

Selly Oak Nursery School

26 Tiverton Road, Birmingham, B29 6BP

Inspection dates 12–13 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Selly Oak Nursery is a special place to learn. Children greatly enjoy all the stimulating and exciting activities.
- Children thrive because of the strong focus on care and nurture. They are known and valued as individuals; because of this they feel secure and have high levels of confidence and self-esteem.
- The strong emphasis on practical activities, and planning based on children's needs and interests, contributes to children's outstanding achievement. There is insufficient time spent on involving children in reviewing their own learning.
- Children behave exceptionally well. They run into school eagerly and have excellent attitudes to learning.
- Staff love their work and are a highly effective team. They are reflective practitioners, who welcome new ideas and are keen to try them out.
- The 'forest school' provides exceptional opportunities for the children to learn about nature, and how to keep safe.
- Underpinning the school's success are the dedication and expertise of the headteacher. She is ably assisted by senior staff and governors. As a result of excellent leadership, the quality of teaching is outstanding.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school. One summed up their views by saying, 'My child loves it here. It is brilliant preparation for school. We get lots of feedback. It is an amazing place!'

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed ten sessions or parts of sessions. Five observations were made jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Snack and lunch times were also observed.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, all practitioners, four members of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority. There were informal discussions with children and parents.
- The inspector took into account the 26 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent view), the views expressed in recent questionnaires carried out by the school and also spoke to parents when they brought their children to school.
- The inspector took into account the 15 completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspector looked at the Nursery's documents, including records of assessment and children's progress, planning for improvement, monitoring of teaching and learning, records of governors' meetings and those relating to attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Mary Hughes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is of a typical size for a nursery school. Children attend either on a full-time or part-time basis.
- An average number of children are currently supported at Early Years action and Early Years action plus. None has a statement of special educational needs.
- The majority of children are from White British backgrounds. However the Nursery has a wide range of different ethnic groups, the largest of these being Chinese. A minority of children are learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The school runs two out-of-school clubs; one is on site and provides a breakfast and tea-time club. The other is on the site of a local primary school. Both these provisions are inspected separately.
- The school was previously run by a charitable trust. The school was adopted by the local authority and became a maintained school in January 2012. The predecessor school was judged to be outstanding when it was last inspected.
- The school has close links with nursery schools in a range of European countries as part of an international project.
- The school has achieved a number of awards. These include the Leading Parent Partnership Award and the Birmingham Healthy Schools Silver award. The school has recently received the Green Flag award for Eco-awareness.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise children's skills, knowledge and understanding to even higher levels by:
 - ensuring that all staff talk to each child about what it is they have learned and how they can improve their work
 - including children's own comments about their learning in their 'learning journey' folders.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- When children start school their skills vary but are often below those expected for their age. As a result of high-quality provision, all groups of children make at least good progress from their starting points. Almost all children leave with skills that are in line with those expected for their age. Many develop skills which are beyond the levels typically expected at the start of the Reception Year. They are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education
- Those who are learning to speak English as an additional language make excellent progress in their communication. They eagerly talk about what they are doing, for example talking about the difference between loud and quiet sounds when playing instruments.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs, or supported at Early Years action or action plus, make outstanding progress. This is because they are given excellent support by adults who teach them in small groups or individually. All children learn key sign language words so that all children can communicate with one another. The school makes excellent use of a range of external agencies to support those with specific learning needs.
- The children enjoy books, stories and the many opportunities to share these. They can retell the story of 'The Train Ride', recall the repeated refrain and can order events from the beginning, middle and end. They frequently use early writing skills to record what they have observed, for example when making passports when playing as travel agents.
- Children use mathematical skills exceptionally well. Every opportunity is taken to develop skills practically, for example discovering how shapes fit together when constructing tracks and using counting skills to play hopscotch. Children ably talk about 'totalling' and 'combining' as they add two numbers together and are given good opportunities to reason and give explanations to develop understanding further.
- All children make excellent progress in all aspects of their physical development. They use the climbing equipment well, and showed good coordination during a football coaching session. They show well developed fine motor skills, for example manipulating small objects to create their Fathers' Day cards and to make a small suitcase for holiday clothes.
- Fundamental to the children's rapid progress is the excellent emphasis given to promoting their personal, social and emotional development. High levels of independence are shown, children are encouraging of one another and are able to persevere until a task is finished; for example when completing a puzzle or preparing a plate of outdoor food in Forest School.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Adults plan activities for each child's individual progress because they have excellent knowledge of how young children learn best, and they know the children exceptionally well. Each day's activities are planned precisely as they are adapted during the daily end of day review. The teaching team reflect, share their observations, children's interests and ideas so that they can make the most progress. Staff have high expectations of what children are capable of achieving.
- Teachers are skilled in getting children to be inquisitive and ask questions about the world around them. This is particularly evident in 'forest school' where children can use the bird hide to observe the birds and then use books, pictures and technology resources to find out more about

them. Children are regularly challenged to solve problems and develop their critical thinking skills.

- Adults are continually adapting and developing children's play to ensure they are always learning. They do this through quality questioning and discussion. For example, children developed their role play at the travel agents into setting up the classroom as an airplane, and then went on a journey.
- All staff are involved in checking children's learning and making notes about what they are able to do. They keep detailed records and chart progress in children's learning journey folders. These show a clear picture of each individual child's progress over their time in Nursery. Staff sometimes miss opportunities to discuss with children exactly what it is they have learnt and what they could do next time to make their work even better. Children's own comments about their learning are not included in their individual folders.
- Staff create an extremely purposeful atmosphere and a highly stimulating environment. This means that children have exciting opportunities to learn, both inside and in the outdoor areas. A wide range of resources is used imaginatively, with particularly good use made of natural resources. For example, children used objects buried in sand to look for treasure and counted out large pebbles to make sets of numbers.
- Many memorable experiences capture children's imagination. Children talk enthusiastically about their recent work with an artist when they made sculptures out of clay and wire. They were animated when talking about a photographic display showing when they built walls with bricks and mortar.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The school is an outstandingly harmonious community. The excellent community spirit is evident throughout the day as children eat snacks and lunch together, chat confidently with staff and ask for help when needed.
- An excellent induction system help families, as well as children, to prepare well for school. Parents spoke well of how quickly children settle into school and how their children feel safe and secure. Children clearly articulated that they feel safe during the inspection. Relationships are a real strength of the school.
- Children's attitudes to learning and behaviour are exemplary. They are extremely eager to get into school and start learning. This results in high attendance levels.
- They successfully collaborate and learn together in small groups. They know how to take turns, share resources and are extremely good at listening to one another.
- Children ably learn to take small risks and work out how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, during the 'forest school' session they knew not to go near the fire pit and knew to kneel down to look at the frogs in the pond.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is an inspirational, dedicated leader. She has ably led the school through many changes, including its transition from a charitable trust to a local authority school. Her expertise

has ensured that the detailed plans to take the school forward are based on an accurate view of its strengths and areas that need improvement.

- All staff and the governing body share the headteacher's determination to provide the very best for every child. Staff morale is very high and the staff questionnaires show that staff are proud to be working at the school. Staff take every opportunity to learn from one another, try out new ideas and make learning fun. High quality teamwork is a major factor in the school's success.
- Robust systems are in place for school leaders to regularly check on the quality of teaching and children's progress. Rigorous targets are set for staff to continually help them improve their performance.
- The rich curriculum interweaves many opportunities for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills to be developed. Many exciting activities create a sense of 'awe and wonder' in the children; for example when children sit quietly, with eyes closed, and listen to all the sounds around them in 'forest school'. The international project enables them to learn successfully about different people's cultures in this country and abroad.
- The school's partnership with parents is a major strength. Parents have many opportunities to find out more about the school and their children's learning. Learning targets are regularly shared and there are regular updates on progress. Parents spoke about how much they appreciated being able to come into school to see how activities are taught and to share these with their children. They are extremely positive about the school's effectiveness. All parents said they would recommend the Nursery.
- The local authority provides suitably 'light touch' support to this outstanding school. The local authority uses the headteacher to support other schools. The school has benefited from being able to access a range of services since becoming a local authority school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are well informed about the work of the school. They have been very active during the school's transition and have worked tirelessly to ensure the school has a secure financial future. They know how well the school is performing because of accurate and detailed reports from the headteacher and from their own visits to school. They are committed to continuous improvement and hold the school to account by asking challenging questions. They ensure that teachers' pay is directly related to their performance in the classroom and manage the performance of the headteacher well. Governors ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements. They have ably adapted to their new roles and responsibilities as a local authority body.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137796
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	400310

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Aki Nehar
Headteacher	Yvonne James
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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