

Inspection of an outstanding school: Stoneyholme Nursery School

March Street, Burnley, Lancashire BB12 0BU

Inspection date: 11 July 2023

Outcome

Stoneyholme Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Children thrive at this unique nursery school. They are happy and safe. Leaders and staff have created a special place to cherish every child in their early education.

Leaders and staff have an absolute conviction that all children will achieve well. Children thoroughly understand what is expected of them. Every area of the nursery invites and inspires children to engage in deep and meaningful learning. Consequently, children are superbly well prepared for the next stages in their education.

Children know that if they try their very best, they reap rewards, such as praise and stickers. Daily group times allow children to reflect on what they have learned and how they have gone about this. Children understand the golden rules to follow, including having kind words and kind hands. Children are caring towards others. They help their friends if they become upset. Staff resolve any bullying or unkindness immediately.

Leaders provide children with a plethora of rich learning experiences. These include trips to the local community and to the zoo. Children benefit from visits from the farm and a theatre group. They learn about the local environment and neighbouring community, and how they can help, such as by fundraising and by recycling waste.

Parents and carers feel part of the school. They enjoy the vast array of parent workshops and in-school events, such as picnics. Parents commended staff for being highly nurturing and supportive of their children. They said that the nursery is like a 'hidden gem'.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Children receive an exceptional early years education at Stoneyholme Nursery School. Leaders and staff share the same high ambition for all children, including those who are two years old. Drawing on their own expertise and external research, leaders have created a broad and knowledge-rich curriculum. They have carefully designed the content

and order of the curriculum to enable children to successfully build on what they already know and can do. Children achieve highly.

Staff have an expert knowledge of how young children learn and develop. They work closely together to precisely identify children's interests and their next steps in learning. As a result, children build their knowledge and skills with confidence across all areas of learning. For example, they were keen to showcase their clay octopus models. Children follow their own ideas, such as when counting out candles for play dough cakes and when using small tools to create potions with lemon and mint.

The provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is excellent. Leaders identify any additional needs that children may have quickly. They ensure that children are exceptionally well supported to access the curriculum. Leaders and staff work exceptionally closely with parents, external professionals and local schools. This guarantees that children with SEND receive the support that they need to flourish.

Communication and language are central to all that the nursery does. Staff immerse children in a language-rich environment that is full of meaningful conversation. They make use of each opportunity to introduce new words and narratives into children's play. Staff regularly check how well children's language is developing. They use this information to provide targeted support for children who need extra help. Staff are highly effective in using key vocabulary from children's home languages during conversations. This helps children who speak English as an additional language to gain a strong grasp of English.

Staff are hugely successful in fostering children's love of reading. Children are enthralled as they listen and join in with stories, songs and rhymes. Staff read with animation and successfully bring stories to life. Parents spend time each week in the classrooms to share books with their children and help them to choose books to take home.

Children are incredibly well behaved. They play alongside their friends in harmony. For example, children giggled with pure delight while playing a running game together. They have highly positive attitudes towards their learning. Children persevere if they face difficulties and staff fastidiously support them to grow their confidence. For instance, staff gave just the right level of support to children for them to successfully climb and balance using low-level climbing apparatus outdoors.

The focus on developing children's wider development is extraordinary. Staff ensure that children feel at ease from the moment that they enter the school. Children engage in mindfulness sessions. Staff skilfully encourage them to develop their self-care skills. A wonderful example of this is during the morning snack. Children mark their healthy breakfast choice on the chalkboard and then get their own plates and cutlery. They butter their own toast and pour their own drinks, before tidying their plates away. Children develop an incredible level of autonomy as they put on their wetsuits in readiness for outdoor learning. They join a school council, where they learn that their opinions matter.

Leaders, governors and staff are rightly proud of everything that the nursery school has achieved. They strive for excellence and seek out ways to continually improve. Leaders

support staff's well-being and are mindful of their workload. This helps staff to feel appreciated and part of the Stoneyholme Nursery School family.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding at Stoneyholme Nursery School. They use robust systems to record and monitor any welfare concerns. Staff receive up-to-date safeguarding training. They understand the signs which may indicate that a child is at risk of harm or abuse. Leaders work well with external agencies to get children and families the timely support that they need.

Safeguarding is particularly well covered across the curriculum. Children learn how to voice any worries that they may have. They learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, children contribute to risk assessments before outdoor play. Children are taught how to stay safe in the local community, such as when crossing roads and avoiding strangers.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in June 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the definition of children in need of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	119074
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10240270
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Thomas Wilkinson
Headteacher	Susan Holden
Website	www.stoneyholmenurseryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 and 8 June 2017

Information about this school

- A new headteacher and chair of governors have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The nursery school provides education for two-year-old children.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives into communication and language (taking account of early reading), physical development and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders and visited some lessons. They spoke with staff and with children about their learning. Inspectors looked at samples of children's work.
- The lead inspector observed some children sharing books with familiar adults.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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