

# Stonehill Nursery School

Stonehill Road, Derby, DE23 6TJ

**Inspection dates** 26–27 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Children are prepared extremely well for starting primary school by a highly skilled staff delivering high quality teaching.
- All children achieve outstandingly well from the time they begin the nursery. From below expected starting points they rapidly progress and all children leave the nursery at or above expected national levels for their age.
- There is outstanding support for those children who are at the early stages of learning English as a second language.
- Children with special educational needs progress as rapidly as others and now leave the nursery with skills that are typical for their age.
- Children's behaviour and safety are outstanding. They are eager to learn and concentrate fully on any tasks they are engaged in. They are consistently polite and friendly towards each other, and work and play well together. They understand how to be safe when taking risks.
- Staff planning, assessment and tracking for individuals and groups of children is meticulous and detailed. They know exactly what the needs of each child is, and use this knowledge in delivering a rich, stimulating curriculum following the interests of the children.
- Staff are always thinking of new and better ways to do things when reviewing how children learnt a particular skill. They thrive on taking on board new ideas to continuously improve their practice.
- The commitment and drive of the headteacher has in no small measure underpinned the improvement in all aspects of the school since the last inspection.
- Leaders, managers and governors work outstandingly well together with a clear focus on improving learning for children. They regularly watch to see how well all staff work with the children.
- There are close, supportive relationships with the vast majority of parents who hold the nursery in high esteem. A few parents would like to know more about how to help their child learn new skills, especially with information and communication technology.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven sessions, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector held discussions with three members of the Governing Body including the Chairperson; a representative of the local authority; subject co-ordinators and other members of staff.
- The inspector took account of the results of the school's annual survey of parents and carers for the past three years, and spoke with thirteen parents as there were insufficient returns to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector also took into account the seven staff questionnaires.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including data on children's current and previous progress, the school development plan, performance management documentation and records relating to children's behaviour and safety.
- The inspector looked at a sample of the children's records of achievement.

## Inspection team

Geoffrey Dorrity, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The nursery is of an average size for this type of school. All children attend on a part-time basis.
- The vast majority of children are learning English as an additional language. The majority are from a Pakistani Muslim heritage with an increasing number of children from an Eastern European background.
- Many families have no working adult in the household and several are living within in an extended family environment.
- There are 5 children with special educational needs who are supported at early action.
- The proportions of children with special educational needs who are supported at early action plus are lower than other settings. Children's needs include specific and moderate learning difficulties. There are no children with statements of special education needs on roll.
- Babington Children's Centre is attached to the nursery but is operated independently and so was not part of this inspection.
- The nursery is a member of a number of learning partnerships, working closely with other nursery schools. They also formed the Babington Cluster of Schools to provide extended services in holiday periods.
- The headteacher is used by the local authority to support other schools in the area.
- The nursery has achieved the Healthy Schools award, Steps to Quality accreditation and is working towards ICAN enhanced accreditation.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all parents understand how to help their child learn new skills, including through greater use of information and communication technology (ICT).

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- All children start with skills, knowledge and understanding below or well-below expectations for a three-year-old. All children make outstanding progress during their time at the nursery. They leave to enter Reception classes with levels that are often better than those typically expected for their age and at least in line with expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The tracking of individual children through to the end of the reception year, shared by the local primary school confirms this.
- The achievement of all groups of children is similar. Rapid gains are made by all groups. More able children are given additional challenge to support their progress. For example, when challenged to resolve how to make the old woman happy in the story of the Gingerbread Man, or when being asked to describe what a zoo is during story time.
- There has been a very good trend of particularly rapid progress by those children who have additional needs, who now catch up with their friends before leaving for primary school because of the skilled input by staff.
- The majority of children start nursery at the early stages of learning English. The very strong focus on speaking and listening leads to rapid gains in their early communication skills. For example, children understood that symbols carried meaning, and used this knowledge when they identified and wrote their names at registration time. They are all confident and competent speakers, and understand how to listen to each other.
- Children make outstanding progress in personal, social and emotional development. They settle very quickly into the nursery, and understand routines well. They work and play successfully together. They independently tidy resources away when they have finished using them. Parents comment positively about their children's development in their ability to play together, and socialise.
- The outdoor area is well resourced for children to develop their physical skills. They challenge themselves when playing on the climbing frames and ropes whilst developing their balancing skills.
- Children develop a love of literature through many activities. They enjoy the library sessions where they choose books with their parents and use scanning equipment independently to check their books out. They freely choose to read books and understand that the words carry meaning. They can tell stories using pictures and words to support them. Staff encourage the use of books for reference purposes to expand and challenge the children's ideas. For instance, when they made a hot air balloon and children referred to books to improve their design.
- Opportunities for writing are embedded in all areas of the nursery. Staff recognise the importance of developing physical skills and use the innovative 'Dough Disco' to develop these, through the fun activity of manipulating the dough to music. Children record their work, such as when observing the growth of daffodils as part of the fundraising for Macmillan Nurses. Parents note that their children can write their own names, and are beginning write in simple sentences.
- Children make outstanding progress in learning early mathematical skills. They count and order numbers well in a wide range of activities. For instance, when they counted in different directions and learnt about numbers, and when they took a number and broke it into different amounts showing an understanding of how the same numbers can be made up in different

ways.

## **The quality of teaching** is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because teachers and staff make excellent use of accurate assessments of children's progress to set work which enables them to do their best. They make frequent and detailed observations of children's learning in different circumstances and gather information from parents to reinforce these assessments.
- All staff are involved in the thorough lesson planning so that their expectations are consistently high, and activities challenge all children to do their best. Parents are confident that the staff know their children well and do the best for them. They talk of the close relationship with the staff and how their children want to be at the nursery every day.
- Staff are reflective and have an excellent understanding of how young children learn; through their involvement with a project they are developing further their understanding of language development and how their practice effects on this skill. This has led to even more detailed and accurate assessments of this area of the children's development.
- Staff promote children's independence extremely well. They make highly effective use of a wide range of different ways of teaching to do this. For example, they made very good use of drama activities and natural objects in the school grounds to engage and inspire children. Staff take children out on a weekly basis to the woods, where children design and build dens, or hunt for mini beasts. The children bring what they have learnt back and set themselves challenges of making dens that are dark, using the resources in the nursery.
- The support for children in the early stages of learning English is exemplary. Bi-lingual staff support the development of the children's home language, and ensure that children are fluent in this. For example, when they held a detailed discussion with a child about a helicopter, they sensitively introduced the English vocabulary.
- Because staff work as a close team, everyone is aware of the additional needs of any children who have special educational needs. Their learning is presented in small steps, so they develop their self-esteem and confidence, and experience success.
- Staff engage most parents in their children's learning, through a variety of means including regular reviews of their records of achievement; workshops; opportunities for writing with their children; and the lending library. Parents are invited in to share their expertise, such as when the nursery had a music project parents brought in and played a variety of instruments from guitars to harmoniums and drums. However, not all parents take advantage of these and a very small number say they would like to know more about what their child is learning and how they can help them develop these skills especially when using ICT.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- The behaviour of children is outstanding. They respond extremely well to the high standards of care and support they receive. They support each other and independently resolve minor issues, such as taking turns at the computer using a timer, or guiding and correcting each other's behaviour during the baking session.
- Children come to school regularly and very keenly start activities as soon as they arrive. They

are clear about everyday routines, such as hanging their coats on their hanger, finding their name-card, registering and writing their name at the start of the session.

- Attendance has risen since the previous inspection. The majority of children now attend regularly and parents are made aware of the importance of attendance. Absence is rigorously followed up and appropriate support put in place, for example through the children's centre, if necessary.
- Children have excellent attitudes to learning, staying at activities until they are successfully completed, whether adult-led or self-initiated. Staff enable children to sustain learning by enabling them to return to chosen activities. For example, when they made a hot air balloon model, children returned over a period of two days and continued to amend and improve their design.
- The school's work to keep their children safe and secure is exemplary. Parents appreciate this, such as having to let staff know if someone different is picking their child up, and the automatically locking doors, and know that their children are safe in the nursery.
- Children have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They use real knives properly when cutting vegetables, and know how to place a ladder safely when rescuing a toy cat from the tree, when playing imaginatively at being fire-fighters. This is reinforced by visits, for example, from the community police when they learnt about road safety and how to wear seat belts.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The headteacher, ably supported by the senior staff, leads and manages the school with passion and drive. High expectations of what each child can achieve are firmly embedded in all aspects of the school's work.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection because school leaders regularly check teachers' and other staffs' on-going effectiveness and, through rigorous training and guidance, raise their expectations even higher. Staff training is sharply focused on school improvement priorities.
- Leaders and managers keep a very close check on the quality of activities experienced by each child and the progress that they make. Accurate assessment and detailed observations ensure that each child's experiences are constantly enriched and built upon.
- The nursery provides a well-balanced range of activities which effectively promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children. Consequently, they learn how to get along with each other and begin to understand what kindness and respect are all about. As when they donated food to the homeless at harvest festival. Learning about different cultures and other celebrations enables them to start to be aware of differences in people and places. For example, when they celebrated Diwali or when parents sent in photos when they went on a pilgrimage.
- The local authority rightly views the nursery as being very successful in what it does. As such the support that has been given has been identified and driven by the nursery itself, and has effectively been used to further develop joint observations and the use of data by governors.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- Governors are passionate about the school and its value to the community. They bring a wide range of expertise and experience, which coupled with their hands-on approach, ensures that they have a firm grasp of the direction that the school is heading towards. They are extremely well informed about the quality of teaching and ensure that performance of staff is managed robustly with pay scale progression closely linked to the achievement of children. Governors understand effectively how weaker staff are helped to improve their teaching skills. They use training effectively to extend their skills, such as when reviewing data and checking children's progress and in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the nursery. Governors manage finances effectively and ensure they know what effect their budget decisions have on contributing to improvements in children's learning. For example, the impact of a project on children's language and communication. They fulfil their legal responsibilities for health and safety checks keeping all children and adults safe.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112476
<b>Local authority</b>	Derby
<b>Inspection number</b>	430682

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	61
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Val Payne
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Pat Geary
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 March 2011
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