

Brearley Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	103121
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	376824
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2012
Lead inspector	Clive Lewis

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	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geraldine Henry
Headteacher	Susan Stewart
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2009
School address	Brearley Street Birmingham B19 3XJ
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Age group	3–4
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Introduction

Inspection team

Clive Lewis

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice by an additional inspector, who observed seven lessons. All teachers and most support staff were seen working with children. Meetings were held with members of the governing body and members of staff. Questionnaires from 16 parents and carers were analysed. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, looked at documentation including teachers' planning documents, and examined tracking and assessment data.

Information about the school

The children attending Brearley Nursery come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups of children are from African-Caribbean, Somali, French Congolese and mixed backgrounds. 75% are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language, which is above what is often found. The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs is higher than is usually found in nursery schools and five children are currently being assessed for a statement. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The Nursery is part of a larger children's centre which was the subject of a separate Ofsted inspection.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- Brearley Nursery provides an outstanding education for its children. Its excellent curriculum ensures that children achieve very well from starting points that are generally well below expected levels. By the time that they leave to join their Reception classes in a number of schools, they are confident and independent learners.
- The Nursery has an overwhelming atmosphere of care, nurture and support in which all the children thrive and which nurtures children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Each child is fully included in what is offered and they, and their parents and carers, are cared for as individuals. The school plays a central part within the community and is greatly valued by parents and carers, who are unanimous in saying that they are happy with their children’s experience at the school. One parent wrote, ‘My son has settled very well into the school and all I can say is “Thank you” to everyone at Brearley.’
- Children love the Nursery; they have highly positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is excellent. Each day, children thoroughly enjoy a wide and highly varied range of carefully planned and exciting activities, both indoors and out in the safety of the school environment.
- The headteacher’s thoughtful, inspirational and wise leadership and management continue to underpin the success of the Nursery. She is supported exceptionally well by a very strong and experienced team of teachers and practitioners each one of whom makes a valuable contribution to the development and success of the school and to promoting children’s outstanding progress.
- There is accurate and rigorous evaluation of all aspects of the school’s provision and performance. Assessment and tracking systems are precise, accurate and thorough. Senior leaders, along with all members of staff, regularly evaluate their own performance as well as that of the school generally. For example, the school has realised that more could be done to ensure that the observation strategies used when children are working in the outdoor classroom in all weathers are as strong and effective as the strategies used when children are in the classrooms.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Work to refine the quality of focused assessments in the outdoor classroom so that they always inform the next steps of learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children run eagerly into the Nursery each morning, demonstrating clearly how much they enjoy coming to school. They play happily on their own or with others and children from widely different cultures and backgrounds play together harmoniously. Children are very active learners and are given a wide range of opportunities to explore and investigate both within the four Nursery classrooms and in the highly stimulating and secure outdoor environment. Because their welfare is exceptionally well provided for, they flourish in this very secure and safe environment. They are keen to learn and a very high priority is given to developing their English skills through well-planned and well-supported speaking and listening activities; as a result, children who speak English as an additional language make outstanding progress. All adults pay close attention to children's individual needs and quickly identify those who may show a delay in learning. They provide good support through the excellent links they have with external health agencies. This ensures that disabled children and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. By the time children move to their Reception classes in a range of local schools, their skills have improved significantly and, although standards remain below those typically expected for their age in communication and language skills, skills are broadly in line with those expected for their age in other areas of learning. Given their very low starting points, this equates to excellent progress overall. All parents and carers feel that their children make good progress and the inspection found that children make at least good, and frequently, outstanding progress.

Quality of teaching

Teachers are imaginative in planning activities and adept at capitalising on every opportunity for learning. They are skilled at intervening at appropriate moments to ask open questions which prompt children to think. The main focus is on promoting learning through first-hand experience. The combination of independent choice for a wide range of interesting and challenging activities and adult-led sessions ensures that basic skills in all areas of learning are promoted most effectively. The outstanding interaction between all staff and children, combined with the extremely well thought-out organisation of the accommodation, curriculum and choice of resources, ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development progresses well during their time in school. The excellent ratio of adults to children ensures that individual learning needs are consistently met. Adults know the children and families very well. Regular observations by staff inform them about children's

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particular interests and their achievements. All adults contribute to daily assessments which build into a comprehensive picture of each child's development in different strands of learning. These observations and assessments are used exceptionally well to plan evermore challenging tasks. Through its extremely rigorous programme of self-evaluation, the school has realised that assessments of children when they are in the outdoor areas are not yet as comprehensive as those made in the classrooms. Adults have very high expectations of children's capabilities and they direct their praise precisely. They are always on hand to promote learning further by showing children how to draw the very best from the exciting activities. Early identification of individuals' needs and very close working with outside agencies mean that children receive first-rate support to help them thrive. Staff excel at building up a comprehensive picture of each child in their care. All parents and carers responding to the questionnaire agreed that teaching is good at the school; inspectors found that it is always at least good and often outstanding.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Children's behaviour is excellent. They get on very well with each other and with adults. Most children behave exceptionally well and the few minor squabbles that occur, mainly over learning to share, are quickly resolved by the attentive adults on hand to mediate. Staff are highly skilled in the management of children and their behaviour. Children were observed busily working, playing and learning exciting new things every day. They know who to go to if they have a problem and that adults will sort it out. They have learned how to do 'good listening' and 'good sharing' almost all the time so that everybody can join in the fun. Children are happy and secure in this safe and welcoming environment. Attendance levels, although inevitably affected by the childhood illnesses many have at this age and their sometimes difficult home circumstances, are good and improving due to the school's effective strategies to improve attendance and punctuality. Parents unanimously agree that behaviour is good in the school and that bullying is not a problem; the inspection findings confirm that children's behaviour is at least good and frequently outstanding.

Leadership and management

Leadership is exemplary. The headteacher has very high aspirations for ongoing improvement and is very well respected and valued within the community. She leads a very strong team of highly committed staff. Teamwork is strong and sophisticated and rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures successfully drive improvement. Staff regularly take advantage of professional opportunities to enhance their work. Equal opportunities are at the heart of the school's ethos and all staff show a very strong commitment to equality and diversity, celebrating the individual qualities of each child and their family very well. Staff have expert knowledge of the learning and development requirements and an excellent understanding of how young children learn and progress. The governing body have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are very supportive of the school and are effective in holding it to account. The curriculum provides a rich and creative mix of activities. A good range of visits and visitors provide children with memorable

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experiences and a thirst for learning. One outstanding example of the exciting visits provided is the annual residential week organised for the children. Many of these activities also include parents and carers so that they are helped to expand their understanding of how they can engage in their children's education. Parents and carers are rightly effusive in their comments about how they are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. These very strong links with parents and carers ensure the personal needs of the children are addressed extremely well. Resources are very well deployed and the school provides excellent value for money. Safeguarding procedures are excellent, policies are comprehensive and procedures ensure children are protected and supported very effectively. There are very strong links with a wide range of external agencies which contribute well to children's progress. The ethnic and cultural diversity of families is fully celebrated. The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis and the school's track record in maintaining outstanding effectiveness since its last inspection demonstrates that it has excellent capacity to improve further.

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 pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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 pupils. 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



20 January 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Brearley Nursery School, Birmingham, B19 3XJ

Thank you all very much for making me feel so welcome. I really enjoyed coming to your Nursery and finding out about all the exciting things that you do and how well you all learn together. I agree with you and your parents and carers that Brearley is an outstanding Nursery and I can understand why you are all so happy there. The grown-ups look after you really well. Your headteacher has managed to make sure that your school continues to be an excellent one and she is helped greatly by all the staff, who are very good at planning things for you to do that help you to learn new things very quickly. It is good that your parents and carers have lots of chances to learn new things too, so that you can have fun together at home as well as at Nursery. You are especially good at doing things for yourselves and playing nicely with other children. I think all of you need to give yourselves a pat on the back for working and playing together so well.

Even when a school is as good as yours is, there is always a way to make it even better. I have asked the grown-ups to:

- Find ways of improving their notes on the work each of you does when you are outside in the playground areas.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis
Lead inspector

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