

Howard Street Nursery School

Howard Street, Rochdale, Lancashire OL12 0PP

Inspection dates 20–21 January 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Howard Street Nursery School has a number of real strengths, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, provision of equal opportunities and ensuring children understand and acquire British values.
- Parents hold the nursery in very high regard and expressed extremely positive views. All who completed Ofsted’s online questionnaire said they would recommend the nursery to others, and know their children are happy, safe, well looked after and progressing well.
- Children achieve well, including those who are disadvantaged, those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs. By the end of their time in nursery, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Good teaching and the very rich curriculum capture children’s interest so they are keen to learn and make good progress.
- Children are very well cared for, so they trust the staff, feel secure and behave well.
- Leaders, staff and governors are totally committed to provide the best possible education and care for the children of the local community.
- Since the previous inspection, attainment has risen and progress has accelerated. Teaching is now always good or better and there is strong capacity for further improvement.
- Very close links with the Children’s Centre and Two-Year-Old Provision located in the same building benefit children and their families.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is improving rapidly but does not yet result in outstanding achievement.
- Not all children are confident to learn without direction. A few small gaps between boys’ and girls’ attainment remain. There are not enough opportunities for children to extend their writing skills outside.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue the upward trend in the quality of teaching so more is outstanding in order to further raise children's achievement by:
 - developing children's confidence so they can become more independent as learners
 - closing the remaining small gaps between the attainment of boys and girls by providing more creative activities that really attract boys so they listen hard, concentrate and progress even more rapidly
 - offering the children more opportunities to develop their writing skills when working in the outdoor area.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Excellent leadership from the acting headteacher has set a clear sense of direction for the strong team of staff and governors, united by a shared aim to make the nursery even better. They successfully provide equal opportunities for every child to achieve well both academically and socially.
- Parents feel very welcome, informed and listened to. Many commented how staff go out of their way to support and help them. This helps their children to develop good attitudes to learning, especially when they work alongside their parents in the 'Come and Learn with us' days.
- Close links with the Children's Centre and Two-Year-Old provision help parents and children to transfer happily when they move to the nursery.
- Leaders' evaluations of what the nursery does well and what could be better are honest and accurate, shown in clear actions in specific plans, such as in certain aspects of literacy and mathematics. This has led to a rise in the proportion of children reaching the expectations for their age to 60% or more.
- A rigorous system for checking the quality of teaching is in place since the previous inspection, along with focused professional development, for example on questioning. Teaching is observed regularly. Staff have to act on points for improvement and know they are accountable for children's progress.
- The early years pupil premium funding was used to create the forest school. This is extremely popular with the children. They love working in the wild area, preparing bird food and scanning the trees with binoculars for birds coming to feed. The impact of the use of this funding has yet to be evaluated.
- Children experience a wide range of activities indoors and outside. The rich, well-planned curriculum gives them a firm base of early reading, writing and mathematical skills so they are ready for the next steps in learning. Staff know the needs of each child well and carefully adapt the curriculum to target and meet those individual needs.
- Excellent promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has created a happy environment where the children flourish. Trusting, respectful relationships between staff, parents and children were observed in all situations throughout the inspection.
- Children learn traditional British values, mix happily and are well prepared for their future lives in our multicultural society. They are gently helped to be kind and friendly to everyone. Simple prompt cards, such as 'Good sitting' and 'Good listening', help them to understand and recognise the need for rules in society.
- The local authority provides good support, particularly during the acting headships since the previous inspection and in supporting staff development.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Since the previous inspection, governors have extended their skills, knowledge and understanding so they question and challenge leaders, for example about the expense of new waterproof clothing. They are working to further their role as a 'critical friend' to make an even stronger contribution to nursery improvement.
 - Governors know the children and represent the local community well. Regular reports and information about how well children are doing keep them informed about progress. Parent governors feel their contribution is valued and that they have a big say in their child's education.
 - Governors know how the early years pupil premium funds were used to set up the forest school and will ensure the impact of this is evaluated.
 - Finances are managed very carefully and directed to where improvements are needed. Any pay rewards are linked to children's progress.
 - Governors ensure children are well prepared for further learning and understand and learn traditional values ready for their future lives in modern British society.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff and the safeguarding governor have received recent training and records are kept meticulously.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Inspection evidence, assessments of children's progress and leaders' monitoring records confirm that the quality of teaching is securely good, and some is better. As a result, progress has accelerated and attainment is rising.
- Staff have high aspirations for children to learn as well as they can. Carefully phrased open questions stimulate children's response by making them think hard. Picture cards and sign language ensure all children are included and can participate, which is particularly helpful to those at an early stage of learning English.
- Imaginative activities across all strands of the early years curriculum are provided both indoors and outside. Children are encouraged to be independent and choose from the carefully planned range of activities. The majority are very eager and know just what they want to do, but a few can be passive and need even more encouragement to help them become confident learners.
- Children practise writing by 'signing in' when they arrive. There are fewer opportunities for mark-making and writing in the outdoor area.
- Staff take every opportunity to develop mathematical and speaking skills and promote children's personal development, for example, at snack time, counting how many have a drink of water, or matching a straw to each milk carton. Children are always encouraged to show good manners by saying 'please' and 'thank you' and what snack they would like. Very occasionally, staff do not respond quickly when children lose concentration or are tired in lessons at the end of sessions.
- Early reading skills are taught well, and children enjoy their daily letters and sounds lessons. Staff reinforce children's knowledge through games such as 'I spy', when children listen very carefully to spot the first letter of their name.
- Clear and informative assessment systems enable staff to spot where any children may be falling behind so they can direct extra help where needed, including the specialised sessions to develop language, listening and talking skills.
- Homework challenges are set, such as finding autumn leaves or practising pencil skills. These are planned carefully with parents in mind, to make it easy for them to support their child's learning at home.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Parents agree that their children are very well cared for. Staff sensitively provide extra help and care for children and families who may be vulnerable, often through links with the Children's Centre and local external agencies, so these children can participate and progress as well as their classmates.
- The nursery is very calm and harmonious, where children become more confident and able to care for themselves. They quickly put on coats and hats to go outside, and understand why they must wash their hands before snack time.
- Children know that they must consider others' needs, as well as their own. They are taught to take turns, and use tools and equipment safely, for example when cutting up bananas and riding round the cycle track.
- Parents are contacted on the first day a child is absent, to emphasise the importance of regular, punctual attendance so good routines are embedded at an early stage.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff gently set clear boundaries and simple routines that give children a secure framework in which to play and learn. Trusting, supportive relationships with staff ensure children behave well and are kind to each other.
- Any incidents are carefully recorded and monitored, and staff work closely with parents and children to support them if they need help. There is no record of any bullying or discrimination.
- Children's confident arrival every day and enthusiasm for learning show they feel safe and secure in the

nursery, and their parents agree. Very occasionally in longer group sessions, children lose concentration and behaviour can slip a little.

- Children know they can turn to any member of staff for help or comfort, because they will be listened to and treated with respect. This all makes a strong contribution to their happiness and good progress.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- When children begin nursery, their skills are below, and sometimes well below, those typical for their age, particularly in language, mathematics and personal development. Most speak English as well as their home language and a significant proportion are at an early stage of learning English.
- All groups of children achieve well and make good progress in all strands of the early years curriculum. By the end of their time in the nursery, although language still lags a little, most children reach the age-related expectations in all areas of their learning, and a significant proportion are above.
- Boys and girls progress at a similar rate, except in the development of listening and attention and creative areas where girls achieve better.
- Children with special needs are supported well, and often receive one-to-one support or external help, such as speech therapy. This enables them to progress well in relation to their individual starting points.
- Many different languages are represented in the nursery. Regular, frequent spoken language sessions where staff model spoken English well enable children to understand and learn quickly. Staff make good use of their own bilingual skills, which gives children greater confidence as they begin to speak a different language in a new setting.
- Staff identify the needs of disadvantaged children carefully and provide individual programmes and activities. In particular, working outside in the forest school really captures their imagination and enthusiasm. Those who are disadvantaged often progress more rapidly than their classmates, especially in personal and social development.
- Children who find learning easier are identified and given extra challenges. Tasks such as programming the little floor robot or finding the name of the illustrator on the class book successfully extend and develop their individual skills.
- Daily practice in letters and the sounds they make prepare children for early reading and writing. They love choosing a book and listening to stories, saying, 'My ears are switched on' when listening to *Penguin Small*, and several showed good recall of the main points of the story.
- Mark-making and writing activities include recognising their name and signing in at each session or tracing over lines and shapes for homework to develop pencil skills. However, children are not given as many opportunities to develop writing skills in the outdoor area.

School details

Unique reference number	105757
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10002214

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–4 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Gartside
Headteacher	Rachael Parsons
Telephone number	01706 646103
Website	www.howardstreet.rochdale.sch.uk
Email address	head@howardstreet.rochdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2013

Information about this school

- Howard Street Nursery is smaller than most nursery schools.
- Most children are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of children who are disabled or have special educational needs is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of children supported by the early years pupil premium is just below the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support children entitled to a free school meal and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The Two-Year-Old provision is managed by the governing body and was inspected in April 2015.
- A children's centre is housed in the same building and will be inspected separately.
- The nursery is led by an acting headteacher, appointed in April 2015.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed lessons and activities in all groups, including one observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Systems to monitor and check the quality of teaching and records of progress, including the children's 'special books', were scrutinised.
- Arrangements for safeguarding children were checked.
- The inspector talked to children during their activities and met with parents, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The proportion of children supported by the early years pupil premium is just below the national average.
- The 14 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, the school's own survey of parents' views and the three questionnaires submitted by staff were looked at.

Inspection team

Kathleen McArthur, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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