

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Turncroft Nursery School

Highfield Road, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 2DN

Inspection date: 20 May 2025

Outcome

Turncroft Nursery School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children are happy at this nurturing and vibrant nursery school. They arrive each day, ready to enjoy rich learning opportunities that inspire their awe and wonder. Staff care for children greatly, which helps children to feel safe and secure.

The school has high expectations for children's achievement. Children rise to these eagerly. They receive recognition when they do, such as with 'star of the week' awards. Children have a thirst for knowledge and learn to become independent learners over time. For example, they contribute enthusiastically to discussions about minibeasts and excitedly go outdoors to 'march like ants' and 'slither like slugs'.

Children behave well. They learn to share and to take turns with their friends. Children are confident and curious to speak with visitors. They learn about what makes them unique, including differences in peoples' cultures and traditions.

Children benefit from meaningful experiences that enrich their understanding of the world around them. They are fascinated to watch as ladybirds and caterpillars grow. Children enjoy baking and spending time with their family members at special events held at the school and the local church. They develop their physical skills and well-being during yoga activities and weekly sports sessions delivered by specialist coaches.

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

The school and the governing body have worked together to bolster their effectiveness during a recent period of instability. This approach has been successful. The governing

body supports and challenges the school well to continue to improve its quality of education. The school provides an ambitious and rich curriculum, which helps children to get off to a flying start in their early education. Children are well prepared for their next stages of learning, including their eventual move on to primary school.

Across much of the curriculum, the school has determined precisely the knowledge that children should learn. However, this is not the case for some areas of learning, where staff are less clear on how to build on what children already know and can do. This hinders how well children develop and remember important knowledge.

The school is tenacious in identifying the additional needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These children receive timely and effective support, which enables them to learn well alongside their friends. Children with SEND follow the full span of learning and wider opportunities that the school provides.

Staff receive regular training, which helps them to hone their practice. They provide children with well-considered learning activities. Recent approaches to check children's learning assist staff to better identify and address gaps in children's knowledge. Nonetheless, the quality of how well some staff support children's communication, language and thinking skills is inconsistent. This means that some children do not learn as well as they could.

Children's love of reading is well fostered. The school has selected high-quality stories, rhymes and songs, which are central to children's learning experiences. Children relish listening to stories, and staff encourage them to join in and discuss different texts. Staff introduce new vocabulary, such as 'chrysalis' and 'delicious', when talking about books. Children take books home each week to share with their parents and carers.

The school has created a calm and harmonious environment that enables children to play together and practise their learning, such as their counting skills. Children generally focus on their learning well and follow instructions from staff. The school helps parents to understand the importance of children's attendance. Most children attend school regularly, which helps to establish positive attendance habits for the future.

The school provides well for children's personal development. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging children's independence and their self-care skills. For example, children learn to wash their own hands, pour drinks and peel fruit at snack time. They learn how to brush their teeth. Frequent visitors to the nursery, such as police officers, help children to learn about safety and about people who help in the local community.

Staff, governors and parents alike are effusive in their pride and sense of belonging to the school. Staff appreciate the school's support for their workload and well-being, including the time that they are given to fulfil their roles. Parents are supported in helping children to continue their learning at home. They commended staff for going 'above and beyond' to support them and their children. Parents told inspectors that the school is a 'brilliant nursery' and that they 'could not thank staff enough for all that they do'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of learning, the school has not determined the precise content that children should learn. This means that staff are not fully clear on how to build on children's prior knowledge over time. The school should refine curriculum thinking in these areas so that staff support children to know and remember more in these areas of learning.
- There is variability in how well some staff support and extend children's communication, language and thinking skills. As a result, some children do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that staff support the development of children's knowledge and skills consistently well.

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 outstanding 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in November 2014.

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	119099
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10377961
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of children	3 to 4
Gender of children	Mixed
Number of children on the school roll	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Damian Collins
Headteacher	Gayle Berry
Website	www.turncroftnurseryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and chair of governors have been appointed.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club for children.

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 that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors visited classrooms and outside areas. They spoke with staff about the curriculum and sampled a range of curriculum documentation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of staff. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with children and observed their behaviour as they played in the nursery, including in the outdoor areas.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record and took account of the views of leaders, staff and children. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and documents pertaining to children's behaviour and levels of attendance.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and their well-being. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors met with some parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

David Lobodzinski, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Gower-Jones

Ofsted Inspector

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