



**NOTTINGHAM NURSERY SCHOOL  
& TRAINING CENTRE  
SEF  
September 2023**

## School Context

Nottingham Nursery School and Training Centre is a unique and special place; the only maintained nursery school in Nottinghamshire. We have a strong, passionate staff team which is committed to our innovative approach to learning, underpinned by rigorous attention to Early Years research and theory. This includes the Froebel Trust, Harvard Centre for the developing child, National Literacy Trust and Early Excellence. We work closely with families to nurture the children who come here and strive to foster independence, resilience, creativity and curiosity.

Although we are in the heart of the city, learning outdoors and connecting with nature are key to our provision, offering an alternative to the urban environment. This develops the child's sense of self, increasing confidence as they try new things and take risks. We extend this offer to include parents, working alongside them to demonstrate the opportunities learning outdoors can bring. Babies born during the pandemic have missed exploring their environment and meeting new friends. Our use of play outdoors creates opportunities to meet this need. We have wonderful outdoor spaces including an area of developing natural woodland, which all the children access. We use this to drive our ambitious and carefully crafted curriculum which has children at the heart and parents as partners in their children's learning.

In April 2018, we expanded our provision so that we now admit children from birth up to the age of four all year around, in a combination of private day-care and government funded provision. This includes the offer of before and after school provision. Where families are eligible, children access maintained government-funded places (either 15 or 30 hours per week, term-time only). Others are funded privately and can attend for up to 50 hours per week, over 50 weeks of the year. Our capacity flexes in response to demand for places whilst considering ratio/floor-space requirements. Last academic year between 87 and 110 children were on roll.

### Pupil Residence (IDACI national rank of LSOA):

- ☀ Nottingham ranks 6th out of the 317 districts in England of Income Deprivation Affecting Children (ID 2019: IDACI, Rank of Average Score).
- ☀ 20% of Nottingham Nursery School pupils reside in LSOA which are ranked in the most deprived 1% of LSOA nationally, compared to 4.5% of Nottingham city pupils
- ☀ 25.3% of Nottingham Nursery School pupils reside in LSOA which are ranked in the most deprived 5% of LSOA nationally, compared to 24.7% of Nottingham city pupils
- ☀ 52.4% of Nottingham Nursery School pupils reside in LSOA which are ranked in the most deprived 10% of LSOA nationally, compared to 43% of Nottingham city pupils
- ☀ 86.8% of Nottingham Nursery School pupils reside in LSOA which are ranked in the most deprived 30% of LSOA nationally, compared to 77.2% of Nottingham city pupils
- ☀ These percentages have steadily increased over the last 6 years as poverty and deprivation in our local area have increased
- ☀ Pupils attending Nottingham Nursery School have an average IDACI deprivation score of 0.3 (based on residence). This means that 34% of pupils may be experiencing family income deprivation in comparison with 29.7% of pupils for Nottingham overall and 16% nationally
- ☀ 78% of our children come from ethnic minorities. 73% of the pupils at Nottingham Nursery School have a language other than English as a first language. There are 30 languages other than English spoken in school.
- ☀ There has been an exponential rise in the number of children with undiagnosed and unsupported additional needs. Currently, there are 22 children on the SEND register, 8 with high level needs.
- ☀ In February 2022 we federated with Mellers Primary School, ensuring excellent provision from birth to 11 in our local area
- ☀ We are passionate about creating extraordinary opportunities for our pupils to lay the critical foundations which will enable them to succeed in education and to compete at the highest level in the career market, in order to effect social mobility and positive change. This is a commitment shared by the whole Nottingham Nursery School community.

### **1. Quality of education: at least good**

## Parent feedback:

*'The staff are knowledgeable and skilled. They have really helped E as I can see a lot of improvement in his communication and attitude. He's always happy coming through the doors and looks forward to school when getting ready in the morning. He's always clean, despite activities and play, no injuries which is remarkably different from the old nursery. Thanks to every single staff member; I also like the big building it's located in.'*

- ☀ The curriculum is underpinned by our six 'keys' which form our school vision, taking into account the EYFS Statutory Framework and the non-statutory guidance (Development Matters and Birth to Five Matters). All learning areas as well as the characteristics of learning are planned for indoors and outside and developed according to children's interests and identified next steps. We have an innovative approach to learning, which is informed by the principles and approaches of Friedrich Froebel, Danish Forest Schools and Reggio Emilia. Alongside this, we incorporate a structured but playful approach to pre-phonics and early maths learning, ensuring that our children are well prepared for the next steps of their education. We have a clear assessment procedure, which uses practitioner knowledge of children, observations and termly data returns to ensure progress is accelerated from baseline.
- ☀ Our streamlined assessment system includes observations and data returns. E1, E2 and N1 focus on prime areas and N2 on prime and specific areas to ensure readiness for the next stage of learning. Discussions about children and their development / next steps are critical and planned into our staff meeting timetable. Accurate assessment using Evidence Me and SIMS supports practitioners' efficiency. Information from these is used to inform provision, to meet individual and group needs effectively and reflect child interests.
- ☀ Pupils at Nottingham Nursery make excellent progress and are fully prepared for school when they leave us. We know this from our assessments, observations and feedback from parents.
- ☀ Each room, and outside, has a medium-term continuous provision plan, with enhancement activities planned according to need and interest, to enable the children to observe, have a go, reflect, re-visit and consolidate. Our environment is carefully planned, structured and evaluated for impact on learning, and for its capacity to enable children to be independent and creative learners. The areas are audited and evaluated through planned quality assurance weeks planned over the year, and through reviews of planning. We have introduced a progressive story and rhyme spines, focusing teaching, so children leave nursery being able to know, love and retell them. This develops early literacy skills and an interest in books and reading to increase future literacy levels. Our maths mastery approach and phonics frameworks are ambitious.
- ☀ Alongside our carefully planned provision, practitioners are highly skilled in interactions and can respond to children in the moment and build on their learning and development. Practitioners use questioning effectively, identify misconceptions and act to ensure they are corrected. Adequate time is given for practice to embed knowledge, understanding and skills, making sure that children on varying hours/ days experience the complete nursery curriculum. Practitioners identify and support children who are behind their development goals and enable them to accelerate progress to reach them.
- ☀ We strive to foster independence, resilience, creativity and curiosity. Learning outdoors and connecting with nature is key to our provision and we have fantastic outdoor spaces including an area of natural woodland, which all the children can access. This is at least once a week, through planned sessions led by our fully trained Forest School Leader. The children enjoy a planned series of celebrations and festivals and parents often join us for these. These days have religious, cultural and international themes and we celebrate with food, stories, music, dress, geography and artefacts. This strengthens our community relationships, as well as providing opportunities to develop skills, role modelling healthy eating and discuss the importance of good oral health and physical activity in a more relaxed environment.
- ☀ Parents are provided with information about their child and their achievements through Evidence Me and for babies, our home-school diaries. Practitioners guide families on how to support their child to develop and thrive, with weekly newsletters for the whole nursery and learning sheets for each group. More formal discussions are held at the mid-year meetings, which incorporates the 2-year-old progress check.

## **School improvement priorities 2023-24**

- ☀ To ensure our curriculum review is embedded
- ☀ To ensure that everyone within our school community is happy and safe
- ☀ To ensure that our strategy and support for pupils with significant SEND meets the emerging need

- ☀ To further develop the indoor and outdoor environments so that they support learning as effectively as possible

## **2. Behaviour and attitudes: at least good**

Parent feedback:

*'You teach my child how to behave, read, share and you are very kind to her.'*

- ☀ Children learn best in the context of warm, secure and safe relationships and they quickly form strong attachments to practitioners. Each child has a named key worker who reports on their child's progress throughout the year using Evidence Me. We give feedback to parents that is much more informal with our open-door policy. Self-regulation is encouraged through consistent high expectations, shared at the beginning of group sessions and supported by adults during play/continuous provision. Our PSED curriculum, based on the SEAD National Strategies document, is successful in supporting children to understand their emotions and express that it ok not to be ok. This encourages positive relationships, develops confidence and self-resilience through team building activities, circle time games and direct instruction. Children feel listened to and are safe. All practitioners respond to behaviours as a form of communication and explore with the children. Progress in PSED and speaking is accelerated as communication and interaction is prioritised. The pace, timing, direction and flow of interaction is contingent on the child's interest, ability and need. This is through:
  - ☀ Use of sign-supported English and symbols
  - ☀ Independence in provision to make choices and take risks
  - ☀ Taking responsibility in tidying up, care of the environment in forest garden and care for animals, especially Dinosaurs and Daisy our chickens!
  - ☀ Story based curriculum, developing speaking and listening, vocabulary and confidence.
  - ☀ Calm, well organised environment and provision
- ☀ Behaviour at nursery is good. The nursery promise, communicated using signs, symbols and sign language, helps children learn the difference between right and wrong. High expectations are consistent throughout the nursery. Children are confident and curious learners with positive attitudes towards learning. They are thoughtful and supportive of their peers, applied in independent play. High expectations for behaviour are demonstrated as children use real tools in forest garden, woodwork and cookery. We are currently reviewing our Relationships and Behaviour Policy, ensuring that all staff members are skilled in their approach
- ☀ We strive to ensure children develop the characteristics of effective learning through exploration and play, indoors and outside. We use the Leuven scales of involvement and wellbeing to identify children potentially at risk of underachieving and we work with families to nurture their children. Our Forest School leader has run a parent workshop over 10 weeks, sharing activities and outdoor learning with families. Our parent support worker has created packs of support for toilet training and oral health. Courses and learning opportunities are promoted as they arise.

## **3. Personal development: at least good**

Parent feedback:

*'How you treat L even when he gets upset. How you have noticed he has absent seizures that are hard to spot.'*

- ☀ Children feel safe at nursery having had personalised induction programmes, working closely with parents, ensuring needs are met. We recognise that this can be a difficult transition from home to nursery. Learning journeys are completed on admission to get to know families personally. We use positive rewards and praise so every child feels special and support families to continue this at home. Transition into primary school includes liaison with teachers from up to 13 different schools, virtual tours, booklets in provision, and visits (when possible). We support parents with admissions forms and strategies for home so everyone is ready for a new school.
- ☀ Children and parents tell us they love coming to nursery! Attendance at nursery is good and the importance of regular attendance is emphasised to parents. Absence is monitored and reasons logged, with no assumptions made about poor attendance. Phone calls, texts and home visits check reasons for absence, ensuring no child is missed. We recognise poor attendance can be a safeguarding concern and a member of the office team is a member of the safeguarding team for this reason. We are part of the Local Authority's

drive to improve attendance in the city, with early communication to parents, and shared expectations. We are supported by the federation with this, having a named Education Welfare Officer.

- ☀️ Healthy eating is promoted at snack times and through meals provided by Nottingham City catering service, personalised to meet the needs of young children. New flavours and food textures are introduced as part of direct instruction and in celebration days. We use forest garden and allotment area to plant, grow and harvest some of our own snacks. Independence is encouraged during our family service mealtimes and with hand washing, feeding, clearing tables etc. Children are active throughout the day, and we promote high standards of personal hygiene, particularly focusing on support for independent toileting and good oral health.
- ☀️ We prioritise school readiness, working with families on toilet training, independence with clothes and shoes, taking care of belongings, developing self-regulation.
- ☀️ We take pride in our diversity and celebrate this in a variety of ways including through regular celebration days where we can learn each other's languages and share food, customs, traditions and cultural practices including music, song and dance. Children experience visitors into school and trips to local and further afield places. We are proud of our work with the Schools of Tomorrow project, with the Nottingham Contemporary and our link artist Sian Watson.

#### **4. Leadership and Management: at least good**

Parent feedback:

*'We love the reception of everyone in the school. Easy to talk to people, because of the good teachers, the children love to go to school. We value everything in the school, the teachers, the equipment, the principal of the school, everything most of all we value its diversity.'*

- ☀️ Changes in funding policy have impacted enormously and negatively on the school. In addition to this, the school has been carrying a very large historical deficit. The Local Authority is supporting Governors in creating a sustainable, long-term plan for the nursery. Leadership support has been provided by Mellers Primary School, with an executive Head teacher in place since April 2019 and head of school since September 2019. Federation between the two settings was completed February 2022. Since then, the deficit has reduced by 90% through:
  - ☀️ Maximising occupancy through a responsive and flexible admissions policy
  - ☀️ Stringent value for money purchasing and reduction in resourcing costs
  - ☀️ Grant applications to fund specific projects, including SSBC £6,000 parent project.
  - ☀️ Restructuring the staff team
  - ☀️ Thorough management of staff absence and subsequent supply / cover costs
- ☀️ The school improvement plan drives professional development schedule and appraisal, inclusive of all practitioners. Our INSET days focus on priorities in our school development plan.
- ☀️ All staff complete safeguarding training as part of induction, annual updates and biannual CPD on Prevent, FGM and CSE. There is a culture of vigilance, where children's welfare is actively promoted. The school has a proactive safeguarding team, policies and procedures. 17% of our pupils have been identified as having safeguarding concerns. The safeguarding governor, Femi Folorunso, regularly attends our monthly safeguarding team meetings. We have three designated safeguarding leads, and each child has a named key worker, to ensure everyone gets the support they need. We work effectively with external partners to support those at risk or subject to a multi-agency plan. The executive head teacher, head of school, business manager, chair and vice chair of governors have completed safer recruitment training.
- ☀️ Nottingham Nursery School is an active participant in Nottingham Schools' Trust and hub school in the Stronger Practice Hub
- ☀️ Rigorous and effective system of monitoring and evaluation: triangulation of evidence, carried out by leadership team and subject leaders
- ☀️ Governors are reviewing leadership across the Federation to ensure sustainable leadership capacity
- ☀️ Whole school focus on leadership at all levels as a result of a leadership initiative based on Steve Radcliffe's Future, Engage, Deliver
- ☀️ Governance at Nottingham Nursery School is outstanding. Our federated governing body has retained the expertise of both former governing bodies at Nottingham Nursery and Nottingham Nursery School.