

Stoneyholme Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119074
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	291305
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Eric Jackson

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mohammed Sher Ali Miah
Headteacher	Mrs Mari Nearney
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2003
School address	March Street Burnley Lancashire BB12 0BU
Telephone number	01282 454473
Fax number	01282 416426

Age group	3–4
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school admits 80 children in two intakes: September and January. Morning and afternoon sessions each cater for 40 children. The local area suffers severe economical deprivation. All the children live close to the school, and are British Asian of Bangladeshi or Pakistani heritage. Many children enter the school with low levels of English, speaking Bengali, Punjabi or Pushto at home. Some are bilingual, with competence in both English and their home language. Overall, children's attainment on entry is well below the usual levels for three-year-olds, particularly in English and personal and social skills.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Stoneyholme is a good Nursery school with some outstanding features. It has improved well since its last inspection. All parents support the school, saying, 'The staff are very approachable, and our children make really good progress'. The carefully planned welcome for new children and parents includes home visits by the headteacher and a bilingual member of staff. Parents rightly feel that their children are safe and very well cared for in the school.

Most children achieve well and make good progress in all the required areas of learning by the time they transfer to Reception classes, although these levels are still below what is typical for four-year-olds. Children make excellent progress in developing their personal and social skills; they behave very well, and very much enjoy the tasks and activities available. There is a good, sustained concentration on language development. This supports the use of mother tongue but increases the level of English as children become more competent. Sometimes, though, boys do not join in speaking and listening activities fully, such as when there is group discussion or singing. Girls make swifter progress than boys in language development.

The staff work very closely with parents, keeping them well informed about their children's development. This excellent relationship with parents is strengthened by bilingual staff who live locally, and who speak English and community languages fluently. Visits by teachers to home villages abroad have also boosted the trust and confidence that the ethnic communities have in the school. Children are well supported to learn how to live healthily. The use of an allotment next to the school gives good support to healthy eating and many other aspects of learning. Children also develop their physical skills well, learning that exercise and keeping fit are important. They learn to keep the nursery tidy and to share resources sensibly. For example, a minor falling out was settled by two girls agreeing to share the 'shopping money' between them. Parents say that their older children were well prepared for the transfer to Reception classes.

The staff work very well as a cooperative team, providing good role models for the children to follow. There is a buzz of cheerful activity as the staff greet the children in a warm and friendly manner so that they and their parents feel comfortable and secure. There is good teaching, curriculum planning and assessment behind this happy activity which is amended weekly to children's learning needs during staff discussions led by the leading teacher. Children learn to choose activities or work in groups led by a 'key worker' member of staff linked to a theme based on traditional stories from different cultures. For example, 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' is the pathway to learning in all the required areas, also linking well with many children's experiences of trips to rural home villages in Asia.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership for the nursery, supported well by the leading teacher and other staff. Staff and governors know the setting well, and are clear about its strengths and what could be improved. Teamwork is good, but support staff have not been encouraged sufficiently to lead the planning and assessment of learning for the groups of children where they are the key worker.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the role of key workers further so that they have more responsibility for the progress and assessment of their groups, including reporting to parents.

- Engage boys more directly in planned learning activities, especially those that promote speaking and listening skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well and make good progress towards the goals set for their learning. By the time they transfer to Reception classes, their attainment has improved from well below to just below what is typical for their age. Children make excellent progress in social and personal skills, and improve very well in aspects of their creative and physical development. Work with local artists and regular art and craft activities expand the range of children's skills, including pencil and brush control and the careful use of scissors. Physical development is promoted well in the outdoor play area, for example, by children showing good skills in shooting baskets using a large ball. Children also make good progress in using English and understanding early mathematics. Boys do not engage in talk as much as girls, so their language development is slower. The increasing use of the allotment next to the school is improving opportunities for children to develop their curiosity about, and knowledge of, the world around them. Many children use a touch screen well to develop early computer skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development is outstanding and their well-being is promoted superbly by the staff. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, specifically in moral and social development. Children are confident and very happy, and this is the key to them feeling safe and trusting the staff to care for and help them. Through constant discussion with staff children are motivated to learn, and well planned activity alongside and with others help them to develop friendships. Even the young three-year-olds are confident and comfortable, often playing alone but relaxed and concentrating on their chosen task. Because a number of the staff are from the local community, they provide excellent role models for children in understanding their own home culture and the culture of others around them. The staff ensure that children learn how to live healthy lifestyles and this is confirmed by parents. Children enjoy the challenges of all learning activities. They learn to play safely, and handle equipment without danger to themselves or others. They respect the nursery rules, and are well prepared for the transition to Reception classes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, and are outstanding in promoting children's personal, social and emotional development. The staff understand how young children learn, and provide the activities and resources to allow them to make choices and become independent. Children enter in the morning or afternoon to a secure environment, carefully set out to promote their learning, with new activities and choices alongside those they are familiar with. In the craft area, for example, children had opportunities to make troll faces, based on a current story, from card, using glue and scissors, or from wet clay, using a range of tools. The leading teacher ensures that all the activities promote learning successfully, especially language skills. A real feature of the school day is that the staff clearly enjoy the children's learning and join them in the

activities with smiles of encouragement. This attitude ensures that behaviour management is excellent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is well planned to cover all the required areas of learning. The staff, led by the headteacher and leading teacher, are constantly seeking ways to make learning interesting. They provide a range of areas in the setting that promote specific learning, such as construction, but which are linked to the main theme for the week. So, for example, children are encouraged to make a variety of bridges for the troll to hide under, in keeping with the current story. Through questioning and discussion, children develop linked language and problem-solving skills. The nearby allotment is developing well as a curricular resource, and there are active and timely plans to expand the outdoor area into an outdoor classroom. Good links with other schools, the local authority and a Creative Partnership group for the arts, add significantly to children's learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care is excellent, and guidance and support are good. Children are very safe and well cared for. The staff know the families well and there is strong mutual trust because parents feel comfortable and confident that their children are secure. Safeguarding procedures are in place. Through the key worker groups, staff know individual children's needs well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is a good system to gather information about children's learning. However, it is not used as effectively as it could be as support staff are not sufficiently encouraged to lead the planning and assessment of children in their groups.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is very well established in the school, and trusted by the community. She provides exceptional leadership, supported very well by the leading teacher. The rest of the staff also contribute well to the school's clear focus on children's progress and achievement, especially in the key areas of personal development and language skills. The nursery runs smoothly and is well managed. Governance is good, and members of the local community make a significant contribution to ensuring the quality of the provision. Self-evaluation is good, and the staff and governors know what is required to develop the quality of education further. The school has good capacity to improve and provides good value for money. It carries a larger than recommended financial surplus because there is doubt about the continuance of funding for bilingual support. A decision by the local authority regarding this is pending.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Stoneyholme Nursery School, Lancashire, BB12 0BU

Thank you for being friendly and kind to me when I came to your nursery.

It is a good nursery and does some things very well indeed.

You work hard and play very well together. The staff help you to learn well and make sure that you are safe. They tell you good stories and give you chance to look at stories yourself.

You also have many good things to play with so that you can learn and do new things inside and outside every day. I think that boys could join in better by talking and listening more.

Thank you again for looking after me and I hope you enjoy a happy and good life.

With best wishes from

Mr Jackson

Lead Inspector