Even though bullying is extremely rare, staff sort out any minor disputes well. Children are supported to make good friends.

Leaders are ambitious for all children to achieve highly. Everything that happens in the school is designed to support children's learning and development. Children are empowered to make choices about what they do and when. They enjoy spending time in the extremely well-equipped outdoor area. Here, they have great fun riding the bikes and making potions in the mud kitchen. The large climbing equipment, tunnels and planting areas are particularly popular.

Children learn about the world around them, including by celebrating different festivals and going on visits to the local area. They especially enjoyed going to the shops to buy the ingredients for cooking. All staff help children to become confident and independent. When the time comes, children are well prepared for the move to primary school.

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

Right from the start, staff work with parents to understand each child's strengths. Staff get to know all children very well.

Leaders keep a close check on children's development. Staff use their expertise to identify children's needs at an early stage. They use 'focus weeks' to look even closer at specific children and meet regularly to talk about how each child is doing. These routines help staff and parents to work out the most important things for a child's next stage in their development. Staff adapt what happens in the classrooms to meet the needs and

interests of individuals and groups of children. Children enjoy visual prompts to help them to manage changes in routines. Some attend group sessions to help with their speech and language. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive the help they need to do well in each area of the curriculum.

Leaders are clear about how staff should interact and support children's learning. Overall, this is working well. Often, staff know exactly how and when to step in and enhance children's play and learning. For example, staff extended children's language as they made potions in the mud kitchen. Children used new words such as cinnamon and lavender. At the workbench, staff asked questions which helped children to think about the aeroplanes they were making. Children were highly motivated as they created dough. They counted carefully the plops of oil and coloured paint which went into the bowl. Staff encouraged children to use words such as 'flour' and 'mixture' accurately. However, sometimes staff do not make the most of opportunities to maximise children's learning. These inconsistencies mean that occasions are missed to promote children's communication and language.

Staff promote children's early reading, writing and number skills well. For instance, children enjoyed counting the number of swings they had made in the hammock. Others recorded the number of candles on the birthday cake. Children show a love of stories. For example, they enthusiastically remembered the key events of 'The Gingerbread Man'. They particularly enjoyed retelling their own versions of the story.

Staff help children to manage different situations, including when things get a bit tricky. For example, the patient's bed in the role-play area can be very popular, and many children like to get involved. Staff respond to these instances effectively, for example by modelling how to take turns. Children quickly learn to understand that their turn will come. Staff teach children the importance of healthy lifestyles. For example, children knew to wash their hands before cutting the fruit for snack time. Staff use resources, including books and toys, which promote children's awareness of diversity.

Positive relationships exist all around the school. This makes the school a calm and purposeful place to learn. Lunchtime is an example of how well children look after each other. Children showed such pride as they served themselves from the salad bowl.

Staff work together in a happy and cohesive team. Staff appreciate leaders' support in relation to their workload and personal well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Children are taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, in circle time, staff share books which help children to understand that their bodies are private. Outside, in the workshop, staff allow children to take risks using real tools such as hammers and nails. Children learn how to use resources safely and sensibly.

Staff are well trained to identify any concerns about children's welfare. Leaders ensure

that any issues are dealt with promptly and well. Leaders work with the local authority to ensure that families have the help they need, particularly in order to keep children safe. Leaders ensure that all the required suitability checks are undertaken before staff start working at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, staff do not make the most of opportunities to extend children's learning. Occasionally, their interactions do not promote children's language and communication development well enough. These inconsistencies hinder children's learning. Leaders should ensure that all staff know when and how to maximise children's learning, particularly to support their communication and language development.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2012.

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	100386
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10255438
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Keith Andrews
Headteacher	Sally Franklin
Website	www.northislingtonnursery.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- North Islington Nursery School caters for three- to five-year-old children. On the same site, and in the same building, there is also provision for children under the age of two. This part of the school is registered separately with Ofsted. It was not inspected as part of this inspection.
- The school offers part-time and full-time places for children.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and school business manager. Inspectors met with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these areas of learning: communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and understanding the world.

For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited sessions, spoke with staff and looked at samples of children’s work and profile books. Inspectors also considered other areas of learning, including physical development and mathematics.

- Inspectors reviewed documentation related to safeguarding, including the single central record of staff suitability checks.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start and end of the school day. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors spoke with children informally throughout the sessions. They spoke with staff informally and in formal meetings. Inspectors considered the responses to the online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Rekha Bhakoo

Ofsted Inspector

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