

Freshfield Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106021
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	324318
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Clare Henderson

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Les Jones
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Shaw
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2006
School address	42 Mauldeth Road Heaton Mersey Stockport Cheshire SK4 3NB
Telephone number	0161 4426944
Fax number	0161 4327607

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This Nursery school is managed by the school's governing body. It offers Early Years Foundation Stage education on a part-time basis. There is also additional provision for babies and children (nought to three years) within the weekly stay and play and child minders sessions, the daily nurture group and parental workshops. Children attending come from advantaged social backgrounds. Most children speak English as their first language. Around 20% belong to minority ethnic groups and a few of these children are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This outstanding Nursery school is a beacon of exemplary Early Years Foundation Stage provision. Instrumental in its success is the highly imaginative way adults use every nook and cranny, both indoors and within the outdoor environment, to excite and interest children in order for them to experience stimulating play-based learning. Within this creative environment, each child is enabled to design their own learning while thoroughly enjoying every minute they attend. Parents overwhelmingly think so too. Typical of the comments parents make is, 'Their experiences here will be etched in their memories forever,' and 'This is a fantastic community resource.'

Achievement is outstanding. Most children begin nursery with skills at or above the level expected for this age group. Because staff meticulously ensure the curriculum presented addresses each child's individual learning needs, all groups of learners make excellent progress. Consequently, at the end of nursery, children exceed the expected learning goals in all areas of learning and are well on the way to achieving the outcomes expected at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Such attention ensures all children are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their education. Outstanding support from well-qualified adults for children with additional needs, including those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language and those experiencing a degree of speech and language delay, ensures that they too make exceptional gains in their learning.

Children's personal development is outstanding. This is because adults pay excellent care and attention to children's physical and emotional well-being and their learning and development. Children have limitless daily opportunities to explore, to make decisions and solve problems. This helps them to become increasingly confident and independent. They are happy, sociable learners who respect each other's needs sensitively and eagerly learn from each other's experiences of diversity in Britain. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding overall. However, their knowledge and understanding of similarities and differences in cultures within the world at large are less well developed.

Adults successfully create a welcoming and secure environment and the promotion of children's welfare is outstanding. The school meets current government requirements for safeguarding children. There are excellent partnerships with health professionals and numerous opportunities for children and their families to undertake a wide range of social and health-related activities within the Nursery. These are extremely popular and extend community relations very effectively.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Teamwork, led by an inspirational headteacher, is key to this, as all adults make a significant contribution to leadership within the school. In particular the management of children with additional needs is outstanding. The governors are a dynamic element of this teamwork and fulfil their responsibilities very well. Leaders have an accurate view of the school and a desire to always strive to do better. The school has been extremely successful in maintaining and indeed extending its outstanding status from the last inspection. This confirms an excellent capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the school's community cohesion strategy further to take greater account of socio-economic, religious and ethnic dimensions beyond the Heaton Mersey and Stockport areas.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The outstanding development of children's learning is promoted successfully by activities specially planned and, as necessary, adapted to meet or extend their learning needs. For instance, the pirate ship writing area, introduced to stimulate, in particular, the desire of boys to write, has successfully raised children's learning outcomes in this area. Adults are exceptionally skilled at encouraging children to communicate within an extremely stimulating learning environment. This ensures that children make excellent progress in all areas of learning. This includes their knowledge and understanding of the world, problem solving and their creative and physical skills. Their daily exposure to a rich diet of interesting books and tremendous opportunities to practise mark-making mean that they make equally impressive gains in developing early writing and reading skills. Children from minority ethnic backgrounds and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language make outstanding progress, as do those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is because of the exceptional care and support they receive, especially in terms of their language and social development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children are busy, active learners from the time they run eagerly up the path at the start of the day to the time they leave. A testament to this is attendance levels that are well above average and children's outstanding behaviour. An exceptionally high level of personal responsibility is evident with, for instance, children helping to serve milk and fruit at snack time or clear their plates in the nurture group at lunchtime. As a result, children are highly confident and self-reliant from an early age. In this welcoming and inviting environment, children learn to look after themselves and each other. They play together happily and are extremely kind to each other, for instance, fetching a tissue when they spot the need, or in identifying in each other what they 'have done today to make them feel proud'. They have an exceptionally good understanding of why it is important to lead healthy lives and are willing to try to eat different fruit and vegetables. Safety is a key feature. While playing in the Freshfield Building Company' one child was heard to say to another, 'You need to wear a hard hat in case some bricks fall on your head.' At the same time, they are physically lively and not fearful, because they are encouraged to have a go, with a 'can do' culture central within all areas of learning. Children have a well-developed sense of community, within their Nursery and locality, although this understanding in the wider world is less well developed.

Quality of provision

Effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development

Grade: 1

Children learn exceptionally well. Relationships between adults and children are exemplary. Adults encourage and support, rather than direct, children's learning within the curriculum. This ensures that children make choices and organise themselves well. They are accustomed to making their own decisions and work and play happily and productively. The well-established key person system, whereby each child has an adult to relate to, and learning opportunities which meet children's needs exceptionally well, keep them actively involved. Based on thorough and accurate observations, staff set up a full range of interesting and thought-provoking

activities, both inside and outside, that challenge children to explore and find out for themselves. Staff skilfully play alongside children, helping them to learn while not doing it for them: for instance, playing in the fire station, with enthusiasm and enjoyment by both being equally evident. Children are free to learn indoors or outdoors as they choose. This means that they learn at the right pace for their age and stage of development and that they are always busy. Adults work with the children continually, yet without inhibiting their play; they ask questions that make children think for themselves and so they learn rapidly through play.

Effectiveness in promoting children's welfare

Grade: 1

Parents comment that their children are very well cared for by, 'committed and dedicated staff'. Vetting procedures for all adults who work with children are robust. Stringent health and safety procedures are in place, with daily checks to ensure that resources and equipment are safe for children to use. They enjoy learning about safe, healthy practices. For example, in putting up a tent they followed the instructions, learning safe practices in an enjoyable way. Children in meditation sessions are given time to reflect on their own and the feelings of others. This extends their understanding and tolerance for others in an exceptional way. Parents feel valued and active partners because staff spend time with them to gather information about their children. Similarly, parents enjoy the extremely beneficial workshops, for example, the Faddy Eaters group, where staff pursued ways, as parents say, 'to make mealtimes relaxed and not a battle'. Colourful photographs and detailed observations are noted in children's records of achievement. These are shared with parents and provide an excellent account of children's early learning. They comment on how much they benefit from meeting staff before their child begins nursery or from attending groups such as stay and play or child minders. At these times, under leadership from school staff, adults and children play and meet together socially. Parents praise the links made with local primary schools and say, 'Transition into school is far easier because of the procedures Freshfield has put in place.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school has gone from strength to strength under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. The main tool staff use is to, as they say, 'all sing from the same hymn sheet', while they check thoroughly that the quality of children's learning available works and where needed is adapted or changed. The process of developing the leadership skills of all staff is excellent with ongoing opportunities for them to attend school-based and external courses. These enable them to reflect on their own and colleagues' practice, especially in terms of evaluating the effectiveness of different areas of learning and suggesting improvements. The leadership and management of the provision for children with additional needs and, in particular, the work in extending children's speech and language are outstanding. Equality of opportunity is fully promoted. The impact is seen in the outstanding progress made by all children. The governing body is extremely supportive while using their skills and high levels of individual expertise to continually challenge the setting to give all children a first-class early years education.

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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 is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
The standards[1] reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Do you remember when I came to inspect your Nursery recently? Well, this letter is first, to thank you for welcoming me and second, to tell you what I found out.

I loved watching you learn while you played. I especially liked seeing you play and learn to share and play together while in, for instance, your 'Freshfield Building Company' or in the lunchtime nurture group. I also thought you were excellent fire fighters while playing in your exciting fire station where you were learning how to stay safe. You have great fun both indoors and outdoors and are very busy all the time, finding out new things. I was amazed to see you planning your own work and having a good think about what you had learnt and what you wanted to find out next. All this fun and hard work mean that by the time you move into Reception, you have learnt many new skills in reading, writing and how to solve problems, which will help you as you grow older. You behave extremely well and clearly enjoy learning.

Your Nursery is outstanding. This means that it gives you the very best chance to learn. Your special adults take extremely good care of you to help to keep you safe but they still let you try things out for yourselves. When I sat and listened, all I could hear were your happy chattering voices as you worked and played together. Your mums and dads agree that everyone works very hard to make things fun and enjoyable for you. Your Nursery school is led and managed exceptionally well and the headteacher and other staff are always looking for ways to make it even better. I have asked them to carry on with all the work they have planned and to help you learn even more about how boys and girls and families in other countries play and live.

I hope you continue to have a lovely time. You go to such a very special place.