

Stonehill Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112476
Local Authority	Derby
Inspection number	357111
Inspection dates	9–10 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

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	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Val Payne
Headteacher	Pat Geary
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons taught by six different teachers. Meetings were held with parents and carers, the chair of governors and the headteacher of a local infant school which children transfer to. No formal meetings were held with children but they were spoken to as they went about their daily activities. The inspectors observed the nursery's work, and looked at the safeguarding policy, risk assessments, individual education plans and records. The nursery's development plan and staff's written observations of children's learning were looked at in detail. An analysis was made of information on children's skills on entry and subsequent progress made in learning. The inspectors analysed 35 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the nursery's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The features of teaching that contribute most to children's progress.
- The effectiveness of the use of assessment in ensuring that all groups of children make good progress.
- The impact of extended school provision on children's enjoyment and achievement.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management in ensuring that all children work in a safe learning environment.

Information about the school

This average-sized nursery is situated in purpose-built accommodation on the edge of a built-up inner city area. It is part of a children's centre but is led and managed separately, with its own headteacher and governing body. A large majority of the children are of Pakistani heritage and many are learning English as an additional language. The remaining pupils are predominantly White British. A very small minority of children have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The nursery has Healthy Schools status and Steps to Quality accreditation.

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

The nursery provides a good quality of education. It has several significant strengths, including outstanding partnerships with parents and carers, children's excellent achievement in speaking and listening and in personal, social and emotional development, and their exemplary behaviour. In the short time for which they attend, children become good learners. This is echoed by the headteacher of the primary school where children enter the reception classes: 'These children are ready to learn and they demonstrate exceptional learning behaviours such as very attentive listening.' Children become independent learners who know how to express their needs. They achieve well and travel far in their learning, given that the vast majority join the nursery with skills that are well below what might be expected for their age.

The nursery provides a memorable start to children's education. Parents and carers receive very good support. 'The nursery has helped me become a better parent because I know how young children develop,' said one, speaking for many. Children make good gains in all areas of learning due to good teaching. Relationships throughout the nursery are excellent and children are eager to please their teachers. The staff have recently started to observe individual children's learning in greater depth. Their observations are detailed, but do not consistently identify the next steps of learning. This prevents the most-able children from making even faster progress, especially in writing where their achievements are satisfactory rather than good.

Children's personal development is good. They know about personal safety, wearing hard hats in the outdoor builders' yard. They eat healthy snacks such as cheese, yoghurt and grapes and know that exercise keeps them fit. The nursery is a very harmonious community where all children get on well with one another, taking turns pushing porter trolleys and balancing on the trim trails. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good due to the many opportunities provided to teach them about nature, making correct choices in understanding right from wrong, working in groups and learning about one another's customs. Well-being and welfare are at the heart of the nursery's work. Children are happy, confident and develop a love of learning. They happily sing along to 'There was a princess long ago' and listen attentively to puppet shows, sharing pretend ice creams with their friends. The nursery makes a good contribution to community cohesion.

Children enjoy an engaging and well-planned curriculum. Out-of-nursery learning, arising from extended school provision, is having a positive impact on families. Parents and carers and their children enjoying trips to the seaside, and appreciate the good quality care, guidance and support in all aspects of nursery life.

The nursery has a good capacity for further improvement. The headteacher never stops improving provision. For example, all children are now very involved in planning their own

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learning and talking about what they have learnt. Regular staff training contributes to high staff morale and excellent teamwork. One member of staff said, 'We really enjoy our work because we are valued by the headteacher, governing body and parents.' The nursery accurately analyses all aspects of provision and has a detailed development plan, although the vague success criteria prevent the governing body from fully evaluating the cost-effectiveness of spending decisions.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide more opportunities for the most-able children to develop their writing skills.
- Ensure that all staff consistently and clearly identify the next steps in learning when they observe children working and playing.
- Ensure that the nursery's development plan has clear success criteria so that the governing body can evaluate the cost-effectiveness of its spending decisions.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

Children are quick to take on independent tasks due to their high levels of confidence. They listen intently to adults as they explain the different activities. They delight in using the outdoors, where they make porridge for the three bears, splash in puddles, balance, jump and run with increasing skills. Children are quick at recognising sounds and know a wide range of percussion instruments. All groups of children, including boys, girls, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language, make good gains in learning. Children persevere in making puppets of the princess, eagerly talking about the colour of hair that they should choose. Snack time is a very pleasurable experience with children listening to African music and sharing their learning experiences with an adult. Children achieve well and enjoy every session.

Children make good progress and leave with skills that are broadly average. In writing children make satisfactory progress overall but there are missed opportunities in learning activities, both indoors and outdoors, for children to develop their writing skills. In speaking and listening and personal, social and emotional development they make outstanding progress. They achieve well in information and communication technology, and in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy they have a good grasp of the language of mathematics. Children have a good understanding of their own culture and are also aware that their friends have different favourite foods such as roti, chips and pumpkin pie. They are well prepared for their next stages of education because of their good achievement in developing key skills and the way they can sit still, listen attentively and are eager to learn.

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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	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Good teamwork, excellent relationships, hard work and an eagerness to implement new ideas are typical features of the good teaching. Staff know each child very well and the implementation of story sessions and 'what's in the box' where, through skilled questioning, children have to guess what treasured objects the box contains, contribute to excellent speaking and listening skills. However, there are occasions where staff do not plan sufficient opportunities for children to develop their writing skills and they do not use information from their observations to move the most-able children on in their learning.

All teachers are fully aware of the best methods of teaching children who are learning English as an additional language, and this expertise is also apparent in the good provision made for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They ensure children pronounce and repeat phrases accurately. Good teaching and secure curriculum planning ensure that sentences are repeated and all new vocabulary explained. Small focused group work enables children to repeat aspects of learning which previously were difficult. The use of well-targeted resources enables children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make the same good progress as their peers.

Good links with other organisations, such as the local primary school that enables children to join in science week and use the woodland, contribute to children's good learning.

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Parents and carers are delighted with the induction procedures. They say that they receive very good information on all aspects of the nursery. As a result, children settle with little fuss.

Assessment is generally used well to support all learners. Staff know the children's strengths and areas for development well but sometimes miss opportunities to use the information that they have collected to identify precisely the next skill that children need to acquire in order to make even better progress.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, governing body and senior staff maintain a relentless commitment to providing the best experiences and outcomes for children, families and the local community. A thorough audit has been undertaken of the needs of the local community, and every measure is taken to ensure that parents and carers receive the support that they need. Religious festivals are celebrated, different types of food are tasted and a whole library of bilingual books reflects the diversity of children's backgrounds. Regular discussions of progress and constant reappraisal of how things can be improved contribute to the nursery's success.

The headteacher has created a very harmonious and ambitious team. Staff are happy as a result. 'She's just like one of us, never asking us to do something that she can't do,' said one member of staff. Good opportunities for staff training and regular performance management ensure that all staff teach well and are very keen to put into practice what they have learnt. Staff meet regularly to discuss children's progress and share this information with parents and carers. The nursery has good links with external partners to promote children's learning and well-being, including excellent links with speech and language therapists. Staff have implemented a range of their recommendations, and this has contributed to the excellent progress children make in speaking and listening.

The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well. All procedures for safeguarding are followed robustly. All staff have been trained on child protection and regular risk assessments are carried out on all activities. This contributes to children feeling safe. The governing body holds the nursery to account, ensuring that monies and resources are spent and deployed well, but cannot fully evaluate the effectiveness of its spending decisions because of the limitations in the nursery's development plan. Children contribute to raising funds for charities and know their own locality well. Good links have been

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established with Nairobi and all children have good opportunities to learn about their countries of origin. This contributes to positive self-esteem and high levels of confidence. The nursery is highly inclusive and tackles all barriers to learning so that all children have equal access to learning.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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

Parents and carers wholeheartedly support the nursery. They say that their children are very happy and that the nursery looks after them well. A very small minority feel that the nursery does not take their views into account and that they do not have sufficient information on their children's progress. Inspectors found that the open-door policy gives parents and carers the opportunity to come and talk to the staff and share their views. Staff are more than willing to share information about children's progress with them.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Stonehill Nursery to complete a questionnaire about their views of the nursery.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the nursery. The inspection team received 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 79 children registered at the nursery.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	66	11	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	71	9	26	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	17	49	16	46	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	46	19	54	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	57	15	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	51	16	46	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	51	17	49	0	0	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)	12	34	21	60	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	40	20	57	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	51	17	49	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	40	17	49	3	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	57	15	43	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	63	13	37	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 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



11 March 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Stonehill Nursery School, Derby, DE23 6TJ

Thank you for making us feel so welcome in your nursery. You attend a good nursery where you are taught well by very caring staff. Here are the things we liked best.

You make exceptional progress in speaking and listening and in personal, social and emotional development, and your behaviour is outstanding.

You know about healthy eating and play very safely in the builder's yard and on the trim trail.

You know when to ask for help if you need it and you have excellent relationships with your teachers.

You contribute well to charities and you know a lot about your local area.

You enjoy all the good learning opportunities offered to you. I really enjoyed your puppet show about the princess and the ice cream you gave me.

Your nursery is led and managed well by a headteacher who wants the very best for you and your families.

Your governors know all about the good things in your nursery and also what needs improving.

The nursery has good systems for keeping you safe and has excellent relationships with your parents and carers.

We have asked the nursery to improve a few things. Those of you who find learning easy can help by asking to have more opportunities for writing. When you are observed by the teachers you might have the opportunity to tell them what you would like to learn about in future lessons, or what aspects of learning you need help with. When governors come in to see you, maybe you could tell them how much you like the new toys that they buy you, so they can be sure they are spending money wisely.

We wish you lots of success and happy learning in your new school.

Yours sincerely

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

Lead inspector

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