

Stoneyholme Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119074
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339334
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Clare Henderson

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 of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Sher Ali Miah
Headteacher	Mrs Mari Nearney
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, one of whom focused solely on the quality of safeguarding. The inspector observed nine teaching sessions taught by the nine adults who teach in the Nursery; approximately one half of inspection time was spent looking at children's learning. They held meetings with governors and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, the progress and attainment of children, the curriculum, the school's development plan and the way the school evaluates its own performance. The views of parents, through 50 returned inspection questionnaires, and the views of staff were evaluated and reviewed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the amount of progress each child makes during their time in the Nursery
- whether the curriculum takes account of children's interests
- how assessment is used to plan new activities for children
- the effectiveness of engagement with parents and governors in improving children's learning and well-being
- the effectiveness of safeguarding.

Information about the school

Stoneyholme is an average-sized nursery school situated near the centre of Burnley. It provides part-time education for children in the three-to-four-years age range of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The vast majority of children are of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage. The percentage of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Almost all the children are learning English as an additional language and most are at an early stage of language acquisition.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good nursery school which provides children with a happy and fun filled beginning to their school life. Outstanding care, support and guidance are provided for each child. Bilingual support, delivered in each child's home language, ensures most children settle quickly and make good progress in all the areas of learning. Parents overwhelmingly agree and praise the Nursery for the close attention it gives to their children's personal safety and social needs.

Almost all children begin school with skills which are low for their age. This is particularly evident in their personal, social and communication skills. Home visits, some pre-nursery induction sessions and regular meetings with children's key workers help staff to really get to know the social and personal needs of each child and their family well. However, not a great deal of information is provided about the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum or of how parents can work with the school to ensure transition from home to school is a smooth one.

The Nursery is a buzz of activity from the moment the children arrive, and exciting activities stimulate the children to speak, listen, and learn to get on with each other. The quality of teaching is good overall. Observations of children as they play and learn are carried out by all adults and these are used effectively to track children's progress. Through outstanding partnerships with the local community, children are provided with first hand experiences of the world of nature found in their local environment. They work with gardeners and family members in local allotments planting, growing and then cooking and tasting the food produced. This gives them an excellent understanding of the benefits of healthy lifestyles. Within a stimulating curriculum, children make outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The school is led and managed well. However, although a few governors, including the chair, have been in post for a considerable time, a minority is new to the role and not fully conversant with the responsibilities required. Close teamwork from all staff ensures the school knows its strengths and areas to improve well. Central to improvement in children's good achievement is rigorous self-evaluation and an ongoing review of learning that leaders and staff undertake. This demonstrates the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop home/school links by providing a series of workshops for parents which explain the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.
- Strengthen governance by providing relevant training for recently appointed

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governors.

■ **Outcomes for individuals and groups of children**

2

Children really enjoy their learning. Their smiling faces as they run into the Nursery each morning are testament to this. Parents and children feel secure, knowing that adults who speak their home language are always on hand to reassure the children if they are distressed or do not fully understand what is expected of them. They play happily on their own or with others and children from different backgrounds and cultures play together harmoniously. Children are very active learners and are given a wide range of opportunities to investigate and explore both within the Nursery and in the highly stimulating outdoor environment. Children are keen to learn and high priority is given to developing their English skills through well-thought-out speaking and listening activities. All adults pay close attention to children's individual needs and quickly identify those who may show a delay in learning. They provide appropriate support from the excellent links they have with external health agencies in the town. This ensures that those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar good progress to their classmates.

Children are happy and secure, and visitors from within the community, such as the police, teach them about staying safe. They take excellent care of the Nursery environment and treat each other with care and sensitivity. Children are very involved in making their daily snacks of fruit and vegetables, often grown by the children in their allotment. This enables them to learn about the importance of leading healthy lifestyles. Continuous opportunities to play outside strengthen their physical development effectively. Most children behave well and the few minor squabbles that occur, mainly over learning to share, are quickly resolved by the attentive adults on hand to mediate. Children know who to go to if they have a problem and that adults will sort it out.

Children make good progress in their physical, creative and problem-solving skills because staff plan good opportunities for them to investigate and explore. For instance, a group of children built a castle with large construction blocks and chatted to one another about the different ways they could get into the castle, counting the steps or balancing on blocks. An adult was on hand to extend their language as they discussed what they had made. Children's information and communication technology skills develop well as they play mathematical and language games on the available computers. Children make excellent progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and partnerships, such as those with gardeners in the town, encourage them to find out about the birds that visit their school grounds. They lovingly care for the birds by making fat balls and checking that the bird feeders are full. This gives them a real appreciation and understanding of the world around them and their place in caring for creation. Such activities prepare them well for the future. Attendance levels are average overall and affected by the childhood illnesses many have at this age, and from extended holidays abroad, which a minority of families take for religious and family reasons. When children move to Reception, their skills have improved and are broadly in line with those expected for their age, though slightly below in most areas of learning.

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However, given their low start, this equates to good progress overall.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment ¹	3
The quality of children's learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
Children's behaviour	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance ¹	3
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Relationships are excellent and a real sense of fun and laughter permeates the Nursery. Recently improved observations and assessment procedures are carried out regularly and logged by each key worker in learning journeys. Adults use this information well to plan for further learning. It is shared with parents on a regular basis to keep them up-to-date with the progress their children make. The Nursery provides a high staffing ratio and all adults promote positive attitudes to learning, whilst displaying a real sensitivity to the personal needs of each child. Children are able to sustain play if they wish, but there are limited times set aside for children to chat and reflect with an adult on what they have learnt and what they might want to do next to extend their learning. Adults plan activities around children's interests and good quality planning ensures activities are suitably challenging to match children's individual needs. The good knowledge of learning, of children's development and welfare needs shown by all adults

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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promotes their learning well and is particularly effective in developing children's personal, social and language needs. An interesting, well-resourced, welcoming environment reflects children's cultural backgrounds and strengthens their cultural identity and the diversity of children attending the Nursery effectively.

Excellent partnerships with health and social agencies give focused support to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and vulnerable children extremely well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The long standing headteacher is very well respected and valued within the Nursery community. She leads a good team of highly committed staff who all show a strong commitment to equality and diversity, celebrating the individual qualities of each child and their family well. Teamwork is the crux to their success. Strong links with parents ensure the personal needs of the children are addressed well. However, induction procedures, to inform parents of the content of the curriculum that children study and how they can help with their child's learning, are less well developed. Excellent partnerships within the local community extend opportunities for children to gain knowledge of the world in which they live. Resources are well deployed and the school provides good value for money. Safeguarding is good, policies are comprehensive and procedures ensure children are protected and supported effectively. Community cohesion is good at local, national and international levels. However, the school has not fully measured the impact of these links on children's attitudes and learning. The governing body is satisfactory overall. A minority of governors have retired and new governors, recently appointed, though keen and supportive, are not up to speed on expectations of the roles and responsibilities they hold as governors. Monitoring of teaching and learning is ongoing and built into school development well. The open environment and strong teamwork that abounds ensures that monitoring and evaluation of practice are undertaken in a spirit of cooperation.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2 2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of the 50 parents who responded to the questionnaire are highly satisfied with the Nursery and comment very positively about the quality of care, the quality of leadership and management, the impact of teaching, and the overall provision in the school. Inspectors agree with these opinions.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stoneyholme Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 80 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	66	14	28	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	62	17	34	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	48	24	48	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	40	29	58	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	44	27	54	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	44	24	48	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	50	23	46	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	32	29	58	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	46	25	50	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	46	22	44	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	44	24	48	2	4	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	27	54	22	44	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	58	20	40	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 February 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Stoneyholme Nursery School, Burnley, BB12 0BU

Thank you all for making my visit to your lovely nursery so enjoyable. It was good to see how eager you are to learn about all kinds of new things. I was pleased at how much you can do by yourselves – without any help from adults.

I loved watching you learn while you played. I especially liked seeing you play together while building your castle or when you were working with Margaret, the gardener, feeding and looking after the birds. You have great fun both indoors and outdoors and are very busy all the time, finding out new things. All this fun and hard work mean that, by the time you move into Reception, you have learnt many new skills in speaking, listening and how to solve problems, which will help you as you grow older. You behave well and clearly enjoy learning.

You go to a good nursery school and your special adults take extremely good care of you to help you to keep safe, but they still let you try things out for yourselves. When I sat and listened, all I could hear were your happy chattering voices as you worked and played together. Your mums and dads agree that everyone works very hard to make things fun and enjoyable for you.

Your nursery is led and managed well and the headteacher and other adults are always looking for ways to make it even better. I have asked the governors to attend some special meetings to find out how they can continue to keep you happy and safe in school. Your teachers give plenty of information to your parents but it would help if they held some more meetings with them, before you start nursery, to tell them about what you will be learning.

I hope you continue to have a lovely time.

With very best wishes to you and your teachers.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Clare Henderson

Lead inspector

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