

Freshfield Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106021
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	377341
Inspection dates	24–25 January 2012
Lead inspector	Sarah Quinn

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	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Les Jones
Headteacher	Linda Shaw
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Sarah Quinn

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent seven hours observing direct teaching and independent, continuous learning, involving nine staff. Meetings were held with members of the governing body and staff and children were spoken to. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at observation, assessment and planning records, together with policies and management documentation related to safeguarding and health and safety. She scrutinised examples of children's 'records of achievement,' as well as other documentation relating to children's achievement. The inspector took account of questionnaires completed by staff and 55 parents and carers. At the time of the inspection, there were no responses recorded on the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) website to aid inspection planning.

Information about the school

This is an average sized nursery school compared to other nursery schools nationally. It has places for 78 children who attend part-time. This is organised into different sessions over the week. Children are generally admitted the term after their third birthday. Children are transferred to up to nine local primary schools. Most children are from a White British heritage and a small minority speaks English as an additional language. A minority of children has special educational needs. The school has achieved Extended School and Healthy School status, has the Eco-Schools award and has achieved the Financial Management Standard in Schools.

The school offers a range of extended provision to families in the community. There are sessions for parents and carers to 'stay and play' with their children aged from nought to three, for childminders to liaise, and for families to meet each other. There are parenting courses and health-related services delivered by health professionals.

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	1
Achievement of children	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of children	1
Leadership and management	1

Key Findings

- This is an outstanding nursery school. Children’s achievement is outstanding as they make excellent progress from their starting points.
- Children with additional needs are extremely well supported and make progress in line with that of their peers. Their needs are swiftly identified and intervention is personalised and effective, from a range of specialist agencies and highly trained and dedicated nursery staff.
- Staff interaction with children is challenging and supportive and they capably develop children’s learning as they have in-depth knowledge and understanding of child development. On occasion, staff are too quick to support children rather than allowing them to develop their own skills independently.
- Staff expertly adapt the environment to ensure it constantly meets the needs of individual children. They value children’s interests and ensure that the bright and welcoming environment is appealing and exciting and allows for development in all areas of learning.
- Behaviour is outstanding and contributes to learning. Children show high levels of care and cooperation. Staff promote respect and consideration, and children respond very well.
- Children have excellent knowledge in relation to keeping themselves safe. The environment is secure and children skilfully assess risk and their own capabilities when playing by themselves and with each other.
- The nursery is a valuable resource and is central in the community providing a wide range of invaluable and supportive activities for parents, carers and families.

- Leaders and managers are aspirational and drive improvement. Continual professional development is a large focus for all of the team. Staff have a strong vision and are evaluative and reflective. This enables them to quickly identify potential improvements.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the school and their comments are overwhelmingly complimentary and appreciative, for example, 'We feel very privileged our child has the opportunity to attend a wonderful environment.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop staff knowledge and understanding to enable all staff to understand how to support children's independence fully through peer role modelling and sharing of good practice.

Main Report

Achievement of children

Children enter nursery with skills and knowledge that are generally in line with national expectations. Some notable weakness in communication, language and literacy development and personal, social and emotional development are very quickly supported, in particular children's speech and language and emotional development, to ensure that children make rapid progress. By the time they move on to school, they have made significant gains in their learning and some are working within the Early Learning goals, which is well above national expectations. Parents and carers comment that they are impressed with the progress their children make and are given much information in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage and their own child's achievement. Inspection findings concur with these very positive views.

Specialist agencies or highly-trained staff expertly support children with special educational needs and they make progress at least in line with that of their peers. Those who speak English as an additional language are supported by skilled staff at the nursery and also by bi-lingual staff from other agencies. Their progress is particularly notable and they use visual timetables, symbols and signs to support their development of English.

Children thoroughly enjoy the forest school and listen attentively when told a story under the tent in the rain. They listen to the rain falling on the tent and splash in the puddles in their wellingtons whilst staff show them how to measure the water levels with sticks. They work together to make 'stick men' demonstrating tolerance and cooperation. They use vocabulary such as, longer than, and directional language, such as, right, and left, with confidence. They enjoy periods for reflection when they think about what their stick could be and staff give them time to develop their thoughts. This experience allows children to deepen and develop their knowledge and understanding well. They enjoy dancing together with ribbons and follow each other's movements with guidance from the teacher. Children cooperate and develop

all areas of learning well in the pretend fire engine. They write reports, compare fire hoses, climb ladders and rescue kittens.

Children choose from a range of activities either indoors or outdoors and make progress across all areas of learning as they use chopsticks to count shapes into bowls, or mould dough into differently sized pots and pans. They demonstrate a very strong knowledge of numbers and counting as they count the spots on dominoes and play games with staff and each other.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is consistently outstanding whether during group times, during adult-led activities or during continuous play. This is the reason for children's high level of achievement. Insightful observations are recorded and this enables staff to plan effectively to address the next steps in children's learning and development.

Thorough assessment procedures enable staff to track children's progress regularly and accurately and any concerns about their development are addressed effectively. Staff monitor the environment carefully and plan a diverse curriculum to ensure that all areas of learning are covered and ensure that they make activities appealing to all children. As a result, children learn exceptionally well across all areas of learning.

A range of specialised programmes is delivered at the school, such as the nurture group to support early behaviour and emotional skills, and the 'LEAP' group, which addresses early speech and language difficulties. Children respond very well to these groups and show high levels of enjoyment and engagement as they celebrate each other's achievements, or play listening games with music boxes. Parents and carers appreciate the skills of staff in detecting potential issues, for example, a parent said, 'The school was especially quick at referring my child to speech therapy. They proved to be very intuitive to children's needs.' Children's groupings are well thought out and tailored to ensure that each child gets the most out of their sessions.

Children learn excellent skills to support their own learning because staff are strong role models and teach them to problem solve and think creatively. Staff have high expectations and are enthusiastic. Teaching has a very positive impact in promoting children's step-by-step progress in all areas of their learning, including their personal, social and emotional development. Their vocabulary development is very well supported by staff who continually monitor activities and challenge play or model learning skills. Occasionally, staff are a little quick to help children rather than allowing them to fully explore their own capabilities during simple tasks like getting ready to go outside or putting bags on their backs ready for forest school. Parents and carers are very positive about the teaching at the school and show high levels of appreciation for the progress their children make and the efforts that staff make in ensuring that their children's needs are met effectively.

Curiosity is very well fostered as staff use 'secret' baskets to unfold objects and activities slowly, for example, a beautiful basket contains a whole selection of objects related to Chinese New Year. These are carefully unwrapped as the group time progresses and children are transfixed on the beautiful objects in the basket. Each object relates to activities around the room that children can choose to complete and they access the activities with excitement.

Behaviour and safety of children

Behaviour is outstanding and children show exceptional levels of respect for each other and for adults. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the behaviour and safety at the school. They comment that their children have received focused support to help them when they have had difficulties controlling their behaviour. Parents and carers are also offered support through the 'positive parenting' course and the behaviour support drop-in sessions held at the school. Staff have very high expectations and children respond very well to them. Children show a strong understanding of safe practices, as they climb on to the climbing frame and enjoy the monkey bars. They effectively learn about safety through well-planned activities around the topic 'People who help us'. They use lollipop sticks and wear high visibility jackets as the crossing patrol or play with the small world animals in the vet surgery. Children say they feel safe in the nursery and the staff ensure that they seek the views of children on this topic regularly through careful questioning and supportive sessions with key workers.

Attendance levels are very high and children love coming to school. Parents and carers report that they want to come every day, even weekends. The nursery works successfully with parents and carers to foster a culture of regular attendance and this shows in the numbers of children attending. Children learn right from wrong effectively as staff demonstrate and praise appropriate behaviour.

Staff promote an atmosphere of respect and promote family groups, a variety of cultures and are committed to developing the ethos of equal opportunity. There are no cases of bullying or name-calling as a result.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are outstanding. Children are very well safeguarded and this is because leaders and managers are committed to continually assessing and ensuring their safety. Risk assessments are highly effective and safeguarding requirements are fully met. The school is committed to equality of opportunity and this is reflected in the ethos of respect. The governing body understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school and supports and challenges the school well. The school is recognised as an essential central resource in the community and feedback from partners and local people is overwhelmingly positive. The school goes 'above and beyond' to identify and meet needs for parents, carers and families.

Leaders and managers are driven and focused on continual improvement. Since the last inspection, they have shown a strong commitment to improvement year on year that has enabled the nursery to maintain its outstanding quality. Strong and successful teamwork ensures that improvements are rapid and that all staff are fully 'on board' with the direction in which the school is heading. The school development plans are detailed, focused and effective and support the progress of the setting. Professional development is a key aspect of the success of the school. Leaders and managers recognise the importance of keeping abreast of the developments in Early Years practice and attend training to enable them to implement the most effective aspects of their findings. Leaders focus rightly on the development of teaching and

learning and this is highly effective, as reflected in the quality of adult interaction and achievement. The school's capacity to improve further is excellent.

The promotion of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and the school's focus on emotional development and Early Years philosophy enables them to develop this area well. They have developed strong links with schools in different contexts, which enable them to explore cultural and language differences. The curriculum is outstanding because staff continually reassess and evolve the areas of learning to match children's interests and ensure that they provide an enabling environment to support all areas of learning.

Parents typically comment that there is a 'Fantastic leadership with a clear vision and good management of the school.' They appreciate the highly productive relationship the school has fostered with them. The school provides daily information to parents and carers when they drop off and pick up children. Leaders make themselves available to talk to parents and carers on request. There are written reports and parent and carer discussions with teachers throughout the year. Children's records of achievement are shared with parents and carers who are then encouraged to make comments and contribute to the record. Other methods of engaging parents and carers are highly successful and the school has started a 'blog' on its website as another innovative method of communication.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the children's work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of children at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. children's punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the children' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe children are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Children's freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



26 January 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Freshfield Nursery School, Stockport, SK4 3NB

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I came to visit the nursery school. You have a lovely time and you learn lots and lots every day. I know this because you smile a lot and laugh together all day. This is why your nursery school is outstanding (brilliant!).

Your teachers think that you are very special and work very hard to make sure the activities you enjoy every day are perfect for you. I really enjoyed playing with you in the fire engine and listening to the story in forest school while the rain fell on the tent.

You are very well behaved and you know how to keep yourselves safe. I enjoyed watching you climbing on the frame outside and jumping and skipping together. You are very good at using tools like scissors to help you in your activities.

The staff are always looking at how to make it even better. They have some very exciting plans for activities that you will really enjoy in the future!

To make your school even better, I have asked the staff to think about how to help you to be even more independent. You can help them by trying very hard to put on your coats and gloves and helping to put on your friends' bags to go to forest school.

Carry on working hard and enjoying playing together and I know you will all continue to enjoy nursery.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Quinn
Lead Inspector

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