

Freshfield Nursery School

Mauldeth Road, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 3NB

Inspection dates 8–9 October 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher effectively promotes a shared commitment to provide the best possible start for children. The school is well led and managed and children achieve well.
- The school provides a welcoming, caring environment in which every child is valued and included.
- The leadership of teaching ensures that teaching is consistently good and staff have high expectations for children's learning.
- Children achieve well in reading, writing and number. In personal, social and emotional development and in their communication and language skills achievement is outstanding. Since the last inspection boys' writing skills have improved and are now similar to those of girls.
- Children behave well and are familiar with nursery routines. They display an excellent awareness of safety.
- Parents think highly of the nursery and comment positively on the progress their children make.
- Governors are supportive of the school and offer a good level of challenge to the headteacher.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Systems to record the progress children make do not always give an accurate picture of the progress individual children are making.
- Staff do not always involve themselves enough in children's self-chosen play, or question children well enough to encourage them to think and to extend their learning.
- Middle leaders are not yet fully involved in checking that all groups of children achieve the best they can in the subjects they lead.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed a range of sessions or part sessions, one of which was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with four members of governing body, 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.
- The inspector took account of 24 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector spoke to several parents when they brought their children to nursery and took account of the school's most recent questionnaire to parents, as well as 12 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Elaine White, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized nursery school. Children attend part-time, mainly for morning or afternoon sessions or for two-and-a-half days per week.
- The majority of children are of White British heritage. A small proportion of children 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 years action plus is below average. There are no children on roll with a statement of special educational needs.
- The nursery shares good practice with other nursery schools locally.
- An acting headteacher was in post from May 2013 until January 2014 due to the absence of the headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and children's achievement to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - every opportunity is taken by staff to question children skilfully during activities in order to extend their learning even further
 - staff engage more fully with children's self-chosen activities to develop learning to the full.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - refining the system for recording assessments of children's learning to ensure they more consistently and accurately reflect children's progress
 - further developing the role of middle leaders so that they are fully involved in checking that all groups of children achieve the best they can in the subject they lead, and are able to contribute better to raising the quality of teaching and children's achievement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and governors are committed to the school and are determined to provide the best quality learning and care for the children. The staff are proud to work at the school and they have confidence in its leaders. This provides a positive environment in which children achieve well.
- The leadership of teaching is good. Nursery staff are well trained and knowledgeable. The performance management system is used to identify areas for further development. Staff appreciate the training opportunities provided to enhance and develop their skills. Staff have attended training in developing children's emotional well-being and involvement and have begun to apply this to their teaching.
- Middle leaders provide good support to other staff in planning activities and providing resources, for example, in supporting staff to teach children the sounds that letters make. They are not yet fully involved in checking that all groups of children achieve the best they can in the subject they lead, to enable them to contribute more to raising the quality of teaching and children's achievement.
- Systems for checking children's achievement ensure that the headteacher and governors have an overview of the achievement of different groups. This enables them to take swift action if any group is not achieving as well as others. A gap in the achievement of boys' and girls' writing has been closed since the last inspection.
- The computerised system for recording and summarising the progress of individual children is still developing, and currently is not always used to provide an accurate picture. This means that leaders and governors do not always have a clear enough picture of individual children's progress. A new system introduced for the current school year is intended to remedy this issue.
- The activities provided relate to children's interests and are lively and varied. They ensure that children develop learning well in all areas of learning. For example, during a focus on bird watching, children enjoyed the challenge of building a 'nest' from different materials which was big enough to hold four children.
- Staff ensure that all children are valued and included, and have equal opportunity to achieve well. Children learn to treat others with respect and learn to appreciate difference as they learn about various cultural traditions and festivals. This helps to prepare them effectively for life in modern Britain.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are effective in ensuring that children are kept safe. Staff undertake regular training to update their knowledge, and high priority is given to ensuring that the school building is safe at all times.
- The local authority provides light touch support for the school because of its success.
- Parents report that they are very happy with the school and their children's progress. They comment that their children settle quickly and enjoy Nursery.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are kept well informed through governor meetings and regular headteacher reports. They are highly supportive and provide a good level of challenge to the headteacher, for example, in requesting clearer information about individual children's progress. They know about the quality of teaching and the link between pay and performance. The budget is well managed and spending decisions are based on improving outcomes for children.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children is good. Children have very positive attitudes to learning. They are curious and eager to learn and involve themselves well in their play.
- Children respond well to the routines of nursery, which help them to feel secure. Staff effectively encourage children to quickly become familiar with the nursery routines, such as group time and snack time. After outdoor play children happily line up at the water dispenser and wait their turn to pour themselves a drink.
- Children generally behave well at small group times, for example, they sit quietly as they are engrossed in a well told story. On occasion, children become restless where the activity is not related closely enough to their interests and abilities.

- Parents say that children behave well and the school reports that there are no bullying or racist incidents
- Children enjoy coming to nursery and attendance is good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep children safe and secure is outstanding. Staff place a high priority on helping children to understand how to keep themselves safe. As a result, children show an excellent understanding of safety procedures, such as why they need to hold on to a rope when walking from the nursery over to the forest school area.
- Children develop an excellent understanding of risk-taking as they confidently climb on low-level branches in the outdoor area.
- Parents who responded to the Parent View online questionnaire or to the school's own survey of parent views unanimously agree that the school keeps their child safe.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Staff establish positive, warm relationships with children. This promotes their self-esteem and contributes to their excellent progress in personal, social and emotional development.
- Children quickly learn to cooperate with others as staff have high expectations for this aspect of their learning. Children learn to work in pairs to collect natural objects in the forest-school area and look at them using a magnifying glass.
- Children learn in an inviting environment both indoors and out. A broad range of resources is available to them, encouraging their independence and creativity.
- Well-timed support for children in developing their speaking skills ensures that children make outstanding progress in this area. Staff are expert at modelling vocabulary and providing specific sessions aimed at developing language skills for children who have been identified as needing extra support.
- Staff generally question children well to develop their learning by encouraging them to think. At times staff miss chances to use their questioning skills, with the result that children's learning is not extended.
- In the main, staff involve themselves well in children's self-chosen learning. For example, children follow staff's encouragement and help to find 'habitats' for plastic animals in the outdoor area. At other times staff do not make the most of chances to involve themselves in children's activities, with the result that learning is not developed to the full.
- Children's love of books and stories is effectively promoted by staff. As a result, children show a keen interest in books and stories. They readily recognise a familiar fairy story and listen attentively, showing curiosity and a good understanding of the story. They readily choose books to share with staff and show a growing understanding that print carries meaning.
- Staff promote children's mathematical learning well. Children learn to count as part of everyday activities. During play, children show a lively interest in number, for example by voluntarily counting up to 10, and beyond, the conkers they are using. They happily use mathematical language to describe 'big' and 'small' toy animals.
- Good use is made of visitors to the nursery to broaden children's experiences and their understanding of life in modern Britain. A florist's visit was followed by children making their own flower arrangements from flowers they had made. These were then sold to parents to raise money for a young entrepreneurs' project.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the nursery with skill levels that are in line with or just above what is typical for their age. They make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development, and in their communication and language skills. They leave nursery with skills in these areas which are well above what is usually seen in children of their age. Indeed, a small number of children leave nursery with skills a year ahead of what is typical having reached the early learning goals expected of children at the end of the Reception Year.
- Children make good progress in reading, writing and number skills and others areas, achieving skill levels above what is typical by the end of their time in nursery.

- Children's achievement is demonstrated by their high level of independence, confidence and speaking skills. Children learn to express themselves very well, speaking in complete sentences and showing a rapidly developing vocabulary, for example, describing a ladybird they had found as a 'tiny creature'.
- The most able children achieve well, but there are some missed chances to develop their learning fully through effective questioning by staff.
- The achievement of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is in line with other children. Children are very well supported by staff, who identify their needs quickly and put in place support to ensure their good achievement.
- Children who speak English as an additional language also achieve well from their starting points, due to the good level of support from staff to ensure that their needs are met.

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	106021
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	448091

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	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Les Jones
Headteacher	Linda Shaw
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2012
Telephone number	0161 442 6944
Fax number	0161 432 7607
Email address	headteacher@freshfield.stockport.sch.uk

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