

Selly Oak Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103149
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	336019
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Best

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Rachel Snape
Headteacher	Mrs Yvonne James
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2007
School address	26 Tiverton Road Selly Oak West Midlands
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**Number of children on roll in the registered
childcare provision****Date of last inspection of registered
childcare provision**

Not previously inspected

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed 13 lessons and seven members of staff, and visited the breakfast and after-school clubs run by the management committee. Inspectors had discussions with parents, groups of children, members of the management committee, staff and the school's local authority advisor. They observed the school's work, and looked at assessment records, curriculum plans, management committee minutes, school policies and the school's single central record of staff and volunteers working with children. Inspectors analysed 42 parental questionnaires from parents of children attending the school and 12 staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress made by different groups of children, particularly those learning English as an additional language and those able to learn at a faster rate
- the use staff make of assessment information to tailor learning to children's individual needs
- the role of the management committee and senior leaders in holding the school to account.

Information about the school

This oversubscribed school has charitable status. It is grant-funded by the local authority and parents contribute towards running costs. There is a voluntary management committee rather than a governing body. All the children attend full-time, starting in the September following their third birthday. Just over half the children are White British, with a greater number of ethnic groups now represented than at the time of the last inspection. About a fifth of the children speak English as an additional language or are bilingual, and these figures have also increased. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.

The school runs an extended day, providing children from the nursery and pupils from nearby schools with breakfast and after-school clubs daily during term time.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Selly Oak Nursery is a truly outstanding school that gives children an excellent start to their full-time education. Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the school and attend regularly. All groups of children make excellent progress because of the outstanding provision and first-class leadership and management. Parents are highly delighted, as reflected in their written and spoken comments to inspectors. One wrote: 'The nursery school is a wonderful environment. Our daughter is learning so many fantastic things and at such a rate. We are delighted with her progress and the caring environment in which she has made so many friends.'

When they start in the Nursery, children's skills and experiences are broadly at the levels expected for their age. This general picture masks a wide range of individual abilities, together with an increasing number of children who speak English as an additional language. A programme of home visits and early assessments ensures that all children's needs are well understood and addressed from the very beginning. The highly committed and experienced staff are extremely knowledgeable about each individual and finely tune learning opportunities to challenge and enable all children to succeed. Learning moves at a brisk yet enjoyable pace and children are wholly engrossed in what they are doing because staff have unfailingly high expectations and ensure that activities are superbly organised. Staff make excellent use of probing questions to help children think, explain and advance their learning. As a result, by the end of the Nursery year, children's skills in each of the six areas of learning are significantly higher than expected for their age.

The school's extremely rich and varied curriculum makes maximum use of the school's facilities and resources to promote children's learning through an exceedingly well-balanced selection of adult-led, adult initiated and child-chosen activities. This is also demonstrated in the excellent extended school provision. Children's behaviour is outstanding. They work together extremely well and demonstrate a consistently high level of respect and concern for each other. Children have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and are remarkably well informed about different countries and cultures. They are exceedingly proud of their school community, contributing their ideas through the school council.

Work is shortly to begin on improving the school's facilities, both indoors and outdoors, which will further increase the already comprehensive range of opportunities for learning. The school rightly acknowledges the challenges that this sets the staff in adapting and developing their planning and assessment procedures to support the new provision. They do so from a position of strength because the school's leaders already ensure a high level of training, planning and teamwork that is fully focused on individual

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children's welfare and progress.

Under the strong and perceptive leadership of the headteacher, who is extremely well supported by her deputy and hard-working staff team, the school has not left a stone unturned in bringing about further improvement, while maintaining already high standards and provision. The management committee provides excellent support while resolutely holding the school to account. The school gives excellent value for money and has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that planning and assessment procedures develop to extend the range of children's learning opportunities, taking account of the school's new equipment and facilities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children**1**

Children make excellent progress in all the Early Years Foundation Stage areas of learning. Girls are ahead of boys in their development, as seen nationally for this age group, although the gap closes by the end of the year as the result of first-class assessments and activities tailored to meet individual children's needs. Beneath the quiet buzz of children at work there is a hive of activity as children enthusiastically engage in learning. They listen carefully, speak clearly using a wide vocabulary and apply themselves earnestly to their work. Individual programmes for children who speak English as an additional language ensure their rapid progress in developing confidence and understanding. More able children are fully challenged and stimulated, enabling them to satisfy their curiosity and pursue their particular interests. First-class support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they make the best possible progress and are fully included in all aspects of school life. All children are proficient in sign language, ensuring everyone in the school community is able to contribute and be understood.

Problem-solving activities, especially those set in the very popular Forest School outdoor environment, show how effectively children apply the skills they have acquired across the areas of learning. For example, one group, independently building an inclined run from guttering to enable a small ball to cover the greatest distance, quickly assumed different roles: one child took the role of organiser and gave instructions to the other member of the team, adjusting the angle of fall to ensure success.

The calm and orderly routine of the nursery day underpins children's confidence and well-being. They readily turn to adults for help and advice, take turns and show mature concern for each other and for creatures in the Forest School area. All children take turns at being daily leaders, with clearly defined responsibilities, and eco-warriors, who are responsible for saving energy and recycling. All children take responsibility for their own personal care, some having made particularly rapid progress since the start of the year. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, weaving together the skills and experiences that are the firm foundations for their next stage of

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education and beyond. Their exemplary standard of behaviour, evident at all times, is achieved without the loss of children's individuality or spirit: on the odd occasion when where there is a difference of opinion, this is invariably resolved before adults have the chance to intervene.

Children's excellent understanding of keeping healthy is evident in their enjoyment of wholesome snacks and meals prepared on the premises. Children grow and harvest vegetables and fruits for the cooks to use and sustain themselves well in both organised and informal exercise. Children are greatly looking forward to their forthcoming residential visit to the countryside, many having heard first-hand from brothers and sisters about all the activities lined up for them. The school council meets regularly and takes part in discussions with children at other nurseries. They confidently express their views about a variety of matters and take a keen interest in what visitors do. Their sense of community extends beyond the school, especially in their knowledge about the children in the nurseries across the world with whom the school has established links.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

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

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

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How effective is the provision?

Staff expertly initiate and develop children's learning. They have an excellent knowledge of how young children learn and make highly effective use of the information they constantly gather about what children know and can do in order to plan their individual next steps in learning. One parent wrote: 'I cannot fault Selly Oak Nursery School. They consistently do above and beyond the requirements and I am delighted with the provision that my child gets. I believe it to be a wonderful place for a child to be!'

A major contributory factor to the school's outstanding provision is the daily after-school meeting where staff discuss children's progress, the match of activities to individual needs, and how these can be further improved. All staff take an active part in these meetings, sharing ideas and seeking out learning resources. The high morale evident in these meetings is reflected in the enthusiasm and skill with which staff transform these plans into challenging and inspiring activities for all groups of children. Continual feedback and measured help encourage children to take responsibility for improving what they do, although just occasionally, staff intervene a little too early. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well catered for, with individual programmes drawn up and learning resources especially prepared.

The curriculum provides rich opportunities for children's high-quality learning and personal development. The extensive outside areas are very well resourced with a range of fixed and movable equipment. During the day, children and staff move between different rooms, each equipped for a different area of learning. Children and staff discuss the activities available and regularly get together to share their experiences and learning.

Staff give excellent attention to all aspects of care, guidance and support. They work very closely with parents and carers, particularly those who are harder to reach, outside agencies and each other to enable all children to prosper and make the best possible progress. Safeguarding and other policies are well understood and promoted by all staff.

The school's extended provision is excellent and children are very well looked after. Older children, most of whom attended the nursery themselves, are delighted to come back and they play well with their younger friends, who appreciate the wide range of activities available. They particularly enjoy making their own sandwiches at tea time. Parents are very pleased with the standard of care and the approachability of staff.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1
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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides the school with incisive and clear direction. She successfully involves children, parents and carers, staff and the management committee in embracing and driving the school's vision. The value placed on each individual child's contribution and zest for learning comes from the staff's relentless drive for improvement. Systems to track children's progress are exceedingly thorough yet readily accessible, and regular monitoring of teaching also highlights where learning needs finer tuning and informs training needs. The exceptionally high level of satisfaction expressed by parents reflects the consistent and productive partnership the school promotes.

Excellent partnerships with other providers and outside agencies focus unerringly on high-quality support and provision for each individual. The school maintains close links with other Early Years settings and local schools. The school goes to exceptional lengths to ensure that all children can participate in all that it offers and make the best possible progress.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding children are robust and the required information is systematically recorded on a single central record. Training is regularly undertaken and the school's risk assessments and quality assurance procedures are rigorous. The school community is highly cohesive and children are substantially involved in maintaining this, not only within the school but in the local and wider community. New technologies enable children to be fully involved in the school's links with nurseries across the world and this is enhanced by regular adult visits and visitors, funded through the Comenius project.

The management committee is extremely well informed and active in the school, its members bringing a wealth of experience to their work. The unique nature of the school's relationship with the local authority puts additional responsibilities on the management committee but, working closely with the headteacher and the school's administrative staff, they discharge these meticulously through a very effective sub-committee structure.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1

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The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Over 80% of families returned completed questionnaires. Nearly all responses from parents and carers included written comments, elaborating on the statements in the questionnaire. They expressed an exceedingly high degree of satisfaction with the school, the vast majority strongly agreeing with all the statements. No parent expressed any negative view about the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Selly Oak 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 52 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	90	4	10	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	93	3	7	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	36	86	6	14	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	86	6	14	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	88	5	12	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	86	6	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	88	5	12	0	0	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)	33	79	7	17	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	83	7	17	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	81	7	17	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	76	9	21	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	37	88	5	12	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	86	6	14	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 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	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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 May 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Selly Oak Nursery School, Birmingham, B29 6BP

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited you last week. When I met the school council, I promised to write to you all about my visit.

Your Nursery is a very special place because it is an outstanding school. The staff take excellent care of you and do all they can to make sure that you are safe and happy, and have lots of exciting activities to do throughout the day. Those of you who come to the breakfast club or stay on after the end of the school day are also very well looked after. You work hard and enjoy yourselves, and your families and carers are delighted with how well you are getting on. They are absolutely right! You do exceedingly well because all the adults in the school want the very best for you and are experts in knowing just how to help you.

You get on very well with each other and your behaviour is excellent. You take turns, speak nicely to each other and generously give your help when it is needed. In taking turns at being group leaders and eco-warriors, you are doing some very important jobs in and around the school. Many of you told me how much you enjoy your Forest School work. I was extremely impressed with how well you got on with solving the problems you were set, particularly all those good ideas for building.

The headteacher and the staff keep a very careful eye on how you are getting on. Each afternoon, when you have gone home, they sit down and plan what you will do the next day, including special things for those of you who need a bit more help or have found things easy. This is one of the reasons why every single one of you does so well. The headteacher and the management committee work very well together to improve the school. All the adults know about their plans for the future, especially the new facilities that are going to be built this summer. I have asked the staff to make sure that they think of as many different ways to use all these as possible, to extend the opportunities children have for learning even further.

Keep working hard and enjoying your learning. I wish you all well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Best

Lead inspector

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