

# Staghills Nursery School

Top Barn Lane , Newchurch, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 7UE

**Inspection dates** 17–18 September 2014

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher is an inspirational leader. She is supported by a highly talented staff team and skilled governing body who share her expectations for excellence in all aspects of the nursery's work. They have been highly successful in promoting and sustaining outstanding achievement for children.
- Teaching is outstanding because staff are highly skilled in using their expert knowledge of individual children's interests, needs and ways of learning to promote children's rapid progress.
- Children take part in a broad range of exciting play opportunities in the extremely well resourced indoor and outdoor areas. As a result, they are enthusiastic learners who are very involved in their play and learning.
- The outdoor woodland 'forest school' area is exceptionally well planned to create an exciting, magical environment for children which contributes a great deal to their rapid learning.
- The nursery continues to improve. Changes to the outdoor forest school area and to ways of checking how much progress children are making have further enhanced its quality. Ways of showing how much progress a class or group of children is making are not always presented in a way which is easy to understand and use.
- Children behave extremely well in response to staff's high expectations and warm, positive approach. Staff successfully promote an ethos of respect and consideration for others.
- Children show a strong sense of security in the nursery and a very highly developed awareness of safety.
- Parents speak very highly of the nursery and the excellent level of communication with staff.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven sessions or part-sessions, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, one other governor, the leadership team, other staff and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the nursery's information on children's current progress, planning and checks on the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- There were insufficient responses to the online (Parent View) survey for them to be taken into account. However, the inspector spoke to several parents when they brought their children to nursery and took account of both the school's most recent questionnaire to parents and the 12 staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Elaine White, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger than average sized nursery school. Children attend part- time, mainly for morning or afternoon sessions, although children can attend for a full day.
- The school is situated in a building shared with Staghills Children’s Centre and ‘The Hedgehog Club’ day nursery, which is run by a voluntary management committee. The headteacher of the school is also head of the children’s centre. The day nursery and children’s centre are subject to separate inspection and reports of their quality can be found on the website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).
- The majority of children are of White British heritage with a small proportion of children of Asian heritage, some of whom are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs supported through early years action is below average. The proportion of children supported through early year action plus is below average. There are no children on roll with a statement of educational needs.
- The nursery is part of a group of schools recognised by the Department for Education as Early Years Teaching Centres. The nursery shares good practice locally and nationally.

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

- Further refine ways of showing the achievement of a group or class of children, so that it is more easily understood and more useful in future planning.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has an exceptional understanding of early years practice and is inspirational in communicating a shared vision for excellence to the leadership team and staff.
- The headteacher, deputy head, and governors are relentless in their drive for excellence and continuous improvement. Since the last inspection, the development of the forest school and other outdoor areas, the employment of more qualified teachers to work with children, and the development of a closer partnership with parents have had a positive impact on children's achievement.
- Leaders have a high level of commitment to sustaining and improving the quality of teaching and learning. The quality of teaching is regularly checked, and staff praise the recently introduced system of sharing a video recording of their teaching to help further improve practice. Staff benefit from a good level of relevant training to enhance their teaching skills, including a visit to observe good practice abroad.
- Systems to check how well children are progressing have been improved and as a result, leaders and staff have a detailed knowledge of the progress children are making. This means that leaders are skilled in identifying areas where individuals or groups of children may need extra support. The progress of groups and whole classes of children is carefully checked, but this information is not always presented in a way which is easy to understand and use.
- The curriculum is exciting and based on children's interests. Children are engrossed in real experiences which sustain their interest, often over several weeks.
- The nursery is highly successful at engaging with parents. Parents praise the excellent levels of communication and are very happy with their children's progress. They value the home visits they receive before their child joins nursery.
- The nursery ensures that children are highly valued as individuals and successfully promotes an ethos of respect and consideration for others. Children from all backgrounds are valued and included, and children learn about different cultural festivals.
- The local authority recognises the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and has provided light touch support to the nursery.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the school's work. They provide a high level of challenge and support to the headteacher in ensuring that the outstanding provision is sustained.
  - Governors fully understand the quality of teaching and the link between pay and performance.
  - They manage finances efficiently, making sure that money is spent wisely to support children. For example, they have recently appointed two more qualified teachers in order to enable a closer working with teaching assistants and further raise the quality of teaching and children's achievement.
  - They ensure that children and staff are kept safe through effective safeguarding procedures and regular safety checks.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Children's behaviour is outstanding. Staff provide a warm, nurturing environment and have high expectations for good behaviour. Children quickly become familiar with the nursery routines and settle in well. As a result there is a calm atmosphere in nursery and children listen and respond well to instructions.
- Staff are excellent role models of courtesy, respect and kindness. As a result, children begin to display these qualities as they learn to take turns and to think about others. Children are encouraged to help one another by, for example, getting a resource for another child.
- Children make rapid progress in managing their feelings and behaviour as they learn the expectations of being part of a small group. For example, they patiently wait for their snack to cook on an open fire in the forest school area and accept that theirs may be the last one ready.
- Children are extremely well motivated and engaged in their learning. They show very positive attitudes to learning as they eagerly explore the exciting indoor and outdoor environments and concentrate well on their activities.
- Parents say that children behave well and the school reports that there are no bullying or racist incidents.

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding.
- Children display a highly developed awareness of safety as they climb low-level branches and use rope swings in the forest school area. They show an excellent awareness of safety rules as they help to light a fire on which to cook a snack, and explain the rules for walking around the outside of the log seats surrounding the fire in order to keep safe.
- Parents are confident that their children are safe in nursery. Attendance is good and parents report that their children are always eager to come to nursery.

### The quality of teaching

**is outstanding**

- Teaching is outstanding over time and never less than good. Staff establish very positive relationships with children. As a result, children feel valued and secure, and thrive in the happy, warm environment provided.
- Staff are highly skilled in responding to children's individual interests and needs, with the result that children's experiences are highly positive and challenging and they make rapid progress. After children find snails in the outdoor area, staff support them to build a home for a snail. As a result children make excellent progress in developing problem-solving skills as they decide how to make the home and what equipment to use. They also develop early writing skills as they make signs warning other children not to ride bicycles in certain areas.
- Staff provide an exciting and stimulating environment which promotes high quality learning. All areas are thoughtfully and imaginatively designed, with a very broad variety of resources at child height. This enables children to be highly independent as they confidently select their own resources to, for example, make dens and collect minibeasts. Children happily make their own 'pumpkin soup' by pouring water from a water butt, selecting their own pans and other resources in the outdoor kitchen.
- The high level of attention staff pay to observing what children are learning ensures that they have a detailed knowledge and understanding of each child's interests, progress and skills. Daily discussion between staff about children's progress and careful consideration of parents' views help to ensure that children's learning is matched closely to their needs, so that they make the best possible progress.
- Staff are skilled at questioning children to challenge them to think. Open questions which encourage children to think about what they may need to do next or how they can solve a difficulty lead to much effective learning. Children who were balancing on lines of wooden blocks were encouraged to think whether it would be more difficult to balance on the line of thin bricks and why.

### The achievement of pupils

**is outstanding**

- Children start nursery with skills that vary, but which for the large part are below those typical for their age group. Children make rapid progress and many leave with skills above the expectation for their age.
- Children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and learn to become confident, independent learners. This means they are extremely well prepared for school.
- All groups of children make outstanding progress, including those who speak English as an additional language. Staff pay close attention to checking the progress of different groups to make sure that they all make excellent progress. They take action to ensure that any gaps in achievement are swiftly closed. For example, a gap in the achievement of boys and girls was identified and has now closed as the nursery took action to remedy this.
- Children make rapid progress in speaking skills, which staff encourage through daily discussion times. Children's vocabulary is extended as they are encouraged to think what sound burning wood makes as they watch the bonfire.
- The school provides a high degree of challenge for more able children as learning is so closely matched to children's interests and stage of development. Children are questioned well to extend their thinking. Activities to promote children's learning about the sounds that letters make are tailored to make sure that all children, including the most able, are challenged.
- Children with special educational needs make rapid progress, as they receive a high level of support from staff. Staff liaise closely with other agencies and parents to ensure that children's needs are very well met.
- Children have a keen interest in books and stories. Listening to stories is a daily part of their experience in nursery and children frequently choose books to look at alone. They learn that print has meaning as they identify what some of the labels within the nursery mean.
- Opportunities for mark-making and writing are an important part of the indoor and outdoor environments.

Children make excellent progress in early writing skills as they make signs in the outdoor area, write lists and happily attempt to write their names.

- Children show a very good awareness of mathematical language as they talk about big, medium and small minibeasts they have found and know that when they use a magnifying glass the minibeasts look 'massive'. They confidently count each other when in small groups and learn what number comes next and what will be 'one more'.

## 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>	119100
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	448106

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>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	120
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Ormerod
<b>Headteacher</b>	Linda Connelly
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 May 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01706 213303
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