

Marsh Hill Nursery School

275 Marsh Hill, Erdington, Birmingham, B23 7HG

Inspection dates 12–13 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- The children are extremely confident, happy and inquisitive. They are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The achievement of all children is outstanding. Regardless of starting points or any barriers to learning, each child receives the care and support they need to make excellent progress.
- Consistently outstanding teaching is underpinned by highly skilled staff who know exactly when to offer direct support and when to allow children to find out things for themselves. They ensure that learning is always interesting, challenging and fun.
- The well-organised, shared classrooms and outdoor spaces are attractively resourced, stimulating children's curiosity and imagination, and leaving them eager to learn.
- Children's behaviour is exemplary. They are wholly absorbed in activities. Staff are excellent role models, helping children to settle in quickly to the nursery. Staff provide a warm and welcoming place for children to begin their learning journey.
- Relationships between children and adults are excellent. There is a close partnership with parents and carers, who hold the nursery in high regard.
- Leaders, managers and governors work extremely successfully to make sure that children make as much progress as possible. They regularly watch to see how effectively all staff work with children.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Consequently, the school has rapidly improved through enhancements to the learning environment, and a relentless focus on monitoring and improving teaching.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed ten sessions, eight of which were observed jointly with either the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- The inspector held discussions with three members of the Governing Body including the Chair; a representative of the local authority; subject coordinators and other members of staff.
- The inspector took account of the 26 returns to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the results of the school's annual survey of parents and carers for the past three years, and spoke with nine parents. The inspector also took into account the nine staff questionnaires returned.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including data on children's current and previous progress, the school development plan, performance management documentation and records relating to children's behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Geoffrey Dorrity, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this 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. A minority of children speak English as a second language, of which there are high numbers of children speaking Urdu as their first language. Children who speak Polish as their first language have significantly increased during the last three years and this is now the third largest ethnic group.
- The majority of children are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportions of children with special educational needs who are supported at school action and at school action plus are similar to other settings. Children's needs include specific and moderate learning difficulties and autism. There are no children with statements of special education needs on roll.
- The headteacher works part-time each week from Monday to Wednesday. The deputy headteacher is also employed on a part-time basis and is the acting headteacher on Thursdays and Fridays.
- Children transfer to many different schools across Birmingham but the majority transfer from the nursery to two local primary schools.
- Changes since the last inspection include the appointments of a deputy headteacher, class teacher and Polish-speaking teaching assistant. Extensive refurbishment and extension of the buildings and the development of the outdoor area has also been completed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that support staff are always fully briefed so that all are equipped to give the most effective help to children and keep them interested and involved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children start school with knowledge and skills which are generally well below those typically expected for their age. Children of all abilities make outstanding progress during their time in the school. They leave to enter Reception classes with levels that are often better than those typically expected for their age and at least in line with expectations. This is confirmed by the two local primary schools to where the majority of children transfer.
- Children make excellent progress in developing their personal and social skills. This lays a firm foundation for their future learning. For example, they listen very attentively to their teachers and to each other and follow instructions carefully. They make decisions about their work and play and stick at activities until they are completed. They work together very well, share ideas and support each other kindly.
- Children who are learning English as an additional language make excellent progress. The very strong focus on speaking and listening leads to rapid gains in children's early communication skills. For example, children understand that symbols carry meaning, and use this knowledge to write sentences when completing stories or when identifying their names at registration time. They are all confident and competent speakers, and understand how to listen to each other.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs make excellent progress from their individual starting points. Teachers make very good use of precise assessments of children's progress to help them build the skills and attributes, such as concentration and language skills, for their future learning. Consequently, these children are also very well prepared for the Reception class.
- There has been a very good trend of improving the skills acquired by less-able children and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. This is because teachers expect the best for all children and are successfully narrowing the gap between their achievement and that of others. Both boys and girls make outstanding progress in all areas of learning. Parents and carers comment on this aspect of the school's work, particularly in relation to language development and social skills.
- Children make outstanding progress in their early mathematical skills. They count and order numbers well in a wide range of activities, such as when counting the buttons on the snowmen, or matching the number on the bike to the parking space outdoors. These activities successfully support their understanding of the order of numbers.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- All teaching is at least good with the vast majority being outstanding. School leaders regularly check teachers' on-going effectiveness and, through rigorous observation and guidance, raise their expectations even higher.
- Teachers make excellent use of accurate assessments of children's progress to set work which enables them to do their best. They make frequent and detailed observations of children's learning in different circumstances, and gather information from parents and carers to reinforce these assessments.
- The staff team have considerable knowledge and expertise about this age group. They work

extremely well together, making the most of their strengths and experience. All staff are involved in thorough planning so their expectations are consistently high, and activities challenge all children to do their best.

- Teachers promote children's desire to find out about things extremely well. They make highly effective use of a wide range of different methods of teaching to do this. For example, they support children to freely make good use of the whole environment, both indoors and out, developing understanding and skills through role play that supports imaginative learning. Similarly, they expertly support children in developing critical thinking skills, for example, when expertly using a story to develop characterisation and prediction in writing.
- All resources are stored in easily accessible containers both indoors and out, with clear labels of the contents. Children are successfully encouraged to make decisions about what they want to use and to tidy up after themselves.
- Teachers and other adults use searching questions to explore children's understanding and develop their thinking skills. They involve children very well in thinking about their own learning and how they can improve it. For example, when writing and drawing, children reflect on the presentation and amend their work so it is more accurate. When exploring shiny resources on a display, teachers skilfully supported children to reflect on improving the descriptive language they were using.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are given work which enables them to make outstanding step-by-step progress. Specialist staff provide sensitive and skilled support when needed, while encouraging children to do things for themselves as much as they can. They work closely with other professionals, such as speech and language therapists, to plan future work.
- Although support staff are mostly extremely effective in helping children to learn, there are rare occasions when they are not as well briefed as they could be. The result is that, very occasionally, when children are working and playing in small groups, staff do not step in quickly enough to make sure that all the children are interested and joining in.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

- Children play extremely well together and show exemplary attitudes to learning. Whether they are working with an adult or by themselves, they sustain their interest for long periods of time because they are motivated to learn.
- Staff are excellent role models and everybody is treated with the greatest respect. Staff, parents, carers and children know and understand the school's routines and policies, and the procedures for promoting high standards of behaviour are applied consistently well. Children are exceptionally cooperative with adults. The effective settling-in routine at the start of a session, undertaken with parents and carers, of signing in and selecting a reading book to take home, means the children start the session calmly and are ready to learn.
- Children care for each other and their environment, apologising without prompting when they accidentally knock into each other, passing warm clothing to each other when going outside and tidying up independently when completing activities.
- Children learn to take small risks and work out how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, waiting on the large outdoor equipment until others have completed their climb, before

starting themselves or when using scissors carefully when cutting paper and card to make shapes.

- Teachers work closely with parents and carers to help children settle in to school life quickly and effectively. They help children with social and emotional difficulties to manage and improve their own behaviour by providing a good sense of security and offering specialist support when it is needed.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher knows the strengths of the school well, and identifies accurately actions to secure continuous improvement. She is supported exceptionally well by the deputy headteacher, skilled governors and a committed staff team. Together, they demonstrate they have the capacity to improve the school still further.
- Staff share an energetic drive for continuous improvement, and the school has successfully addressed the areas for action that were identified at its last inspection. The very effective leadership of the headteacher and governors has improved the school considerably since then. The development of the outdoor area and curriculum, alongside refurbishment enabling the children to freely choose whether to work outside or in, has been exceedingly well managed.
- The school has an accurate awareness of its strengths through the regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and the progress made by children. This is underpinned by robust data collection and analysis. The headteacher and other senior leaders share their expertise extremely well and this ensures that new staff quickly become part of a highly effective team.
- The management of staff performance is very well monitored and findings used effectively to identify where further training is needed. Excellent leadership of teaching has ensured that this continues to improve from already high levels. All staff are held to account for children's progress and, as their questionnaires confirm, they all feel highly valued and morale is high. An extensive programme of whole-staff training, linked to actions in the school improvement plan, ensures that skills are continually updated and improved.
- The way activities are taught is well planned across the areas of learning, and enriched by a wide range of extra experiences. Music sessions are delivered by specialist visiting teachers. Visits are organised to various locations, such as Drayton Manor Park and a farm, with visitors to the nursery including theatre companies and ceramic artists. These are relevant to the children's ages and interests, and successfully enhance their progress.
- The school's partnership with parents and carers is a significant strength. They are extremely positive about the way the school works, the progress their children make, and how it helps them to understand their children's learning. They overwhelmingly agreed that they would recommend the school to others.
- The local authority provides appropriate 'light-touch' support to this outstanding school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body fulfils its duties exceptionally well. It makes sure that the school is a safe place, and that staff are suitably checked and trained in child protection matters. Parents and carers comment positively about the effective action taken by the governing body to improve the buildings and grounds. Governors have a full understanding of the school's effectiveness through the use of a range of data and frequent reports from the headteacher and her deputy.

Governors play an important role in decision making, based on first-hand information on the quality of teaching and the children's achievement. They have a good grasp of the school's work by undertaking focused visits to the school and holding the senior leadership team to account. They check the quality of teaching by asking questions about data which shows how much progress is being made by different groups of children. They make sure that decisions about how to use funds available are rational and in the best interests of the children. They decide whether staff should be rewarded salary increases and review targets set for the headteacher. Since the previous inspection, several new members have been appointed and there is now a full complement in membership. Governors have a wide range of relevant experience and expertise, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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	103126
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	427065

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 of pupils on the school roll	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Lane
Headteacher	Helen Masaun
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2011
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