

Stoneygate Nursery School

Stoneygate Walk, Preston, Lancashire PR1 3XU

Inspection dates

14–15 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher's self-evaluation of the school is honest, accurate and insightful.
- Since the previous inspection, children's outcomes have declined. Working with her new senior leadership team, the headteacher is turning the fortunes of the school around.
- The two new senior leaders are making a positive contribution to improving outcomes for all children at the school. Their leadership roles are currently being defined.
- Good teaching fosters children's love of learning. There are many worthwhile activities across all areas of the early years curriculum which capture children's imagination and curiosity, particularly outdoors.
- From their different starting points, the children, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress. However, outcomes in reading and writing are not quite as strong as in other areas of learning.
- Children are safe. Overall, standards of behaviour are impeccable. Children's joy at being at Stoneygate is evident from the moment that they walk through the door with happy, smiley faces.
- The level of support offered to vulnerable families is exceptional. Staff know their children and families very well.
- The use of high-quality questioning is not consistent across the school. On occasions, some staff do not develop and extend children's language skills.
- Governors know the school well. They hold leaders to account for many aspects of the school's work.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher monitor the quality of teaching across the school closely. However, the feedback given to staff after observations of their teaching, at times lacks detail with regard to the progress that different groups of children are making.
- Parents and carers hold the school in the highest regard. Many were queuing up to speak to the inspector as they brought their children to school at the start of the day.
- There is currently strong capacity from leaders to move the school to a higher level, and an enthusiasm to do so.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the recent improvements in reading and writing are sustained.
- Make sure that the use of high-quality questioning is consistent across the Nursery and that children are given sufficient time to respond when a question is posed.
- Ensure that all staff take every opportunity to promote children's language development.
- Develop further the leadership and managements of the school by:
 - ensuring that the new senior leaders, over time, take an even more active role in the leadership and management of the Nursery
 - ensuring that feedback given to staff after observations of their teaching focuses more sharply on the learning that has taken place for different groups of children.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Although the school has been through a period of instability, the leadership and management of the school are good. Working with her two recently appointed senior leaders, the headteacher is continually looking for ways to improve. The school provides a warm and welcoming environment in which children flourish. The capacity for continuous improvement is strong.
- Senior leaders have taken to their new roles with energy and enthusiasm. However, at this time, their roles as leaders of the school are not fully defined.
- Staff are proud to work at the school, and morale is high. A real sense of teamwork is evident.
- The school's self-evaluation gives an honest and evaluative review of the school's strengths and priorities for development.
- The school development plan focuses on the school's priorities to drive improvements. Lines of accountability are clear. The progress that the school is making towards achieving its goals is monitored regularly.
- The headteacher has an accurate view of the quality of teaching across the school. Monitoring is regular and is done through lesson observations, learning walks, planning reviews and work scrutiny. However, the feedback given to teachers after observations of their teaching does not place enough emphasis on the learning of different groups of children. The monitoring of teaching is not delegated sufficiently to all senior leaders.
- Performance management is effective. Teachers' targets are closely linked to school priorities. There are also clear lines of accountability in place to show the contribution that teaching assistants make to improving outcomes for children. Staff access a varied range of training opportunities to ensure that they have the skills to give children the best possible start to their education.
- Leaders keep a close eye on the progress that children make. The school's assessment information is regularly analysed. This is done so that any underperformance, such as the recent dip in outcomes in reading and writing, is quickly identified and addressed. As a result of training from senior leaders, staff are becoming more confident in independently analysing data for children in their key group.
- Careful thought is given to how the early years pupil premium money is spent. Senior leaders have a good awareness of the barriers to learning that disadvantaged children face. A large part of the funding is used to increase staffing, to allow the children to achieve academically, socially and emotionally. As a result, these children achieve well.
- Effective use is made of the special educational needs funding. Good levels of support are afforded to children with SEND. Children are referred to the school by other agencies, because of the quality of the support that the school provides. The diverse needs of this group of children are met well in a sharing and inclusive environment.
- Almost all parents are effusive in their praise of the school. They are resounding in their praise of the staff, the quality of teaching and well-being of their children, particularly those with SEND. The following comment typifies the views of many

parents: 'This is a fantastic nursery. Staff are very friendly and approachable, and they provide activities which interest and stimulate the children.'

- Children access a rich and balanced curriculum. Their learning is further enhanced through excellent links with the local community. In addition, there are a broad range of trips and visitors to the school. Through the celebration of cultural festivals and relevant resources, children gain a good understanding of the diversity of the world in which they live. The promotion of British values is woven through all aspects of the school's work.
- Transition arrangements into the Nursery and onwards to primary school are effective and tailored to meet the needs of each child.
- The local authority has provided the school with good levels of support, which the headteacher greatly appreciates.

Governance of the school

- No one can doubt the governors' commitment to the school. They bring a varied range of experiences to their roles.
- Governors have a clear understanding of why outcomes have declined since the last inspection. They have accessed additional training which is successfully strengthening their strategic leadership of the school.
- Governors have a good awareness of what the school does well and what needs to improve.
- Governors have a secure understanding of the progress that different groups of children make.
- A close eye is kept on the budget to ensure that the school remains sustainable.
- Governors act as a critical friend, offering good levels of support and challenge to school leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Keeping children safe is at the heart of the school's work.
- Staff have a secure understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow should they be concerned about a child's welfare. Staff are also very aware of the risks to child protection that apply within the local area.
- Those responsible for safeguarding have completed training at the appropriate level.
- There are comprehensive procedures in place for the recruitment and selection of staff.
- Leaders work well with parents and other stakeholders to make sure that children are well supported and kept safe. Records relating to vulnerable children are stored securely
- The school site is safe and secure. Visitors' credentials are checked before they are allowed entry to the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The headteacher has evaluated that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Evidence gathered at inspection confirms that this is the case.
- Central to the good teaching is the strong and highly positive relationships that staff have established with the children. Children share a tight bond with their key person.
- The organisation of the day with regard to adult-directed and independent play activities meets the needs of the children.
- Children are secure with the routines that operate within the nursery. For example, they know that when staff ring the bell, they must stop what they are doing and tidy up. Right from the start, children are taught to be independent by hanging up their own coats and accessing their own drinks.
- Staff have ensured that the physical environment is rich with print and conducive to learning. The outdoor area is particularly inviting, with many exciting activities for children to enjoy. Children have ample room to move around freely and play in comfort. There are clearly defined independent play areas which are generally well resourced. Many of these resources are made from natural materials, providing children with real-life experiences. Resources are accessible to the children, allowing them to independently follow through their own ideas and thinking to enhance their learning. For example, during the inspection, children freely accessed paper, glue and sellotape to make their own telescopes. Children then used the telescopes to observe their friends as they played.
- Staff are well deployed. They spend their time interacting and observing the children as they play. Some staff are skilled at knowing when to stand back and let children work things out for themselves before intervening to offer support.
- Some staff make effective use of questioning to probe and deepen children's learning. This was exemplified when staff asked pertinent and searching questions to develop and assess children's understanding of what worms eat and how they move. However, the use of high-quality questioning is not consistent across the school. In addition, at times, some staff ask questions, but do not give children time to think before providing them with the answer.
- Children's language skills are developing well. Conversation flows freely as children learn and play. Many staff actively promote children's acquisition of language by continually looking for opportunities to develop and extend their vocabulary. However, such effective practice is not followed by all staff.
- Mathematical concepts are well incorporated into the daily routine. When working directly with staff and also in their independent play, children count, solve mathematical problems and recite number rhymes.
- Stories, songs and rhymes are used well to develop children's phonics skills. Children confidently identify the initial sounds that objects begin with and words that rhyme.
- A wide range of mark-making materials are available to encourage all children, particularly boys, to write for a purpose, both indoors and outside.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote children's personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders offer exceptional levels of care, guidance and support to children and families facing challenging and difficult situations. Working very closely with other professionals, they leave no stone unturned to ensure that the needs of vulnerable families are met in a timely manner.
- Delightful and friendly children are a credit to the school. Most skip into school each morning. Without a backward glance, they walk into the classroom happily chatting with staff and their friends. Parents do not have to stay long because children settle quickly.
- Children soon learn the importance of sharing and taking turns. Many are developing a caring attitude towards each other. This was evident when a group of children worked very well together to build a construction using drain pipes which allowed water to flow into a container.
- Children eat healthy food. Lunchtimes are usually pleasurable and sociable occasions. Children are taught key skills, such as sitting at the table while eating food, and how to hold a knife and fork correctly.
- Children raise money for charitable causes. This helps them to understand that there are others in the world dealing with difficult situations.
- Through the curriculum, children are taught to keep themselves safe. They learn about the importance of not talking to strangers, crossing the road safely and following correct procedures during an emergency evacuation.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of the children is outstanding.
- There is a consistent approach to behaviour management across the school. Staff constantly celebrate children's achievements, which helps to promote the children's confidence and self-esteem. Children make excellent progress in managing their own behaviour.
- Children display very good manners. They give a warm welcome to visitors to the school.
- Although attendance is non-statutory, the school does everything possible to encourage parents to bring their children to school. Parents are made aware of the possible impact of non-attendance on children's progress and attainment. Any unexplained absences are diligently followed up.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Children start at the school with varying abilities and skills. Some children have particularly poor communication and social skills. From their different starting points,

most children make good progress in their learning and are well prepared for their transition into Reception.

- Parents of children aged two years are provided with a summary of their children's development in the three prime areas of the early years foundation stage (EYFS). These prime areas relate to children's social, physical and communication skills.
- In 2018, outcomes in reading and writing dipped. Leaders took swift action to address this. As a result, the tide is turning. From observing teaching and looking at examples of children's work, it can be seen that outcomes in reading and writing are improving. However, the challenge for the school is to ensure that these improving outcomes are sustained over time.
- Children show an interest in books. They enjoy reading on their own for pleasure, or listening to a story as part of a group. Children handle books with care. Many children know that print carries meaning.
- Children enjoy being creative. They are provided with a range of opportunities and a variety of media and other resources to develop their artistic talents. This also encourages them to engage in meaningful role play.
- The small proportion of children in receipt of the early years pupil premium funding achieve well. This is a result of the effective targeted use of this funding and demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Taking into consideration their very diverse needs, case studies show that children with SEND make strong gains in their learning. This is due to high-quality teaching, timely interventions and effective partnership working with other agencies.
- Children who speak English as an additional language are provided with additional support by bilingual staff. Most become absorbed in developing their vocabulary. Overall, these children make the same good progress as their peers.
- Above all, children enjoy their time at the school, where learning is active and fun.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 119083 |
| Local authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 10054384 |

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

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| Type of school | Nursery |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 5 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 96 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Jenny Sides |
| Headteacher | Mrs Christine Branscombe |
| Telephone number | 01772257865 |
| Website | www.stoneygate-nursery.co.uk |
| Email address | bursar@stoneygate.lancs.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 15-16 July 2014 |

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized nursery school. Children start at the school at various times throughout the year. They attend part-time, for morning or afternoon sessions, or for two-and-a-half days per week.
- A significant proportion of children are from minority ethnic backgrounds and many speak English as an additional language. A total of eight different languages are spoken across the school.
- The proportion of children with SEND is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged children is above the national average
- In 2012, the school became federated with Appletree Nursery School. Both schools are led by one headteacher. Each school has its own governing body. This is coordinated by an overarching collaboration committee formed of members from both governing bodies.
- There have been a number of staff changes since the last inspection. A new deputy

headteacher and special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) have been appointed within the last year.

- A new chair of governors has been appointed since the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning at various times during the two days of the inspection. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were also held with the headteacher, staff and parents. The inspector also spoke to parents as they brought their children to school at the start of the day.
- The inspector also met with members of the governing body and with two representatives from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at examples of children's work in their books and on display.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan and records relating to the quality of teaching. Documentation relating to safeguarding and attendance was also considered.
- The inspector also took account of the responses to the Ofsted online questionnaires completed by 11 parents and 13 members of staff.

Inspection team

Sheila Iwaskow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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