

Ilminster Avenue Specialist Nursery School

Ilminster Avenue, Knowle West, Bristol, BS4 1BX

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children make good progress in all areas of learning.
- The school provides high quality support to disabled children and those who speak English as an additional language. Consequently these children also make good progress.
- Children are well prepared for their next school because of consistently good teaching.
- The school is led by committed leaders who want the very best for every child in school.
- The headteacher has worked hard with her staff to develop excellent opportunities for all children to learn, including improvements to the environment.
- The governing body gives good support and challenge to the school.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the nursery and know that their children are safe, happy and learning.
- Children’s behaviour is good. They feel safe and very happy to come to school.
- The school gives high priority to the children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are extremely thoughtful towards each other, valuing and celebrating each other’s differences.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching. Practitioners do not always challenge children to extend their learning.
- There is not a consistent focus from all leaders on continually improving teaching and learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a wide range of activities across the nursery over two days, including those led by adults and those chosen by children. Three practitioners including the deputy headteacher, joined inspectors for observations.
- Meetings and conversations took place with the headteacher, senior leaders, chair of governors, staff, children, the Family Link worker, the lead nurse, parents and carers and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered key documents provided by the school, including the school’s development plan and self-evaluation, coordinators action plans, governing body minutes and tracking data for all pupils including individual Learning Journeys.
- Inspectors analysed 26 parental responses, 25 via the online survey, Parent View and one written by hand and 28 completed staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Sarah Varnom, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jo Curd	Additional Inspector
Janet Maul	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a specialist nursery school. It has four classes of three to four year-olds and Class 5 which has three class groups for three to seven year-olds with severe and complex learning needs.
- Some children attend nursery every morning or afternoon. Others attend for a continuous two and a half days each week.
- The nursery has a significantly high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. The main areas of need are speech, language and communication, autism and visual impairment.
- A wide range of cultures are represented in the school and a number of pupils are at very early stages of learning English.
- The nursery provides before and after-school care at its on-site children's centre. The children's centre is subject to its own inspection.
- Children leave the nursery to continue their education at 21 different settings.
- The school is not eligible to receive pupil premium funding or funding for sports provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To develop more outstanding teaching by:
 - checking children's understanding throughout their learning and giving support when necessary to reshape activities and move learning on, particularly for the most able children
 - ensuring that all practitioners ask questions that allow children to answer fully.
- To ensure that all leaders focus on continually improving teaching and learning by:
 - checking that the development plan is focus on accelerating the progress children make and that outcomes are achieved
 - developing leaders' skills to support improvement in teaching ensuring that teaching and outcomes for children are checked on a more regular basis.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children start the Nursery with skills and abilities below the levels expected for their age. Children with severe additional learning needs and those with little or no English start Nursery with skills and abilities significantly lower than levels expected for their age. By the time they leave nursery, the majority of children have made good progress in relation to their starting points.
- The school makes every child and their families welcome. Staff ensure that all children have equal opportunities to good experiences that support good learning.
- The school has good systems in place to assess children's abilities on entry, mid-way through the year and on exit. The school tracks individual pupils' progress and works with the children and their parents to plan the next steps for learning. Children's progress is recorded in attractive learning journeys which chart progress across the children's time at nursery using photographs, examples of children's drawing and writing, WOW cards, and assessments.
- Children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Practitioners take every opportunity to help children to develop these areas and the way they behave is an excellent model for the children. For example, whilst making a collage with mud, there was a lot of laughter and some mud which did not make it onto the paper! But staff ensured that the good humour contributed to the learning and that everyone was happy and safe. When it was time to stop, the children did so immediately.
- Children are becoming confident in recognising sounds and letters at the start of words. The beginning of the school day extends this activity when children share their feelings and find the feeling and their name on cards using the first letter. In Class 5, there is a 'good morning' song when children recognise each other's names as well as their own.
- Children are interested in books and stories and like to write and tell their own stories. In one class, the teacher took the stories and the children acted them out for each other. Children were very excited by this activity.
- Children get lots of opportunities to count and investigate numbers. When given glass beads, one group used them to count round a clock face. Not all practitioners use these types of opportunities to ask questions and move pupils' learning forward. This is particularly true for the most able children.

The quality of teaching

is good

- As a result of good teaching, most children, including those with specific learning needs and those with little or no English, make good progress and achieve well over time.
- All practitioners are committed to providing the very best outcomes for children. They work as a team and plan well to support the needs of individuals and specific groups of children. As key persons, all practitioners are involved in checking children's progress, contribute to the learning and attend meetings with parents.
- Most activities are carefully planned around what children know, understand and can do, although this is not always the case.
- High quality resources promote a very positive learning environment both inside and outside to support learning. The outdoor area has been developed beyond the original veranda. It provides children with opportunities to develop their physical skills through climbing, water and sand play, forest school and use of construction and wheeled vehicles.
- A quiet caravan provides space for reading and thinking and willow structures allow children time for reflection and contemplation. Children with and without specific learning needs play and learn safely together in this exceptional and inclusive environment.
- Most practitioners take every opportunity to listen to and carefully observe and question children to help them to reshape tasks to improve learning. However, this does not always happen and the

development of children's language is sometimes limited.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Children's behaviour is good. They love coming to school. One parent wrote: 'the school is a must for my son not a choice and if it was up to him, he'd probably want to come in over the weekends.'
- Attendance is good and most children are brought to school on time each day.
- There is a very positive ethos in the school and this is reflected well through the very good relationships children have with different practitioners and with each other.
- Children relate to a particular member of staff and this works well. Parents and carers say that they feel confident to exchange information and seek guidance. The vast majority of parents that inspectors spoke to or that returned their online questionnaire reported that they were happy with the school and felt that their children were safe.
- Children behave well in nursery and there is a positive atmosphere of praise and encouragement. However, some children's lack of engagement in lessons is not picked up as swiftly as it might be so learning can be delayed.
- Children respect their school and look after it well. There is no litter and the environment is well cared for.
- Children do not mention bullying but know that if anyone is naughty, they will have to see a grown-up and it will be put right.
- Concerns were expressed by some staff about how the consistency of behaviour is managed. The headteacher is going to revisit current guidelines with all practitioners as a priority.
- The safety of children is good. The school works hard to keep pupils safe and secure. All practitioners are appropriately trained to levels in line with their responsibilities and the school works effectively with outside agencies where they feel that children's safety may be at risk.

The leadership and management are good

- Since her appointment two years ago, the headteacher has worked extremely hard with her staff and governors to establish nursery provision that meets the needs of all children, including those in Class 5. Highly skilled senior staff work effectively with children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Children and families have benefitted from many structural changes to the school as well as a well-developed curriculum where learning begins with the child and children are encouraged to take risks.
- The headteacher is building a strong team focused on continually improving outcomes for children. Middle leaders are developing in confidence and support learning well. The headteacher recognises the importance of regular checks on the development plan and rigorous checks on the quality of teaching.
- Working in partnership with parents and carers is a real strength. Parents say they feel very welcome in school and are an active part of their children's learning.
- The school has built highly effective working relationships with other professionals such as those in health care and social services. Parents of children with specific needs feel well supported by a range of services. They appreciate that the headteacher has coordinated these important resources locally. Safeguarding procedures are all met and children's safety is a key priority for the school.
- The school receives light-touch support from the local authority.

The governance of the school:

- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their school and are

kept well informed through governor meetings and regular headteacher reports. Governors have not been afraid to tackle underperformance and have established a revised performance management policy to address this alongside rewarding outstanding performance. The budget is well managed and spending decisions are based on improving outcomes for children. Governors keep themselves up to date by attending relevant training. They work as a team and new governors are made welcome and receive good induction. They recognise the importance of asking challenging questions about learning in order to check that outcomes for children continue to improve.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	108896
Local authority	Bristol
Inspection number	439458

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andreas Holthius
Headteacher	Miss Claire Shiner
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 May 2011
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