

Selly Oak Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103149
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	286574
Inspection date	25 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Barbara Crane

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Appleby
Headteacher	Yvonne James
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001
School address	26 Tiverton Road Birmingham B29 6BP
Telephone number	0121 4721700
Fax number	0121 4721700

Age group	3-4
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This direct grant-funded Nursery has charitable status. It has a management committee rather than a governing body. All the children attend full-time. About a third of the children come from the Selly Oak area and a fifth from Bournville. The rest come from several other areas. Most children come from favourable backgrounds and several ethnic groups are represented. Just over a tenth of the children have English as an additional language but none are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of children with learning difficulties is slightly below average. Children's attainment when they start at the Nursery is better than typically found..

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstandingly effective Nursery in which children are very well prepared for their future. Children's excellent achievement means that they go far beyond the expectations for their age in their work and personal development by the time they leave. Parents are delighted with what the school provides and with their partnership with the staff. The easy two-way flow of information between home and school means that both staff and parents know how to help children to do their best and to feel happy and confident. Parents value the school's caring atmosphere and the professional approach of the staff, as reflected in the comments of one parent who said that the school 'provides a nurturing and stimulating environment in which my child has blossomed.' The staff are resolute in pursuit of the best for the children and provide excellent care, guidance and support for them. Consequently, children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. Children start and end the day happily and enjoy learning with their friends and the adults. They are polite, considerate to each other and extremely well behaved. Children relish the nutritious meals and snacks and take full advantage of active play in the fresh air to keep healthy.

Teaching is outstanding and effective teamwork means that there is a high level of consistency in nearly all respects. Children with English as an additional language receive any support they need. Very effective teaching for children with learning difficulties promotes their rapid progress. There is often excellent questioning by adults that prompts children to think more deeply. On a few occasions, adults miss opportunities to fully extend the very capable children's understanding through probing questions that would challenge them even further. Excellent relationships and the thoughtful and smooth organisation of the day enhance children's feeling of security. High aspirations are seen in the children's targets that are set with the help of parents, so that everyone knows what is being aimed for. The excellent breadth and excitement that are built into the curriculum, combined with the adaptation of teaching for individual children, leads to their very rapid progress. Indoor and outdoor spaces are full of things to explore, engage children's interest and spark their curiosity.

Leadership and management are first-rate and ensure that all children are fully included in what the school offers. The headteacher leads a talented and committed team with a mission to inspire children's love of learning. The thorough review of practices and analysis of data means that the school has the right priorities. Swift and effective action means that things that need improving do so rapidly. There is excellent capacity to improve, demonstrated in the improvements made in strengthening the school's systems for assessing and tracking individual children's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that every opportunity is taken to fully develop the most capable children's learning through adults' questioning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children's excellent progress means that, by the time they leave the Nursery to enter Reception classes in other schools, they are very well set up for the future. This is the same for all children, regardless of gender, ethnic group or background. The overwhelming majority of children are working well beyond the expectations for their age. About a third of the children are on track,

by the time they leave, to reach the goals set for children who are at the end of the Foundation Stage. This very positive picture is seen across all the areas of learning. Children's excellent skills in listening mean that they learn from each other as well as adults. Through analysing data about children's progress, the school identified that some aspects of children's physical development needed boosting. The steps taken to adapt the curriculum and teaching have proved very successful and so children's attainment and progress in this area now matches that of other areas. Children with learning difficulties make excellent progress towards their targets because of highly effective intervention and teaching. Children who have English as an additional language make equally good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children love coming to the Nursery and show delight in learning. Consequently, their attendance is good. Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. Their good early skills in reading, writing, numeracy and using information and communication technology set them up very well for future learning. Children's capacity to work together, to solve problems by negotiation and to develop excellent relationships rounds off their development. They eat and drink healthily and have fun in the fresh air during active play that they know that is good for them. They know how to keep themselves and others safe by respecting others' space, handling tools carefully and attending to hygiene. Children care about each other and the adults in the school. This was well demonstrated when a group invited an adult to join them in a speed boat that they had built from large blocks in outdoor play. The duly seated adult expressed concern that the sea might become rough and a child quickly reassured her, saying 'Don't worry, we are only pretending, you'll be alright with us.' When differences of opinion arise amongst children, they show an excellent ability to find a solution that is amicable. Children are eager to help their community by doing jobs around the school and acting as the leader for their group for the day.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

High quality teaching ensures that children use all of their senses to build up ideas and knowledge. Adults know children's capabilities very well and their enjoyment in being with them is evident throughout the day. The staff are skilled at knowing when to intervene and also when to hold back and let children become more independent in their learning. Assessments are very well used so that adults know when individual children are ready to be taught new skills or need to revisit those that are not firmly in place. The needs of children who have learning difficulties, or have English as an additional language are very well catered for. Staff training on how to use questions to probe children's understanding and extend their learning has been mainly successful. There are just a few occasions when opportunities are missed to fully extend learning through questioning for children who demonstrate the capacity to go far beyond the expectations for their age in learning. The sensitive support for children with learning difficulties means that these children's progress matches that of others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The very well-planned curriculum is reflected in a vibrant and stimulating environment that gives due emphasis to all areas of learning. Children's experiences are woven together in activities that enable them to use the skills they have in relevant situations. Consequently, children meet with success and want to learn more. They have many opportunities to imagine and recreate experiences through play indoors and outdoors and to practise the vocabulary they have learned. The Forest School, which is an outdoor area in which children can explore and take risks in a safe environment, is one of the children's favourite areas for learning. There is a very good balance of planned and incidental work for children. Adults are quick to seize children's ideas and use these to extend children's learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The excellent level of daily care for children is greatly appreciated by parents and helps children feel secure. In the Forest School, for example, children are provided with good quality weatherproof clothing and footwear so that they can freely explore the environment. Everything necessary is done to safeguard children. Parents are fully involved in the procedures for helping children to settle in when they join the Nursery. Children's specific individual needs are quickly identified and are fully met. The checks on the children's progress in learning and their personal and emotional development are carried out meticulously and lead to adults' deep knowledge of each individual child. Targets are drawn from assessments and shared with children's parents. Very effective support for children with learning difficulties, as well as those who are learning English as an additional language, means that their progress is the same as their classmates.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Excellent leadership and management form the foundation of the school's success. The headteacher leads with skill and a determination to get the best out of everyone. The staff form a hard-working team who put the children at the forefront of their efforts. Their professional development of staff is tightly tied in with the school's priorities for improvement. Self-evaluation is objective and very well used to identify what needs to improve. The school's track record of doing what it says it will do is excellent. Work on improving systems for analysing data about assessments has been carried out meticulously. The management board are supportive and well informed and are rapidly extending their role beyond their statutory responsibilities because they want to give every assistance to the school.

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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, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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 effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Children

Inspection of Selly Oak Nursery School, 26 Tiverton Road, Birmingham, West Midlands B29 6BP

Thank you for being so kind to me when I spent a day at your Nursery recently. Everyone was very welcoming. I am writing you this letter to tell you what I found out while I was with you. I can certainly see why you enjoy coming every day and why your parents think that your Nursery is such a good place for you! It is an outstanding Nursery giving you a brilliant start to your education. This is what I found that makes it such a special place.

- You enjoy being with your friends and the grown-ups who work with you. Your behaviour is excellent. Well done all of you for being so sensible and thoughtful!
- You know how to be healthy, fit and safe and also how to have fun.
- You are learning all the things you need to know for when you start your next school. This is because the teaching is so very good.
- The grown-ups take very good care of you and are very kind. They know each one of you and so they can give you the right sort of help at the right time.
- You have a lot of exciting things to do and I could see how much you enjoy learning in the Forest School.
- Everyone works hard to get the best for you and the people in charge make sure that the Nursery is a lovely, happy place for you.

I have asked the grown-ups to do something to make things even better. This is to make sure that the questions they ask make you think even more. You are so good at thinking about things and answering questions that you will enjoy this, I'm sure.

Keep on trying hard and enjoying working and playing together. I wish you all the very best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Barbara Crane (Lead inspector)