

Staghills Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119100
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	326946
Inspection dates	26–27 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Onyon

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	119
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Ormerod
Headteacher	Miss Linda Connelly
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2006
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Top Barn Lane Newchurch Rossendale Lancashire BB4 7UE
Telephone number	01706 213303
Fax number	01706 213303

Age group	3–4
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This Nursery serves a wide area, which includes social and economic disadvantage. Children attend part time and the majority of children are from White British backgrounds with a few children learning to speak English as an additional language. A small number have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Since the previous inspection the building has been improved and it is now on the same site as a Children's Centre, where there is extended day care provision for babies and children aged 0 to 3 years. An independently run, 'Hedgehog Club' provides before and after-school care on the premises. The school has Healthy Schools and Investors in People accreditation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Stag Hills is an outstanding Nursery school where the children thrive in a stimulating, enjoyable and extremely caring learning environment. Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were unanimous in their acclaim. Comments like; 'This is a fantastic school!' and 'Stag Hills is providing an excellent foundation to my child's education, there are so many wonderful and imaginative play and learning opportunities', summarise those of many. The inspection confirms the views of these parents and carers.

Children settle very quickly into routines because expectations are clearly communicated to them. The inspirational quality of children's learning, outstanding personal development and exceptional quality of welfare and care reflect the fact that this is a school where every child really does matter. Children's engagement with school is reflected in their good attendance. They behave exceptionally well. Relationships with adults and each other are excellent. Opportunities abound for the children to develop their independence, especially in the outdoor areas and in the extensive woodland area. Children rapidly grow in confidence, make friends readily and play exceptionally well together. The school also offers excellent opportunities for parents and toddlers to learn and play together through a wide range of extended services, for example 'chatterbox sessions', focusing on the development of communication skills.

The outstanding learning and development opportunities provided mean that all children achieve extremely well, often from starting points below what is typical for their age, to reach standards above those expected. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language achieve equally well. Very effective learning takes place because staff know children very well and track their progress meticulously. Progress is recorded in detail through 'Learning Journey' booklets, which are shared with children and their parents.

Promotion of children's welfare is exceptional. All the recommended procedures for safeguarding children are fully in place in the nursery and the extended services. Governors take a full part in conducting regular risk assessments to ensure the safety of all children, including those who use the additional childcare services. Children respond well to the very high standards set by staff in showing courtesy and respect for adults and children. They are guided and encouraged to care for their own needs and hygiene is given a high priority throughout the school.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The acting headteacher provides excellent leadership. The school has built well on the outstanding practice identified at its previous inspection. The governors have an excellent understanding of the school's work. They rigorously check and review the work of the school and this leads to well-considered action plans for improvement. All staff are actively involved and fully support each other, discussing concerns and celebrating achievements on a daily basis. The value for money the school offers, and its capacity for future improvement, are outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school has an extremely clear view of how it can continue to develop and there are no areas for improvement that have not been identified in the school's improvement plan.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children's achievement is outstanding. From levels of attainment on entry to the Nursery, which vary, but are, in general, below those typical for the children's ages, outstanding overall progress is made. Children achieve high standards by the end of their time in the Nursery and almost all reach levels which are above those normally found in children on entry to the Reception Year. All children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language, make outstanding progress, helped by the very high quality support, which they receive, and the excellent curriculum experiences available to them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. The school's strong emphasis on personal, social and emotional development enables these young children to develop independence as well as very good attitudes to learning from an early age. Behaviour is exemplary and spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is excellent. Children clearly enjoy coming to school and are very keen to join in the wide range of interesting activities on offer. Attendance is good for children of this age. They learn to stay safe because of the clear guidance they receive and they thrive with the freedom to experiment and develop their skills in a safe and secure environment. They are adopting a healthy lifestyle and know all about the benefits of their 'five pieces of fruit a day'. They value and benefit from extensive opportunities for physical activities indoors and in the extensive outdoor areas, particularly as 'Woodland Explorers'. Children make a very positive contribution to their own school community and join in all activities with enthusiasm. Relationships are excellent throughout the school and amongst the children who attend for additional hours and the before and after-school care facilities. Qualities such as independence and the ability to work together to solve problems is preparing these children extremely well for the future.

Quality of provision

Effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development

Grade: 1

Children make excellent progress in their learning. The school is thorough in regularly assessing what children know and can do. Adults track children's progress very closely. They constantly adjust learning activities so they are carefully related to individual needs and interests, and on developing children's personal, social and academic qualities. There is an excellent balance between adult-led learning and opportunities for children to be creative, work independently and explore. For example, using the current building work, extending the outdoor facilities, as a resource to encourage children to ask questions. The learning environment is inspirational, helping children to discover that learning is an exciting activity that comes from a range of stimulating experiences. Children flourish, sharing space and resources exceptionally well. The school works very closely with parents keeping them up to date about their child's progress and involving them in their children's learning. As noted by a parent; 'I know that my child's needs are reviewed regularly and shared with me.' An important part of the beginning of each half-day is the warmth and welcome both children and parents receive.

Effectiveness in promoting children's welfare

Grade: 1

Children's welfare is promoted very effectively leading to children's outstanding personal development and well-being. Parents are confident that any concerns they have are listened to and dealt with quickly. All the recommended procedures for safeguarding children are in place and consistently and rigorously applied throughout all aspects of the provision. Relationships between adults and children are excellent and children relate particularly well to their key worker who oversees their progress and needs. Every effort has been taken to ensure that the exciting outdoor areas are safe and secure and so children are confident in practising physical skills such as balancing along a beam on the safe, spongy surface. Children respond very well to the high expectations that they behave well and respect each other. They develop excellent independence as they are encouraged to take care of their own personal needs and to make choices about their activities. There are excellent procedures for introducing children to the Nursery, including home visits, which help children to settle quickly and make a good start to their education. The extensive range of additional services on offer, such as the full day care provided in the Hedgehog Club, makes an excellent contribution to children's welfare.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The acting headteacher's leadership has successfully sustained a climate where everyone is constantly trying to improve the school further. Outstanding teamwork ensures that all staff are united in their desire to do their very best for the children. The school is rigorous in the self-analysis of its performance and is reflective about its achievements and how it can improve what it offers. Children make such rapid and successful progress in their learning because the school puts the child at the heart of all that they do and there is outstanding attention to detail. Community cohesion is excellent. Children have a real sense of being part of the Nursery community and all are welcomed. Careful thought and interaction lead to a school that is valued highly by the local community and engages extremely well with a variety of different groups. Staff are appropriately qualified and great importance is placed on their professional development. Governors fulfil their roles extremely well; they challenge the school and are very involved with the future vision for the development of the Nursery as part of serving the local community.

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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	2
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	2
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?	1
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

27 February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Staghills Nursery School, Lancashire, BB4 7UE

Thank you for making me so welcome when I inspected your school. I really enjoyed my time with you and seeing all the lovely things you do. I am writing now to tell you what I found out about your Nursery.

Yours is an outstanding Nursery school. I can understand why so many people in your families wrote to say that they are delighted that you are able to go, even when you are small babies, to such a lovely school. They know, as I discovered, that the staff look after you extremely well and make sure you have lots of interesting things to do every day. You are learning new things all the time. You have especially good opportunities to make things, like your super hero models, and to learn to get on with each other and become confident about who you are. You are also doing well in starting to write, listening to stories and finding out about numbers. You behave extremely well and I could see that you enjoy choosing from all the activities available.

The teachers and other adults who work with you are very experienced in knowing what children of your age need and they work very hard to make learning enjoyable for you. The Nursery is led and managed exceptionally well and the headteacher and other staff are always looking for ways to make it even better. They always let you and your parents know how well you are doing. I have asked them to carry on with this so you can keep on learning new things and having fun.

Best wishes

Michael Onyon

Lead inspector