

Brunel Nursery School

Address: Cambridge Street, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB1 1ES

Unique reference number (URN): 119092

Inspection report: 19 May 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	● ● ●
Needs attention	● ● ●
Urgent improvement	

✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have established effective systems to track and monitor rates of attendance. Any concerns regarding attendance are addressed in a timely manner. When needed, leaders work collaboratively with other external partners to help support improvements to regular school attendance. Leaders have built effective relationships with parents and carers about arriving to school on time. Leaders communicate high expectations about coming to school every day. This helps to ensure that positive habits regarding attendance are developed before children go on to join a primary school. Overall, many children attend school regularly.

Leaders have a carefully planned approach that helps children settle into the school. Children learn about the different rules and routines. For example, children readily stop what they are doing when asked to and begin to help tidy up at the end of the day. Children learn with little disruption to their activities. They act sensibly, take care of resources and help one another. Children enjoy learning and are happy to welcome others into their games. Parents told inspectors that they had no concerns about bullying. During snack time, children sit calmly together. They wait their turn to be served and thank staff for the food and drink they receive.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Disadvantaged children and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have any barriers to their learning quickly identified. Leaders and staff respond well to the range of needs that children join the school with. For example, children who need it receive effective additional support to develop their spoken language and communication skills.

Leaders and staff know the children well and respond to any change in their circumstances. Leaders ensure that extra help is routinely reviewed and adjusted when necessary. They work closely with parents and carers. Leaders and staff work with external specialists to further enhance the support available to children. Staff are suitably well trained to provide the right kind of support in class for children with SEND. Leaders ensure that the early years pupil premium grant is used well to provide additional wellbeing support. Overall, disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND are able to access the same learning as their peers.

A significant number of children attending the school speak English as an additional language. Leaders have in place effective approaches that identify and support when children need extra help in developing their spoken English. These approaches could be strengthened further by checking how well children can communicate in their home language. This would help leaders to assure themselves that children do not have any wider barriers to learning beyond acquiring English as an additional language.

Leaders provide a range of opportunities to promote children's personal development. Staff teach children to make important choices to stay healthy. For example, children eat a range of healthy snacks and drink either milk or water in school. They learn about the importance of brushing their teeth in school and at home. Leaders provide meaningful opportunities for children to learn about different cultures. For instance, children learn about the celebrations of Diwali, Eid and Christmas.

Children are successfully supported to develop their self-help skills and independence. This includes learning how to put their coats on by themselves and washing their hands before snack time. The basic elements of fundamental British values are taught through activities such as voting for books to be read to the class. Children also learn why following class rules are important. For instance, how not running in class helps to avoid accidents. Staff support children to become increasingly resilient. An example of this is the outdoor area which provides a range of physically challenging activities. Children show determination in using their strength and balance to succeed at these. Leaders ensure that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged children fully benefit from the range of personal development opportunities available.

Given the young age of the children, support for their wellbeing is woven through all aspects of the school's provision. Staff are considerate and caring. They respond well to any children who need extra attention and pastoral support. Leaders work well in collaboration with parents and carers around aspects of personal development. This includes supportive strategies that can be used at home to support children with toilet training. Leaders and staff also work with parents to discuss the importance of keeping time spent on electronic devices at home to a minimum.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Some children do not achieve as well as they should in aspects of important knowledge and skills linked to early writing and mathematics. For example, they are not sufficiently well supported to develop and build on their mark-making in readiness to form letters. Similarly, the support that some children receive does not help them to build up their early number knowledge as well as they should. This limits how well prepared some children are for primary school.

Children who join the school at an early stage of learning English make positive progress. Leaders have taken effective action to develop the learning environment so that children's physical development is well supported. For instance, children show coordination and control when using bikes and other large apparatus. Overall, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities typically make progress from their individual starting points.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders have recently developed a more detailed curriculum for this Nursery school. It sets out what children should learn and the order that it should be taught in. Some children join the school needing further support in specific areas of learning. The curriculum does not sufficiently set out what key knowledge, skills and activities staff should focus on for children who are not working at a level typical for their age. Consequently, the learning activities that some children experience do not help them achieve their next steps as well as they should.

There is variability in the teaching of some important knowledge and skills linked to early writing and mathematics. This limits how well prepared some children are for their future learning. This has not been addressed by leaders as quickly as it should have been. Children are generally supported well to develop their communication and language. Staff explore new words with children through books and nursery rhymes. There remain occasions when some staff are not fully clear about what key vocabulary and next steps of learning they should be helping children to achieve in the different activities.

Leaders have ensured that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged successfully access learning. Children who are at an early stage of learning English are supported well.

Leadership and governance

Needs attention 

Leaders understand the strengths of the school and where improvements are needed. However, some aspects of improvement have not taken place at a quick enough rate. Leaders and governors have information identifying that aspects of early writing and mathematics need to be developed. However, this has not been suitably prioritised or addressed. That said, leaders and governors have appropriately prioritised how the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are met. Collectively, they have responded in a timely manner to ensure that the needs of children with SEND are appropriately provided for in school. This includes staff accessing appropriate training to develop their expertise to support children with SEND. Conversely, there remain training needs for some members of staff to ensure that the curriculum is consistently taught well.

Governors carry out their statutory duties effectively. For example, they ensure that there are appropriate safeguarding systems and processes in place that help to keep children safe. Leaders and governors make decisions in the best interests of children. The actions taken by leaders are viewed positively by parents and carers, who appreciate how well their children settle into the school. Staff are highly positive about the consideration leaders give to their workload and wellbeing. They feel well supported by leaders with the roles that they carry out.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Children happily come into school, eager to take part in the different learning activities available to them. Many children attend school regularly. Children learn how to share and

cooperate. They work together to build models and to create imaginary games. This brings to life the school's motto of 'learning together'. Staff help children to understand their different emotions and how to manage these. Children who find this more challenging are supported well by caring and nurturing staff. Incidents of bullying are not something that children experience at the school. The positive relationships that children have with staff helps them to feel safe.

Many children at the school speak English as an additional language. These children benefit from extra support that helps them to develop their use of spoken English. Disadvantaged children and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the support they need to learn alongside their classmates. However, children do not achieve as well as they should. This includes developing some of the important knowledge and skills linked to early writing and mathematics. This limits how well prepared some children are for their next steps in education. Leaders and governors have not acted as quickly as they should to ensure that this is addressed.

Children benefit from experiences that bring elements of the outside world into school. For example, children get to enjoy live shows from visiting theatre groups and performances put on by pupils from the nearby school. Children also begin to learn about important people in the local community and the roles that they serve. This includes by meeting police officers in school and by reading books about the fire service and other people that help us.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum accounts for those children who join the school working below age-related expectations.
- Leaders should ensure that staff consistently use assessment information to design and deliver learning activities that help children to build on what they already know.
- Leaders should ensure that children typically achieve well in all aspects of literacy and mathematics by the end of the Nursery Year.
- Leaders and governors should ensure that key areas for improvement are effectively prioritised and addressed in a timely manner.
- Leaders should review their systems for identifying and assessing children's additional needs, so that greater consideration is given to children who may have overlapping barriers to their learning.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Fred Kershaw.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

The inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.

The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is federated with another nearby school. This means that the same headteacher and governing body oversee both schools.

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

Headteacher: Julian Rogers

Lead inspector:


David Robinson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Wendy Tracey, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 19 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

28

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

0.0%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

0.00%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

7.14%

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Our grades explained

Exceptional ●

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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