

Lillian de Lissa Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	103137
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	376832
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2012
Lead inspector	Susan Walsh

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	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Ritson
Headteacher	Mandy Cryan
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2009
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Age group	3–4
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Introduction

Inspection team

Susan Walsh

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited 12 sessions, and saw 12 members of the school's staff teach. Meetings were held with staff and governors. The inspector observed the work of the school and spoke with parents. She looked at the school's development plans, curriculum planning and the school's records of children's progress as well as other documents. Nineteen questionnaires completed by parents and carers were analysed as well as questionnaires from staff.

Information about the school

The school provides 78 full-time places and 16 part time places and is a relatively large nursery school. The percentage of children from minority ethnic groups is very high and an above average proportion of children are known to be eligible for free school meals. An above average number of children are in the very early stages of speaking and understanding English when they join the Nursery. Children come from a diverse range of backgrounds with over 19 different languages being spoken in the setting. Many travel relatively long distances in order to attend the Nursery. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs (receiving support at school action plus or who have a statement) is above average. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2011. The school is designated as a children's centre and this aspect of its provision was inspected at the same time as the Nursery and is reported upon separately.

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

- This is an outstanding school where every child is highly valued and actively encouraged to reach his or her full potential whatever the starting point. Parents and carers are delighted with the quality of provision, often describing it as ‘amazing’ and saying that nothing holds their children back. They recognise that their children are encouraged to be very creative and are very well prepared for their next stage of education.
- Children make outstanding progress, often from well-below age-related expectations and by the time they leave the school their skills are usually similar to those expected for their age. This represents outstanding achievement. Children quickly improve their ability to speak English because of the prominence given to language development.
- Teaching is often outstanding and is never less than good. Staff are highly skilled early years practitioners who provide numerous exciting activities that make learning fun. They are particularly talented in teaching children who are in the early stages of learning to speak English and in supporting disabled children and those who have special educational needs.
- Children are extremely enthusiastic about learning. They learn about trust, friendship and cooperating with others. An exceptionally supportive environment means that they feel totally safe and consequently their levels of confidence soar and their behaviour is outstanding.
- The enthusiastic new headteacher, together with the very capable staff, has maintained the outstanding provision while enhancing the school’s sense of community and excellent external partnerships. The outstanding curriculum is exceptional in the way that it promotes children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The leadership and management of teaching have ensured that teaching continues to be outstanding. The school’s evaluation of the quality of teaching is accurate but occasionally does not focus sufficiently on children’s outcomes. Staff are also aware of the need to share best practice even more widely.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the maintenance of high quality provision by:
 - enabling more teachers to observe the best examples of teaching
 - making certain that the impact of teaching strategies on outcomes for children is always thoroughly explored when observing lessons.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Although children often join the school with poorly developed skills and very limited spoken English, all children make rapid progress during their time in the Nursery setting. Children make swift progress in learning to speak English because teachers are very good at promoting language skills. For example, when a small group of children who were at the early stages of learning how to speak English were taught in the wooded area, children quickly learned new words and phrases. This was because resources were used exceptionally well to support learning and the activity was very stimulating. Children are given ample opportunities to practise speaking, to reflect on their experiences and to develop their vocabularies. Teachers encourage children's emerging interest in books; consequently, children know that books can contain factual information and instructions as well as tell stories. For instance, during an exciting session that involved making a witch's potion children were highly motivated. They were subtly introduced to a set of instructions and the activity was cleverly linked to a book about witches which they were very eager to 'read'. Children are also given ample opportunities to develop their writing skills. For instance, staff had responded positively to children's interest in maps and more-able children had produced pictorial maps which they had labelled well. Many children are keen to write and important skills such as manual dexterity and physical control are carefully nurtured. Additionally every opportunity is taken to reinforce an understanding of number. Children were often heard to count accurately and independently. The counting of interesting objects such as fresh vegetables offered staff an additional opportunity to develop children's knowledge and understanding as well as their mathematical skills.

The focus on children's personal development is at the heart of the school's work. The exciting curriculum ensures that children are thoroughly engrossed in activities and they develop high levels of concentration. Many are able to sustain an activity for a relatively long time. Understandably parents and carers are delighted with the progress made by their children and many comment positively about the gains their children have made in acquiring English and in gaining confidence. The school is exceptionally thorough when assessing the requirements of children at the time they join the school. Therefore it is able rapidly to identify when children have additional learning or emotional needs. Additional support is carefully focused on the areas where children are in need of the most help and is of a very high quality. As a result, disabled children and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress, as do all groups of children.

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Quality of teaching

Staff have an excellent understanding of how young children learn. Their relationships with the children are particularly kind and supportive. A very enthusiastic approach is combined with an exciting curriculum that is very closely matched to children's needs and interests. This ensures that children are highly motivated and eager to learn. Parents and carers correctly say that teaching is excellent and talk enthusiastically about the wide range of exciting activities that are available in school. They are aware that expectations of achievement are exceptionally high. Staff are very skilled at asking questions that move children's learning forward. They promote animated discussions where children learn from each other as well as from the teacher. The way that teachers lead activities such as peer massage has an important effect on children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, promoting children's well being and their ability to be trustworthy friends to others. In particular, this activity is used well to create a tranquil atmosphere before lunch.

Staff are excellent at assessing children's learning. The level of detail in children's learning journals is outstanding; therefore the monitoring of children's progress is very thorough. Checks are used very well to identify areas where children could benefit from carefully focused support. For example, the nurture group gives quieter children the opportunity to gain confidence and to develop their speaking skills in a very calm environment. The quality of support for disabled children and those with special educational needs is outstanding. Staff ensure that these children are fully included in every aspect of school life and are able to make a full contribution in lessons. They expect every child to do their very best no matter what their level of ability.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Children from a very wide range of backgrounds get on very well together. Friendships have blossomed and children are enthusiastic about coming to school and being with their friends. They feel very secure in school. Parents and carers are extremely pleased with their children's personal development. They correctly recognise that children make huge gains in their social skills and appreciate the friendly, welcoming environment that ensures that their children feel safe. Bullying is extremely rare. The Nursery is very good at recognising when a child's individual characteristics could easily make them stand apart from other children. They actively promote tolerance and understanding and make certain that each child is cherished. Consequently, levels of mutual respect are very high. Children are courteous. For instance, they often say 'Please' 'Thank You' and 'Excuse Me'. Their enthusiasm for learning is infectious. It is clear that they thoroughly enjoy their time at the Nursery. They are able to cooperate well with other children and have valuable conversations about their learning. The school helps children to manage their own behaviour through giving them many small responsibilities. Children are very proud of the work they do to help staff and each other. Their sensible attitudes, resilience and

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independence as learners mean that they are well prepared for primary school. Attendance rates are improving because the school works very hard to make parents and carers aware of the importance of regular attendance.

Leadership and management

The new headteacher is uncompromising in her drive to secure the very best quality education for children who attend the Nursery School. She has been careful to retain and built upon the outstanding practice already present in the school while expanding the range and impact of the provision by reaching out into the local community. She has the sterling support of a very effective deputy headteacher, a highly skilled staff and the committed governing body. She has gained an accurate view of the school's performance through the careful analysis of children's progress including the progress of disabled children and those with special educational needs. With the support of the staff and the governing body she has developed an ambitious action plan. All staff have had access to good quality professional development and regular performance management and this has helped them to maintain outstanding performance. This shows the strong capacity to make further improvements. There have been plentiful observations of teaching but occasionally links between teaching strategies and outcomes for children are not clear enough. The staff are aware that there is the potential to do even more to ensure outstanding provision by observing each other's work more frequently.

The promotion of equal opportunities is of utmost importance to the school. The individual needs of children from all cultures and backgrounds are celebrated, valued and addressed. Consequently, discrimination is tackled and all groups of children make outstanding progress. The school is determined to share its excellent working practices with a wide range of external partners, and involvement in organisations that promote high standards in Early Year Foundation Stage Education brings mutual advantages; for example, through accessing good-quality training and involvement in professional discussions. The curriculum is extremely rich and exciting. Activities are tremendous fun and as a result children are very enthusiastic about learning. Extensive use is made of visiting adults to add even more enrichment to the curriculum. For example, Bangra dancing makes a very important contribution to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development due to the skilful way they are encouraged to develop their imaginations, work with others and appreciate the world around them. The school has highly positive strategies for engaging parents and carers. Its close links with the children's centre are particularly beneficial in engaging parents and carers who might traditionally find working with the school difficult. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and the school is rigorous in its efforts to keep children safe from harm.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



28 June 2012

Dear Children,

Inspection of Lillian de Lissa Nursery School, Birmingham, B5 7LX

I really enjoyed talking to you when we visited your Nursery. It was fantastic to see so many smiling faces; you are always polite and your behaviour is excellent. You have a wonderful time at Nursery because there are lots of exciting things to do and your teachers make certain that learning is fun. Each of the activities is very carefully matched to your needs. This is why you make outstanding progress and your school is outstanding.

The staff in the Nursery are doing an excellent job. They always know when you need a bit of extra help. There were many exciting things to see in your Nursery. I especially enjoyed watching your Bangra dancing and the Forest School activities. I was very impressed by the way some of you are learning to speak English so quickly and by your wonderful counting. You learn to concentrate well and gain lots of confidence.

Leaders and managers have worked hard to make sure your school is one of the very best. Teaching in your Nursery is almost always outstanding. In order to make sure that your Nursery continues to be outstanding I have asked your teachers to share their skills more and to make sure they always take your learning fully into account when they check teaching.

You can make sure that you take full advantage of the wonderful opportunities in Nursery by coming to school very day.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh
Lead inspector

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