

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Whitecross Nursery School

Watson Street, Derby, Derbyshire DE1 3PJ

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Inspection date: 1 May 2024

## **Outcome**

Whitecross Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Whitecross Nursery School is a special place where children arrive with big smiles on their faces. They flourish due to the exceptional standard of education and care that they receive. Children are happy and safe. Relationships between staff and children are strong. Staff know children incredibly well. Children love coming to school. Parents and carers agree. Typical comments include, 'Whitecross is an absolutely spectacular school. The staff go above and beyond. We cannot praise this school enough.'

The school places a strong focus on supporting children to develop positive behaviours and attitudes. Well-structured routines and expectations guide children to make the right choices, including being respectful of others. Children's behaviour is impeccable. They model the school values beautifully. Children are independent, resilient, kind and curious learners. For those who require additional support to communicate, the school ensures that bespoke systems are in place to enable children to manage their feelings and emotions.

The school has high expectations of children's learning. Adults provide high-quality teaching and guidance for them. They ensure that children's play is purposeful and fun. Children thrive when playing and learning with their friends in the exciting environment, and delight in each other's achievements.

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

The school has a highly ambitious curriculum in place for all areas of learning. Staff have mapped out the knowledge and skills that the children in this nursery need to know and be able to do by the time they leave. The curriculum has a strong focus on developing children's speech and language skills. Children's individual starting points and interests are also taken into consideration. The exceptionally well planned curriculum ensures that all children achieve well and are ready for the next stages of their education.

Throughout the provision, staff select appropriate activities that help them to deliver the curriculum well. They skilfully introduce and model new knowledge and vocabulary to children. Children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), acquire a wealth of expert support to be successful learners. Staff understand how these young children learn best. This enables them to identify and address any needs children may have promptly. This ensures that all children, including those with SEND, can take part in activities alongside their friends.

The nursery has a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Children show exceedingly high levels of concentration and perseverance when they encounter difficulties, for example when completing a jigsaw or using the water pump together to fill containers. Children learn wonderfully well together. They share, take turns and are extremely kind to each other. Children have beautiful manners, and they warmly welcome visitors to the school.

The celebration of books, stories and rhymes shines throughout the provision. Staff and children can often be found engrossed in sharing books together in the well-stocked library. Children keenly select books to explore for themselves. They gain important knowledge about books and how to communicate their own ideas through talk. Children understand the joy that words and the sharing of books can bring.

Children's personal development is exceptional. Staff choose activities carefully to support children to make better sense of the world around them. Children learn about a range of faiths and cultures. They enjoy exploring the various important festivals from each other's faiths, such as Eid and Chinese New Year. All children benefit from visits to different locations. Particular favourites include a bus trip to Derby Museum and spring walks in the local park. Children enjoy exploring and learning in the school's forest area, developing an understanding of teamwork and how to use tools safely.

Governors are highly committed and provide effective challenge and support for leaders. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They appreciate the real care given to their workload and well-being. Staff and governors are proud to be part of the team and have the children's development at the heart of everything they do.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in January 2015.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112480
<b>Local authority</b>	Derby
<b>Inspection number</b>	10324049
<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	80
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Claire Devey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Claire FitzPatrick
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.whitecross.derby.sch.uk">www.whitecross.derby.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Whitecross Nursery School is a local authority-maintained nursery.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## 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 the headteacher, the lead teacher, the special educational needs coordinator and those responsible for governance. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these areas of learning: communication and language, mathematics, and personal, social and emotional development. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of nursery sessions, spoke to staff and looked at examples of children's learning.

- 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 considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online survey, including the free-text responses, and the responses to the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Kirsty Norbury, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

George Huthart

Ofsted Inspector

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