

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Stonehill Nursery School

Stonehill Road, Derby, Derbyshire DE23 6TJ

Inspection date: 17 December 2024

Outcome

Stonehill Nursery School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

At this friendly and diverse nursery school, relationships are nurtured. Children and their families are valued and well supported by the nursery staff. Some children attend for short periods of time or arrive part way through their early education. They settle well and learn the school's routines quickly. They are happy and well cared for. Children learn to use their manners and develop their independence. For example, they learn to put their coat on without adult help and how to share toys with others.

The school wants every child to build a secure foundation in their early years education. It has revised its curriculum to meet this ambition, although not enough thought has been given to how the school develops children's vocabulary over time.

Staff help children to use 'kind hands and kind words'. They are alert to any children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who may need help to manage their emotions and behaviour. On the rare occasions that disagreements happen, adults clearly and calmly model the nursery's expectations using words, symbols and actions. In a short period of time, children make rapid progress with their personal, social and emotional skills.

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

The school places a deliberate emphasis on promoting children's personal, social and emotional development, alongside their communication and language development. The important books that children repeatedly share are mapped out carefully. These books help children understand key knowledge linked to their learning, for example about

families, number and keeping safe. The school has set out the key words children will encounter as they learn the curriculum. However, it has not fully considered how this vocabulary builds on what children know already or the new words that children need to learn as they progress through the school.

All children, including those with SEND, join in with the songs and rhymes that form part of their daily routines and play. For example, when building a block house, adults share stories and sing songs about Santa coming down a chimney. Children quickly develop a love of reading. They find their favourite books and invite adults to join in when looking at them. Through songs and rhymes, children learn how to tidy up, form numbers and understand how to conduct themselves during group time.

Children love to investigate and learn, both inside and outdoors. They are fascinated to explore the natural world. They talk about dinosaur habitats and compare these to where bugs might live. Children enjoy chatting with adults about their learning, their play and their interests. Through play, adults repeat and rephrase the language that the children use. Occasionally, children are asked to complete activities that do not match their stage of development.

Children's personal development is prioritised through the curriculum. They learn to become increasingly independent in their self-care skills. They are taught about risks in the local community, including the importance of road safety. During snack time, children are encouraged to try new foods. They learn to concentrate on activities for increased periods of time and show perseverance when things do not go to plan. Through stories and discussions, adults help children make connections to their own families, cultures and beliefs.

The school actively seeks to build strong relationships with its families. It hosts a variety of events in the nursery and in the local community. These events help to ensure that positive relationships are established quickly and, when necessary, families are provided with support. Parents and carers appreciate the communication they receive about the progress their children make and how they can encourage their children at home.

The 'Stonehill Committee', which forms the governing body, asks pertinent questions to ensure that the school's vision is realised. Staff appreciate the professional development opportunities they receive. This has led to positive changes in their workload and has further enhanced their expertise in how to help children learn.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, the activities that children complete do not align closely to their stage of development. When this happens, children do not learn the school's curriculum as well as intended. The school must ensure that staff have the necessary expertise to implement the school's curriculum so that children secure an appropriate understanding of what they are learning.
- The school's approach to developing children's vocabulary is not designed well enough to build on children's prior knowledge. As a result, children do not learn the key words they need to prepare them well enough for their learning in the Reception Year. The school should refine its approach to teaching vocabulary and the order in which children learn key words, across all areas of learning.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 good for overall effectiveness in June 2019.

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 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

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| Unique reference number | 112476 |
| Local authority | Derby |
| Inspection number | 10347335 |
| 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 | 70 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Russell Langley |
| Headteacher | Louise Foster |
| Website | www.stonehillnurseryderby.com |
| Dates of previous inspection | 11 and 12 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new chair of the governing body has been appointed.
- The school is federated with Dale Community Primary School. The schools share the same governing body. The headteacher has oversight and responsibility for both schools. Several staff work across both providers.
- The nursery school admits 2-year-olds.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the

extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- Inspectors visited the classrooms and outdoor provision. They spoke with the headteacher and staff. They considered a range of curriculum documents.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. Documents from governing body meetings were sampled.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents expressed through Ofsted Parent View and also spoke with some parents.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with groups of staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Shaheen Hussain, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Emma Tayler

Ofsted Inspector

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