

Howard Street Nursery School

Howard Street, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL12 0PP

Inspection dates

4 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Not enough children make good progress in all areas of their learning.
- Children's progress in their knowledge of letters and sounds and mathematics is not fast enough because these aspects are not included in a sufficiently wide range of activities.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Expectations are not high enough for children to explore, investigate and develop their own ideas.
- The curriculum is not planned to secure enough opportunities for children to think critically, solve problems and develop aspects of their physical development.
- Children have too few opportunities to reflect on their achievement and to develop an awareness of how to improve what they do.
- Assessment data is not efficiently informing staff about how well groups are doing and where improvements can be made to raise children's achievement.
- Checks on the quality of teaching have not been rigorous enough to secure improvements. Staff appraisal and performance management are not yet effective in enabling staff to work together to improve the quality of teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- By modelling good quality spoken English, singing songs, playing alongside children and telling stories, staff help children to make good progress in their spoken language development.
- Most children behave well and have good attitudes to learning. They particularly enjoy sharing books and stories with an adult.
- Strong and effective partnerships with the integral children's centre benefit the children and families attending the nursery.
- Parents value the work of the nursery. They say their children 'love it', enjoy coming, and are happy and safe. They appreciate the relationships they have with staff and the support that is provided to the whole family.
- The governors are passionate about the school and its contribution to the community.
- The acting headteacher understands what needs to be done to improve the school. Pertinent improvement targets are in place.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching indoors and outdoors on six occasions.
- Separate discussions were held with the acting headteacher and members of the governing body. A meeting was conducted with a representative of the local authority.
- In planning the inspection, and when forming judgements, reference was made to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Three responses were evident which are below the number required to access the data. The views of parents collated by the school were evaluated.
- The opinions of 10 staff were gained by analysing their responses to questionnaires.
- An evaluation of a range of school documentation added to the inspection judgements. These included the documents relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan, the documents that record the school's view of its performance, and information about children's progress and attainment.

Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Lawrence

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized nursery school.
- Most children are from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language.
- The proportions of disabled children and those with special educational needs, with a statement of special educational needs or supported at early years action plus are just above average, as are those supported at early years action.
- The school is attached to a children's centre; this will be inspected separately.
- There is day-care provision for children from six months to four years old, available from 8.00am to 6.00pm
- The school is currently led by an acting headteacher appointed in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to consistently good or better by ensuring that all staff:
 - promote children's knowledge of letters, sounds and mathematical skills in a wide range of play activities
 - increase opportunities during the course of each session for children to develop their physical development so they develop good precision and accuracy when using small resources such as scissors and pencils
 - refine and improve the way questions are used to develop children's learning and ensure that activities offer enough challenge
 - provide children with regular opportunities to think critically, solve problems and to explore, investigate and develop their own ideas
 - give more opportunities for children to evaluate their own achievement and how to improve.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - leaders carrying out regular observations of teaching
 - developing better systems for coaching and managing the performance of staff
 - recording children's progress regularly and efficiently to give all staff a clear view of how well different groups are performing and using the information to improve children's overall achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In the past, children have achieved very well in relation to their starting points, this is not currently the case. Children's achievements, including those of disabled children and those with special educational needs, are inconsistent. This is because teaching, which requires improvement, is not enabling children to achieve well.
- Most children start in the nursery with knowledge and skills that are well below those typical for their age. Their speaking skills are particularly low. While some children are articulate, most speak English as an additional language and some have speech and language difficulties. This makes it harder for them to communicate in English. When children leave the nursery their attainment is below expectations. However, many activities promote children's spoken language well, and for those children who speak English as an additional language, their progress in learning to speak English is good.
- Children's progress in early literacy skills requires improvement. It is not good because not all staff know the best ways in which to help children learn the sounds that letters make. They do not plan sufficient ways to develop these skills in play activities to help children make the progress they could. When given the opportunity, however, children very much enjoy looking at a book and sharing the story with an adult.
- Limited opportunities are available for children to make good enough progress in building their curiosity, developing their ideas and exploring them in depth. There are not sufficient activities indoors or outside that help children to think critically, solve problems, develop perseverance and gain confidence in their abilities.
- For their age, children's understanding of numbers and shape and space are relatively weak. The nursery recognises this, but activities inside and out do not always give sufficient focus to developing children's understanding of these areas of their learning. Children access simple computer games well, but there are not enough activities and resources to help them to develop skills in using computer technology appropriately for their age.
- Children develop their physical skills at a steady rate. Outdoors, frequent opportunities enable children to make good progress in developing their coordination and the control of their movements when involved with large equipment such as climbing, balancing and riding on a variety of wheeled toys. Too few opportunities are readily available during the course of each session for children to develop their skills of being precise and accurate when involved in using smaller resources, for example, by threading buttons, using pencils and crayons to copy shapes, including letters and numbers, and manipulating malleable materials to create models.
- The most-able children do not always make enough progress because teachers do not consistently have high enough expectations and activities do not fully extend their learning.
- Children make good progress in some aspects of their personal, social, and emotional development, playing happily together and keeping to the nursery rules. Those with specific behavioural and emotional needs participate fully in all that the school offers and make good progress in their social skills.
- Although disabled children and those with special educational needs receive extra support, their overall progress also requires improvement. However, good support often on a one-to-one basis enables those with most need to access all aspects of the curriculum and reflects the school's promotion of equality of opportunity for all children.
- Children attending day-care provision receive good support. They are successfully encouraged to improve their skills in speaking, to develop and use their curiosity to learn, and to physically develop.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching with some good teaching observed. The good

practice that exists is not adequately shared. Children do not always make as much progress as they should.

- Activities indoors and outdoors do not always ensure that all children gain as much as they could. Some staff act spontaneously, playing with the children and developing a range of skills, while others take on a less productive supervisory role.
- The teaching of early reading and writing skills varies in its quality. Not enough opportunities are provided throughout the indoor and outdoor learning areas for children to extend their knowledge of the sounds letters make in order to give them a firm foundation for reading. Similarly, not enough attention is given to developing children's skills in recognising numbers and shape and space.
- Opportunities for staff to evaluate children's achievements and to adapt activities daily to meet their precise needs are held back by the need to refine the assessment and tracking systems. The practice of regularly analysing data about children's progress and achievement in order to improve aspects of teaching is not fully embedded. Children's next steps in learning are identified but not always with enough precision.
- At times, the needs of the most-able children are not fully met. Questioning tends to be too general and, as a result, not all children are fully involved and their learning is not fast enough. Insufficient time is given for children to create their own play and explore their own ideas. Role-play areas lack the vibrancy and excitement required for children to make the best progress in exploring and in developing their thoughts and ideas through music, dance, drama and role play.
- Staff promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through well-planned activities that promote children's emotional development. Not enough emphasis, however, is given to enabling children to reflect on how well they have achieved and how they could improve.
- Teachers give good attention to recording the key markers in each child's progress in the good quality learning journey records. These include the results of activities explored by children and indicate the individual child's progress.
- A strength in all sessions is the positive and caring manner with which staff help and support children. Behaviour is managed firmly but kindly, so that children quickly grow to understand what is expected of them. They follow routines and play a role in ensuring that sessions run smoothly.
- Many sessions reveal staff are good storytellers and these times are enjoyed by all. Children also learn effectively through rhymes and songs that consolidate their new skills in an enjoyable way.
- The focus on enhancing children's social skills is apparent throughout the day because adults model good manners and encourage children to share and collaborate. As a result, children learn the importance of cooperation and improve their attitudes to learning in preparation for starting school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Children benefit from good care and support from all staff. They are encouraged to behave well, to be kind, to take turns and to respect one another. Very little anti-social or aggressive behaviour was seen during the inspection because children are encouraged to get on with each other.
- Children with significant behavioural difficulties are managed well and rarely interrupt the learning of other children. Children know that adults are interested in them and keen to listen to what they have to say. Children from all backgrounds play harmoniously.
- Children from different backgrounds get on very well together. They enjoy coming to nursery and most confidently take part in what is on offer. All children have a key worker and for certain parts of the day work with them. This enables all children to build a close relationship with at least one adult.
- Daily opportunities enable children to learn about the importance of eating healthily and drinking water regularly. Children enjoy the fruit snacks and access to fresh water.
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection. Absence is now followed up and parents

are encouraged to contact the school if their child is not attending.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, aspects of the nursery's performance have not received enough attention to sustain the previous strengths related to the quality of teaching and children's progress. The recently appointed acting headteacher is promptly tackling these issues and leads the school well. There is a strong drive for improvement evident in all that goes on. A very focused and relevant school improvement plan is guiding all aspects of the school's development.
- The acting headteacher is strengthening the monitoring of the quality of teaching. As yet, this is not fully embedded to ensure that the areas for improvement identified are fully resolved. Staff are increasingly sharing best practice and evaluating each other's performance.
- The appraisal of the performance of staff has not effectively secured the previous high quality of teaching but the process is currently being strengthened. Systems are increasingly informing the accuracy of the school development targets and used to identify where professional development would benefit the school and its staff.
- The systems to check the progress of groups of children within the nursery are at an early stage of development and are not yet refined enough to demonstrate the progress for all groups. It tracks individuals, but lacks the clarity to enable leaders to extract information efficiently. This reduces the scope of all staff to be involved in using data to improve achievement and teaching.
- The school values its good relationships with parents. Visits to children's homes establish good relationships with families and good quality communication about their children's progress keeps parents well informed. Staff give much time also to assist families who need support in making sure their children can manage their personal needs, including going to the toilet independently. There are plans to improve further the quality of communication by creating a school website.
- Strong and effective partnerships with the adjacent children's centre benefit the work of the nursery. Good communication between the staff of both organisations enable effective liaison between a variety of services, including education, health and welfare. This means that any children of families who are vulnerable due to their circumstances can access support and help if required.
- The curriculum is aligned to the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, some elements are not given enough attention. These relate to enabling children to learn through play and exploration, developing children's perseverance, promoting an early experience of sounds and letters and enabling children to be creative and think critically.
- The local authority provides appropriate support to the acting headteacher when requested, particularly with regard to aspects of the management of staff.
- The acting headteacher, in partnership with the governing body, demonstrates the capacity to improve the nursery because there are clear plans to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to check on children's progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are active in their support for the school and are passionate about its role within the community. They are well trained and some are regular visitors to the school and recognise the overall quality of teaching and improvements necessary. All governors listen carefully to the views of parents.
 - Governors are proud of the impact the school makes on aspects of the personal development of children but do not look closely enough at the rate of children's progress in all areas of development.
 - The governing body is involved in decisions about any increases in salary and annual targets for teaching staff. It ensures that the performance of the acting headteacher is linked to the outcomes for children.
 - Appropriate decisions are made about how money is spent. Governors use their expertise to monitor the budget carefully and anticipate predicted changes in income arising from decisions

made within the local authority.

- The governing body ensures that the school complies with health and safety requirements and those related to safeguarding.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105757
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	426059

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	51
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Gartside
Headteacher	Nicola Burton
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2010
Telephone number	01706 646103
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	office@howardstreet.rochdale.sch.uk

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