

Inspection of an outstanding school: Lark Hill Nursery School

Northgate Road, Edgeley, Stockport, Cheshire SK3 9PH

Inspection dates: 3 December 2019

Outcome

Lark Hill Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Lark Hill Nursery School is a wonderful place for children to learn and grow. They thoroughly enjoy coming to the school because they know that learning will be exciting. Children thrive as a result of the care and guidance provided by the staff who know their needs so well. Typical comments from children include: 'I love this school and I've got lots of friends.'

Children are safe, happy and confident. They learn how to play and work together and take turns. For example, we saw children retelling the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. They all took on different roles and waited for others to speak so that the story made sense.

Leaders and staff have high aspirations for every child. They make every moment a learning opportunity. Staff quickly check on what children know and can do when they start at the nursery. No time is wasted as staff use this information to plan the next steps in learning for each child. As a result, children's confidence, skills and knowledge grow rapidly.

We saw children behaving very well. If anyone is unkind, children are certain that adults will step in and help to sort out any differences. We saw no evidence of any form of bullying.

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

Lark Hill provides an outstanding quality of education. The well-designed curriculum enables children to successfully build on what they have already learned.

Leaders, staff and governors are highly ambitious for children to love learning and achieve well. They are clear about what they want children to know and be able to do by the time they leave the nursery. Their ambition, to provide 'a caring community of curious learners', is being delivered in practice.

Staff fully understand the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) very well. They are very well cared for and supported. Children with SEND enjoy the full range of experiences that the nursery has to offer. Children of different ethnicity, ages and gender play and learn happily together. No one is left out.

Children are surrounded by attractive reading materials. They love listening to the carefully selected stories that adults read to them. Children learn many stories and rhymes by heart, which helps their language and literacy development. For example, as they talked about a 'bear hunt' children explained the difference between 'over', 'under' and 'through'. They enjoyed telling their friends what 'squelching' sounded like if they jumped in mud. The teaching of early reading is very well organised and given the highest priority.

The curriculum for mathematics is excellent. Children learn to count accurately and to recognise shapes. They regularly practise their mathematical skills and grow in confidence. For example, we saw children taking great care to fill containers with water and comparing the different shapes and sizes. They were able to explain how when they added water some containers had 'more' and others 'less'.

The curriculum supports children's physical development exceptionally well. Children develop their physical skills as they explore different materials such as rocks, ice and cardboard. They use simple tools confidently, which strengthens their finger control. We observed many of the children holding pencils correctly and drawing recognisable shapes.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that helps children learn about other beliefs and cultures as well as their local community. Trips and visitors to the school bring learning to life. Children celebrate festivals, try different foods and enjoy meeting local community residents in the nearby community centre.

Leaders prioritise staffs' well-being. Staff told us that leaders listen to their views and that they all work effectively as a team. They are given time to complete tasks and their workload has been reduced. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Parents and carers told us how pleased they are with the quality of education that the nursery provides. 'Staff want the very best for them' is typical of the views expressed by the overwhelming majority of parents. They are confident that their children are very well prepared for moving on to the next stage of their education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise children's safety and welfare. Staff know children and their families extremely well. They are very well trained and highly vigilant. Any concerns are reported quickly to leaders and, where necessary, to outside agencies. Staff work diligently with other professionals to keep children safe.

Background

When we have judged a maintained nursery 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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in December 2014.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	106016
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10058096
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	58
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Hayley Whitehouse
Headteacher	Joanne O'Raw
Website	www.larkhill-nur.stockport.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	December 2014

Information about this school

- The school has provision for two-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

- We visited lessons at various times during the day.
- We held meetings with members of the senior leadership team, governors and staff.
- We spoke with parents as they brought their children to school.
- We looked at examples of children's work and spoke with children when we visited lessons. We also listened to children read.
- We held additional discussions with staff which focused on safeguarding. We also examined documentation relating to safeguarding.
- We carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and physical development. Deep dives are the methodology by which inspectors identify why a subject is as it is. This entails: discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, looking at examples of children's work, discussions with teachers and discussions with children.
- We met with the school improvement partner.

- We took account of three written responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- We took account of staff views following discussions with them.

Inspection team

Mike Hewlett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Stephen Rigby

Ofsted Inspector

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