

Inspection of an outstanding school: Colleges Nursery School

Campkin Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB4 2LD

Inspection date:

10 July 2024

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. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children are relaxed and settled at this nursery school. They arrive in 'the garden' ready to explore the activities set up for them to enjoy. Staff warmly welcome children as they arrive. This helps children to feel reassured and creates a happy and friendly atmosphere.

Staff build nurturing relationships with children and their families. They expect children to behave kindly. Staff model the calm, friendly behaviour that they expect. This helps children to learn the routines for behaviour. Children are confident to approach staff for help when they need it. This helps them to feel safe.

Staff encourage children to 'have a go' at new things. This helps children to be independent when moving between activities. Some adults enable children to learn new words or skills with precise help. However, this is not always the case. Some adults do not help children to move on to the next step in their learning as quickly as they could.

Children enjoy their trips out of school as well as their time in provision. For example, they visit a local woodland area regularly. They learn about valuable life skills on these trips, such as road safety.

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

Following a period of change, governors and senior staff are working together to develop and strengthen the school. Staff appreciate their involvement in making improvements. The school has built a stable team that knows what it does well. Staff are proud to be part of the team here. From their regular checks, leaders have spotted that there is more to do to help staff get the right guidance, so they know what to improve and how to do this.

The school has been developing the curriculum. It has identified and organised learning in small steps. This provides a clear starting point for staff, who also use children's needs and interests when preparing activities.

Staff provide a broad range of activities each day. They encourage children to take part in a wide range of play-based learning. Some adults check what children know effectively. When they spot a misconception, they quickly correct it. They show children how to do things the right way. Some adults use questions well to support children's thinking. They help children to come up with their own ideas and solutions. However, this is not consistent. Sometimes, adults do not spot gaps in children's learning. At other times, they do not build on what children already know to extend their learning.

Books, songs and rhymes are used throughout the day. Children enthusiastically select books for adults to share with them. Children enjoy their story times with props, indoors and outside.

Staff use focused group sessions well. Children learn precise vocabulary and skills in these groups. Staff make the learning fun, so children pay close attention and remember what they learn in these sessions.

Staff are well trained to identify children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They put carefully planned extra help in place straight away. Staff work effectively with families and other professionals so that children with SEND make good progress.

Staff teach children to name and manage their feelings. They put extra help in place for children who find this tricky. Over time, staff help children to manage frustrations appropriately. Staff teach children to care for each other and their environment. They teach children to listen, take turns and share their toys. The school works with families to establish regular attendance, so children get into good habits, ready for their next school.

The school helps children to learn about the wider community. There are visits from 'helping' professions, such as the fire brigade, the police and nurses. Staff enable children to learn about the natural world. Children are fascinated by caterpillars hatching. They look carefully at flowers and vegetables growing outdoors. Children enjoy the wild area, where they can study minibeasts such as spiders and worms.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Systems to review and develop the expertise of staff are not helping all adults to improve their practice. Occasionally, adult interventions do not help some children to

progress as quickly as they could. The school should ensure that all staff have the right support to develop their expertise in extending learning.

- Provision is not consistently well adapted to meet the needs of children. As a result, children do not always consolidate or extend their vocabulary and skills. The school should ensure that all staff have the right expertise to adjust provision so that children can consistently develop their learning.

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 December 2018.

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	110597
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10323600
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	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Caroline Purser
Headteacher	Ruth Holman, Executive Headteacher
Website	www.colleges.cambs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 December 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The provision includes children who are two years old.
- The school provides additional care through a lunchtime club.
- The school does not use any off-site providers of alternative education.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.
- Inspectors met with senior staff in the school, including the executive headteacher, the chair of governors and the designated lead for safeguarding. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in: communication and language, physical development and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the

curriculum with senior leaders, observed focused group activities and child-initiated play and spoke with other staff.

- Inspectors reviewed minutes of governors' meetings, school development plans, curriculum documentation and other reports relating to 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 pupils' interests first.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents through responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. Inspectors gathered the views of staff through Ofsted's staff survey, as well as discussions conducted during the inspection.

Inspection team

Lynne Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lucy Roberts

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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