

Marsh Hill Nursery School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 103126 |
| Local Authority | Birmingham |
| Inspection number | 355324 |
| Inspection dates | 3–4 March 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Anna Coyle |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Nursery |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3–4 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 92 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Peter Lane |
| Headteacher | Helen Masaun |
| Date of previous school inspection | 23 January 2008 |
| School address | 275 Marsh Hill Erdington, Birmingham B23 7HG |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who visited seven sessions involving two teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, staff, the Vice Chair of the Governing Body and groups of children, parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including assessment and tracking data, the school improvement plan, monitoring reports, children's work and photographic evidence. The inspection questionnaires were analysed, including 73 from parents and carers and 9 from members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively does teaching build on girls and boys attainment on entry to help them reach the national expectations across the six areas of learning?
- Has the school developed its curriculum, use of teaching staff and buildings effectively to provide more opportunities for children to make independent choices and experience outdoor learning?
- How effective are leadership and management, given the recent changes in senior leadership and the part-time headship?
- What are the reasons for the school's very high budget carry forward and does the governing body have suitable procedures for holding the school to account?

Information about the school

The nursery school is situated within a residential area and is of a similar size to other schools of its type. The majority of children are White British and there is also a wide mix of children from minority ethnic backgrounds which includes a high proportion from Pakistani backgrounds. Over a third of children speak English as an additional language and many of them are at an early stage of language acquisition. The main languages spoken at home are Urdu, Punjabi and Bengali. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to other settings, and their needs include specific and moderate learning difficulties and autism. The headteacher works part-time each week from Monday to Wednesday. The deputy headteacher is employed on a full-time basis and is the acting headteacher on Thursdays and Fridays. A new assistant headteacher was appointed in January 2011, who oversees the provision for special educational needs and provides bilingual support for early English language learners.

Children transfer from the nursery to one of a large number of local schools; for example, last year children transferred to 19 different schools.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This nursery school provides a good quality of education for its children. The outstanding care, guidance and support for the children and exemplary procedures for safeguarding ensure that they feel exceptionally safe and protected. Parents and carers speak highly of the school and agree that its links with them are outstanding. They say that: 'The staff are extremely professional and caring. They make time to listen' and that the school is 'a credit to the community.' The good leadership of the headteacher, who works part-time, and the deputy headteacher benefit the nursery well because they work effectively together as a team. Accurate self-evaluation procedures have enabled senior leaders to develop a clear vision for the future. They have produced a detailed school improvement plan, which rightly includes a focus on further improving children's communication skills and developing the school environment and the outdoor curriculum.

Achievement is good. Children make good progress from low starting points on entry and they attain the age-related expectations by the time they leave the school. Communication, language and literacy skills are developing well but a significant proportion of boys and girls have speech and language development needs when they first start school, and many are at a very early stage of learning English as an additional language. This means that progress is sometimes less consistent in the acquisition of communication skills than it is in other areas of learning. Children make good progress in problem-solving, reasoning and number, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. They make exceptional progress in their personal, social and emotional development and in physical development. As a result, they attain standards that exceed the national expectations in these two areas of learning. Children settle well and grow rapidly in confidence. The oldest children behave extremely well and have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and stay safe. This is because the school focuses well on promoting these aspects of learning.

The quality of teaching and the curriculum are good. The school has outstandingly effective procedures for collecting data about children's progress. Teachers' weekly planning and children's targets are good and show clearly how children will learn through a good balance of adult-led and free-choice activities, indoors and outside. Daily plans are focused well on activities, although they are not monitored consistently by all senior leaders to ensure they provide enough detail about the skills children will learn based on assessment information.

The governing body provides good support for the school and makes sure that all statutory requirements are met. It has suitable procedures to hold the school to account. Consequently, the sharing of staff expertise and the use of the outdoor areas have improved well since the last inspection and are now good. The school is yet to secure planning permission from the local authority for its development of the buildings and play

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areas. Hence, the large amount of money in the school's contingency fund is still set aside for this purpose. The school has good capacity for future improvement because it is led and managed well, governance and teaching are good and leaders have effectively dealt with the points raised at the time of the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build upon children's acquisition of communication skills by:
 - providing boys and girls with even more opportunities for role-play activities to help them develop their speech and language.
- Refine the monitoring of teaching and learning by:
 - involving all senior leaders in checking the quality of teaching and the use of assessment to inform daily planning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

Children make good progress from low starting points on entry. They make outstanding progress in personal, social, emotional and physical development, including those with special educational needs and disabilities and those who learn English as an additional language. Children increase their physical skills exceptionally well when manoeuvring wheeled toys and climbing over and under large equipment.

Initially, a significant proportion of children lack the skills to communicate with others and many are early language learners. Speaking skills develop steadily and the school's data shows that the gap is closing between the progress of girls and boys. The school's focus on boys' skills of communication has had a positive impact on their learning. As a result, they make good progress towards their individual targets. Listening skills develop quickly and these help children to concentrate well and follow adults' instructions carefully. This was illustrated clearly when children sat in a circle with their teacher and passed around a soft toy known as 'Beat Baby', speaking only when they held it their hands. As children become more self-assured, the good focus on well-planned literacy activities increases their skills in early reading and writing and the most able children achieve particularly well. Good opportunities for creative and imaginative play benefit children's learning, but a few children do not have enough role-play opportunities to help them build upon their speech and language skills. Children make good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of the world and in problem solving, reasoning and number; for example, when they explore construction toys and mathematical shapes such as squares, circles and triangles.

Children grow in confidence so that they become happy learners who enjoy their time in the school because they feel exceptionally safe and well cared for. Behaviour is outstanding. Children have a really strong understanding of the difference between right and wrong, and relationships between them are friendly. They respond promptly to adults' high expectations of them and attend school regularly. Children realise the importance of keeping safe even when they become excited, such as during lively musical sessions using xylophones and beaters. They know that fruit and vegetables are good for them and that running around outside helps them to grow healthy and strong. Children make good contributions to the school community by taking responsibility for putting things away and

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tidying up. They enjoy trips to a local farm and a centre for sea life. These activities widen their knowledge of cultural aspects and help to prepare them well for their future.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: Children's attainment ¹ | 2 |
| The quality of children's learning and their progress | 2 |
| The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| The extent to which children feel safe | 1 |
| Children's behaviour | 1 |
| The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |
| Taking into account: Children's attendance ¹ | 3 |
| The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Children of all abilities learn well because the teaching is good overall, and sometimes outstanding. Teachers work effectively with teaching assistants to take responsibility for a wide range of well-planned curricular activities. All adults use open-ended questions skilfully to encourage children join in practical activities, especially during quiet 'circle' time activities with 'Beat Baby'. They watch over children diligently when they are playing; for example, when they are outside climbing on large cones, wriggling through tunnels and balancing on wooden blocks and tricycles. Staff rightly put a lot of emphasis on children choosing tasks for themselves indoors and outside during 'free-flow' activities. Children particularly enjoy learning in the outdoor areas, which are well resourced with plenty of toys and play equipment. Computers and visual aids are used well by staff and children to extend learning. For instance, children with special educational needs and new language learners are well supported when counting two-dimensional shapes and making patterns with dough. The school has accurately identified the development of the outdoor curriculum as an area to improve so that children's learning is enriched even further.

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Assessment procedures are used meticulously by senior leaders to measure progress and pinpoint children's attainment. For example, the deputy headteacher has detailed information at her finger-tips to help her keep a check on children's progress. However, the data are not always used consistently to inform teachers' planning for daily activities, although clear evaluations of children's learning are made at the end of each day.

Children from all backgrounds and abilities are fully integrated within an inclusive and racially harmonious environment. Staff take excellent care of them while they are in the nursery. This helps the children to settle happily and feel valued. Children who are vulnerable because of their circumstances are cared for extremely sensitively so that they learn to trust the adults around them. Additional support from a speech and language therapist and a teacher for children who learn English as an additional language also benefits children's learning. Good use of photographs to record children's experiences and successes in their 'Learning Journeys' are shared openly with parents and carers. Plenty of attractive displays of children's work in wall displays brighten the classrooms with colour and help to provide a stimulating environment for learning. Visitors, such as a Bhangra dance group, African drummers and storytellers, musicians and local artists, enrich children's learning well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|---|----------|
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher work together in unison to provide good leadership and management. They share the leadership of the school effectively, have a clear sense of ambition and ensure good value for money is achieved. The new assistant headteacher is developing her role and takes good responsibility for managing the provision for children with special educational needs. Her bilingual skills in Urdu and Punjabi benefit the children's speech and language development, especially those who learn English as an additional language. The senior management team drives forward improvements with the use of a detailed development plan. The management of teaching and learning is good, although monitoring is not sufficiently refined to ensure that teachers have feedback about the quality of their daily plans. Nevertheless, leaders make sure that staff have good opportunities for professional development and training. The governing body meets regularly and is well informed about the school through the headteacher's reports. Governors are keen to develop their roles further to provide more challenge in order to drive forward the school's planning application for its building

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project. The school is eager to complete the planned improvements to the accommodation and outdoor areas, and has set aside funds appropriately for this development.

Safeguarding procedures are excellent and records are maintained meticulously. Careful checks are made of all those who work in the school to make sure that staff are suitable to work with young children. The school's excellent focus on partnerships with parents and carers is of great benefit to the children. These links help parents and carers to develop close involvement in their children's learning. Staff are effective in promoting equality of access and opportunity for the children by valuing each child as a unique individual and celebrating diversity. They actively promote good community cohesion between different groups in the local neighbourhood and this has a positive impact on children's learning. For example, effective partnerships with external agencies and local primary schools help the centre to enrich teaching and learning. The school has begun to increase its links with the wider community by making contact with a link for a school in Gambia.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 1 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

The high number of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire and those spoken to during the inspection were very appreciative of the nursery's provision. Their comments refer accurately to the 'teaching staff who obviously care about their school and the children'. Parents and carers rightly believe that adults care for their children very well. They all agree that their children are happy and safe and that they enjoy their time at the school. Parents and carers say that they are pleased with the experiences the children receive and say that the school takes account of their views and provides them with plenty of information. A very small number of parents and carers expressed concern about their children's progress, the lack of consultation evenings,

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pressure to make payments to the school fund and a lack of preparation for transfer to the next school. The inspectors followed up these concerns and found that progress is good and children are prepared well for entry into the Reception year. Plenty of information is given to parents and carers about children's progress which includes regular consultations with them. There is no obligation for parents to pay in to the school fund as this is completely voluntary.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Marsh Hill Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 92 children registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 58 | 79 | 15 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 56 | 77 | 17 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 44 | 60 | 28 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 50 | 68 | 21 | 29 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 53 | 73 | 19 | 26 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 48 | 66 | 23 | 32 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 39 | 53 | 29 | 40 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 37 | 51 | 29 | 40 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 51 | 70 | 19 | 26 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 38 | 52 | 30 | 41 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 41 | 56 | 31 | 42 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 49 | 67 | 23 | 32 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 58 | 79 | 15 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its children's needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

Overall effectiveness of schools

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 59 | 35 | 3 | 3 |
| Primary schools | 9 | 44 | 39 | 7 |
| Secondary schools | 13 | 36 | 41 | 11 |
| Sixth forms | 15 | 39 | 43 | 3 |
| Special schools | 35 | 43 | 17 | 5 |
| Pupil referral units | 21 | 42 | 29 | 9 |
| All schools | 13 | 43 | 37 | 8 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a child in their learning and development. |
| Attainment: | in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| Progress: | the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



7 March 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Marsh Hill Nursery School, Birmingham, B23 7HG

Thank you for helping me to find out about all the things that you do when I visited you all in Classes 1, 2 and 3. I enjoyed talking to you and seeing you playing together. Here are some of the things I found out.

You have a lot of fun at nursery school, especially in the outdoor area.

You make good progress and learn about lots of new things.

Your behaviour is excellent. You play happily together and enjoy learning.

Many of you understand that staying safe, eating fruit and vegetables and getting plenty of exercise helps you to be healthy and strong.

The adults who look after you are extremely caring and kind. They give you lots of help when you need it and make sure that you are very safe and protected.

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher lead and manage the school well.

There are two things that I have asked school to do to make it even better than it is already. I have asked the teachers to encourage you to talk to each other more often when you are playing, and to make sure leaders check their daily plans. All of you can help too by making sure that you continue to be kind to each other and trying hard in everything you do.

Yours sincerely

Dr Anna Coyle

Lead inspector

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