

# Stonehill Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112476
<b>Local Authority</b>	City of Derby
<b>Inspection number</b>	310899
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mary Hamby HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	65
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Val Payne
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Pat Geary
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 January 2005
<b>School address</b>	Stonehill Road Derby DE23 6TJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01332 341636
<b>Fax number</b>	01332 341636

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<b>Age group</b>	3–4
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. Childcare elements of the provision were inspected in May 2007; this report is available at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## Description of the school

The majority of children in this nursery come from Pakistani backgrounds and are at an early stage of learning English. Very few have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The children usually spend three terms in the nursery before joining the local primary school. Most attend part time, but there are a few who stay to lunch, and one child who attends full time.

The nursery has stable staffing, but the full time teacher was absent during the inspection and was replaced by a supply teacher.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where children are happy and safe. Parents are very pleased with the way that their children are cared for and those who responded to questionnaires are full of praise for the school, saying for example, that the staff are 'very caring and approachable.'

Standards on entry to the school are very low and are still lower than those normally expected when they leave, particularly in early literacy and mathematical development. Nevertheless, most children achieve well in each area of learning in the comparatively short time they spend in the school. This is because the teaching is good; the staff know the children very well and encourage them to try hard. The children learning English as an additional language make good progress with this because they have ready access to bi-lingual staff who support their needs extremely well. However, in whole group sessions there is not enough opportunity for these children and others to talk about their learning and express their ideas and opinions. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are encouraged to try hard; they gain confidence in themselves as learners and make good progress towards their targets. More able children enjoy the activities on offer but are not always challenged by what is planned and so their learning is not as effective.

The good curriculum provides a wealth of opportunities for children to learn about the world around them. Staff work together well and good use is made of their expertise to plan a lively range of activities each day. They log children's progress diligently, but do not yet make enough use of this information to plan challenging targets for more able children. The children receive good care, guidance and support and this helps them to achieve well in their personal development; for example, they are learning how to be healthy through good provision at snack time, where staff talk to them about making healthy choices and the importance of hygiene. Behaviour is extremely good and the children show very keen interest in all that is provided and enjoy their time in nursery very much. They make a good contribution to nursery by helping to clear up each day and are making a contribution to the wider community by fund-raising activities. The nursery prepares children well for their futures.

The leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads the school well and has a clear understanding of the areas that need to improve further. Governors are strongly supportive of the school and are developing their roles as critical friends. There has been no complacency in developing the school since the last inspection and the school is well placed to continue its successful path. Procedures exist for the leaders to check on the quality of teaching and learning and to evaluate the provision. However, these are not always written down or followed through rigorously enough and so their impact is unclear.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

As a nursery school, the Foundation Stage is completely covered by the Overall Effectiveness section.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities to all children to plan and talk about their learning.
- Increase the challenge to meet the needs of the more able children.

- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation are recorded regularly and identify the impact of provision on children's learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

On starting nursery, the children's abilities in almost all areas of learning are well below those typical of three year olds. When they leave, standards have risen, but are still below those expected, particularly in early literacy and mathematical development. Nevertheless most of the children achieve well, and make particularly good progress in the acquisition of English and in aspects of personal, social and emotional development. The more able children make steady progress, but could achieve more. The few children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Boys and girls achieve equally well, understand routines, and learn to work and play together cooperatively. Standards match expected levels in physical development and are close to expected levels in creative development. The children enjoy making music and are developing an understanding of rhythm but aspects of imaginative play are still at an early stage.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children show that they enjoy coming to school very much by their smiles on entering the nursery and by the quick way they settle and leave their parents and carers without a fuss. They know the routines and take advantage of the wide range of activities provided. They persevere with tasks, even when they encounter difficulties because the staff encourage them to try hard and praise them for trying. Attendance is regular and parents are aware of what to do if their child is ill, but overall attendance figures are affected adversely by the long-term absence of a few children.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The children work safely, and are careful when using equipment like scissors. They listen carefully and are developing good dispositions to learning because the nursery provides a rich variety of interesting learning opportunities. The children are starting to understand the needs of others. They take turns and play fairly, but are not yet sufficiently involved in discussing their learning or the choices they are going to make in their play each day.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The effective teamwork ensures a consistent approach to planning so that staff are familiar with the learning objectives to be taught. Excellent understanding of individual children ensures that each child feels at home in the nursery and enjoys the range of learning opportunities prepared each day. The balance between the staff's use of English and community languages helps those children who are learning English as an additional language to contribute and achieve well. Whole group sessions and story times are enjoyable but there are not enough opportunities for children to talk about their learning and to express their ideas.

Staff are diligent in the observations they make of children's learning and all contribute to the excellent system of recording achievement. This information is starting to be used to plan the

next steps for children, but is not well enough embedded to show the impact that this is having on raising standards.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum responds well to the children's needs by its strong focus on personal, social and emotional education and language development. This emphasis enables children to develop good dispositions to learning and improve their understanding of English. The curriculum is adjusted in the light of regular staff evaluations and this takes account of the needs of most of the children. Some of the open-ended tasks however, do not provide enough challenge for the more able children and so their learning is not always effective.

Visits to places of interest help children to appreciate the natural world and learn more about their local community. The visiting artists and actors also contribute very well to children's cultural development and enjoyment of school. The opportunity to play outside in all weathers makes them resilient, and enables children to consolidate learning. There are plenty of opportunities for children to experience the wonder of the natural world, through experiences such as hatching chicks, but opportunities to reflect on experiences are not planned sufficiently well.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Parents are right in their views that the nursery provides good care for children. Staff put parents at their ease and the staggered intake helps the children's transition from home to school. Parents have good access to staff and the warm relationships between staff and parents ensure that any concerns are quickly noted and responded to. Safeguarding procedures are suitably in place and staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities in keeping children safe and secure. The staff identify children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities quickly and ensure that they get the help they need to make good progress. The school's disability access plan takes account of the needs of some of its users, but does not embrace the needs of all, and so it is not clear how the nursery might cope with children with a hearing or visual impairment. Good relationships with receiving schools and shared policies for record keeping support effective transfer to primary education.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The good leadership and management are demonstrated in the strong teamwork and determination to help each child to succeed. The headteacher's understanding of this phase of education provides a firm vision for the school and includes a commitment to working in partnership with parents. Her vision is shared very well with staff, one of whom commented that the headteacher 'takes us with her every step of the way.'

The school's capacity to improve is good and has been shown in the improvements to the school since the last inspection and in an appropriate plan for further improvement. Aspects of self-evaluation work well; for example, the change in location of the reading area to encourage greater participation. Where self-evaluation is less effective is the school's broader view of the effectiveness of its policies and the regular reviews of teaching and learning to identify the

impact that these have on children's achievement. The governors are developing their roles and have a good idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

13 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Stonehill Nursery School, Derby, DE23 6TJ

I am writing to tell you about the things I found out when I came to visit your school. I am grateful to your parents who filled in some forms to tell me what they thought of your school. They think that Stonehill Nursery is a good school and I agree with them.

I was pleased to see that you behave very well and take care of all the interesting things you have to play with. You are learning lots of new things each day and really enjoy school. The teachers and all the adults who work with you help you to make good progress because they know you all very well. However, I have asked them to give some of you harder work to do, because I think that you need a bit of extra challenge.

You are good at sharing equipment, take turns fairly and you are very good at clearing up and helping each other. Everybody in nursery takes good care of you and this helps you to feel safe and happy and gives you the confidence to try out new things. There are many interesting things for you to do both inside and outside and you enjoy finding out about things, such as what will happen when the chicks hatch.

You all listen to the teachers and answer questions enthusiastically and you are making good progress in learning new words each day. I have asked your teachers to build on this by giving you more chances to plan and talk about your learning, particularly when you are in your group time.

Mrs Geary and the teachers work very hard and are good at their jobs, but I have asked them to do something to make your school even better. Although they know what is working well and what needs improving, they don't always write these things down. It is really important to write things down, so we don't forget and it also helps us to look back on things and see if we have made things better.

I hope you all continue to enjoy your time in nursery. Good luck for the future.

From

Mrs Hamby

Her Majesty's Inspector