

Kings Norton Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	103129
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	376826
Inspection dates	12–13 July 2012
Lead inspector	Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

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	83
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Barfield
Headteacher	Maureen McGillicuddy
Date of previous school inspection	3 June 2009
School address	Westhill Road Kings Norton Birmingham B38 8SY
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Age group	3-4
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Introduction

Inspection team

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited 13 lessons taught by two teachers and four practitioners. The inspector scrutinised teachers' planning and assessments, looked at a wide range of documentation including the school development plan, governors' minutes, the headteacher's monitoring of teaching and learning and teachers' assessments of children's work. The inspector met with parents and carers and analysed six questionnaires including parental responses to the on-line Parent View survey. The inspector met with governors and staff including the headteacher and deputy headteacher to discuss a range of issues relating to school improvement and self-evaluation.

Information about the school

Kings Norton Nursery School and Camp Lane Children's Centre serve the community of Kings Norton in Birmingham. The Children's Centre, a phase three Children's Centre, did not form part of this inspection and will be inspected separately at a later date.

The nursery is of average size and offers 52 full time equivalent places for children aged three to four years of age. Children are taught in four groups by five practitioners. Parents and carers choose the number of sessions that they want their child to attend. Since the previous inspection in 2009, the nursery has admitted more children from different minority ethnic groups. Approximately one third (above average) of the children attending this year speak English as an additional language and include children from Eastern Europe, Africa, China and India. None of these children are at the early stages of language acquisition. The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs is broadly average. A small minority of children are supported by early action plus and two children have statements of special educational needs. The range and nature of children's needs are largely related to social and emotional development and learning difficulties.

The nursery is in receipt of Eco-School's Award (silver status), the Basic Skills Award, Healthy Schools' status, and Impetus Award for the work it has done in raising money for a well in Africa.

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 nursery school due to the excellent achievement of most groups of children in most areas of learning. From low baselines, children leave the school having attained the expectations for their age in all areas of learning. At least one third of the children exceed the expectations, especially in speaking, listening and early reading. Nevertheless, a small group of children of different abilities struggle with undertaking tasks that require skills of precision or forming letters because their fine motor skills are underdeveloped.
- Teaching is outstanding because there is a whole-school approach in establishing clear routines, ensuring that each child takes part in the activities that are planned and using information from observations to move children on in their learning. The teaching of early reading is particularly impressive.
- Children’s behaviour is outstanding due to the well thought-out learning opportunities offered both indoors and outdoors. Relationships between parents and carers, staff and children are very strong and parents and carers are delighted with the excellent progress that their children make. Staff are highly attentive to children’s welfare needs. Risk assessments and safeguarding procedures are robust in keeping children safe in the nursery.
- Leadership and management are outstanding and the school has continued to improve under the leadership of the headteacher and the governing body. Self-evaluation is accurate and professional development is well focused leading to consistency in teaching. The school development plan has all the correct areas identified for improvement but steps to success are not detailed enough for the governing body to be able to evaluate the impact of actions taken on children’s achievements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the fine motor skills of all children by:

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- providing more opportunities for them to develop their skills of cutting, threading small objects and holding tools with increased dexterity
 - routinely showing children how to form their letters correctly.
- Ensure that the school development plan has tightly focused steps to success that relate to improved achievement by all groups of children which can be monitored more accurately by the governing body.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers are delighted with their children's achievements. 'I have sent all of my children here because the staff are very experienced and love the children as if they were their own,' said one parent.

At least half the children enter the nursery with levels of skills and knowledge well below those typical of three-year olds, especially in speaking, listening and personal, social and emotional development. Most children make outstanding progress and attain the expectations for their age in all areas of learning by the time they leave the nursery. About one third exceed expectations for their age in early reading, speaking and listening. All staff encourage good listening and ensure that children respond in full sentences. For example, in the outdoors when children were planting seeds, the teacher talked them through the process and then asked each one of them to describe the texture of the soil, its features and make comparisons between seeds and plants.

Strong emphasis is placed on children's self-esteem and confidence through the implementation of 'Values Education' and 'the Impetus Award', which explore the contribution young children can make in developing a better society. This makes an outstanding contribution to children's personal, social and emotional development.

Children make very good progress in linking letters to sounds and many of them can identify isolated letter sounds in their names and other words. They love reading books and finding familiar words in them. They readily choose to go into the book corner to share books with one another. They enjoy repetitive rhymes in books and squeal with delight when familiar stories are shared with them both indoors and outdoors. In writing, while most children make outstanding progress, staff need to place greater emphasis on showing children how to form their letters in order to increase progress for a few. In problem solving, reasoning and numeracy, children can describe shapes and have a very thorough knowledge of the language of capacity and early mathematics. Their learning is dynamic because teachers observe their responses in each learning session and if there are some misconceptions they provide further opportunities to consolidate their learning. For example, when observing mini-beasts in the 'forest school', some children did not accurately record

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the shape of mini-beasts that they had found. The teacher immediately used a microscope to enlarge the shape and children drew their pictures of worms and earwigs with great precision. Disabled children and those with special educational needs learn as well as their peers as they are given well-targeted support and are not excluded from any of the activities. In the 'forest school' they were actively looking for mini-beasts and concentrating very hard to count the legs of a wriggling centipede, a task which they completed accurately. This contributes very well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Analysis of the previous year's data identified a marginal difference between boys and girls in writing. Immediate action was taken to turn the outdoors into a building site where boys had to write down their orders for purchasing more cement, thus encouraging them to develop their writing skills in a relevant and enjoyable way. Children who speak English as an additional language make excellent strides in their learning. A contributory factor to children's excellent achievement is the consistency of high quality teaching where all practitioners ensure that children are given every opportunity to talk about their learning.

Children's love of learning is clear. They do not want to leave at home time and they show high levels of enthusiasm in all of the activities both indoors and outdoors.

Quality of teaching

'These are the best teachers in the world,' said one delighted parent. Teaching is outstanding because the staff are relentless in ensuring that every child succeeds.

All practitioners have an excellent understanding of how young children learn and ensure that sessions are expertly planned, based on a daily evaluation of children's learning. There is a very good balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by the children themselves. Children are encouraged to make choices but they are also taught that when they start an activity they should persevere to finish it and evaluate their learning. For example, a practitioner very sensitively prompted a child to finish his drawing before he went to join his friends in the outdoor learning environment.

Teachers' questioning has improved since the previous inspection. They encourage children to talk through their thinking and this is invaluable as then teachers know precisely when to intervene to offer support. What makes teaching so effective is that all the teachers follow the same routines so that children feel safe and know what to expect. In their play children in the builder's yard used the repeated verse of the Three Little Pigs, 'I'll huff and I'll puff till I blow your house down' to re-enact a narrative. This love of language contributes to excellent progress made in all areas of learning.

The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is exemplary. Staff have an excellent understanding of these children's barriers to learning and ensure that learning is presented in minute steps that are achievable.

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For example, teachers regularly repeat initial sounds of words in a variety of contexts until children master them.

Every opportunity is taken to encourage children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In an excellent music lesson, when the practitioner took out her shiny silver flute to play to the children, they immediately fell silent and gasped with amazement at both the sound and the beauty of the instrument.

Teachers' recording of children's progress is accurate, timely and concise. It is shared with parents and carers in order to plan the next steps of learning. In spite of the very high quality of teaching, staff do not always provide sufficient activities for developing children's fine motor skills or letter formation.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

All parents and carers interviewed and the few who responded to the questionnaire are adamant that behaviour and safety in the nursery are outstanding. Inspection findings confirm this to be the case. The school deals very well with any aspect of misbehaviour by explaining to the children the reason that they are asked not to do certain things. The management of behaviour is respectful and consistent and children are very clear as to what is expected of them.

Children are taught values such as respect and honesty. They show excellent degrees of respect towards themselves, the staff and other children. They learn right from wrong, care for one another, and accept one another's differences. There are many opportunities for children to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. These include supporting the building of a well in an African village and learning about different fruits through the story of 'Handa's Surprise', which contribute extremely well to children's knowledge of different communities. Children have excellent attitudes to learning because they are safe, happy, know what is expected of them and they are supported to succeed. They attend regularly and even want to come to the nursery when they are ill.

'The school has helped me enormously with showing me how to deal with my son's tantrums,' said one delighted parent. Parents and carers agree that their children are extremely safe at school and understand how to behave safely, for example when using tools.

Leadership and management

Parents and carers cannot praise the headteacher and her staff enough. 'They are amazing. They are always here to help and no problem is too big for them to handle,' said one parent. The nursery is very well led and managed by a highly dedicated headteacher and senior leadership team. Staff are enthusiastic; they love coming to work and teamwork is excellent.

The governing body has a clear understanding of the nursery's strengths and areas requiring development. All statutory duties are met, including the monitoring of

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children's progress and equal access to learning. The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination well. While the school development plan is a very useful document in moving the school forward, the steps to success are too broad to monitor the impact of provision on outcomes in relation to children's achievements.

The monitoring of teaching is very well conducted by the headteacher and senior leaders. Appropriate targets are set through rigorous performance management. Staff have many opportunities to extend their professional development through training, such as that given by the speech therapist, which has greatly improved children's speaking and listening skills. The nursery has excellent partnerships with other nurseries, primary schools and agencies.

The curriculum is lively, vibrant and enhanced by excellent opportunities to work with a park ranger, artist and sports coach. Children love their 'forest school' trips to the Lickey Hills where they learn more about their responsibilities towards the environment.

All requirements for ensuring children's health, well-being and safeguarding are of high quality. Parents and carers are delighted with the excellent range of workshops that they receive in order to help learning at home. The schools' mission statement of valuing children as individuals and promoting their confidence and excitement in learning is fulfilled in everyday practices, giving an exceptional capacity for further improvement.

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.



16 July 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Kings Norton Nursery School, Birmingham, B38 8SY

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school and thank you for taking the time to tell me, both in discussions and through your questionnaires, how much you enjoy learning and how much you respect and like your teachers. I found that your school gives you an outstanding quality of education.

These are some of the things that I liked most.

- You make excellent progress in learning, especially in speaking and listening and early reading, where you have learnt a great many letter sounds.
- You are confident, extremely well behaved and you look after one another well. You have learnt quickly how to behave in the nursery. Your parents and carers tell me that they are so pleased with your progress.
- You love learning and have excellent attitudes to your work, especially when you are working in 'forest school' or playing outdoors.
- You are taught exceptionally well and your teachers do the very best for you to encourage your excellent learning.
- You care deeply about others and you have outstanding knowledge of life in other parts of the world.
- The learning opportunities you have are excellent. Your nursery is very well led and managed by your headteacher and governing body.

To improve the school, I have asked your headteacher, staff and governing body to:

- help you form your letters correctly
- assist those of you who struggle using small toys, scissors and equipment to give you further opportunities at practising these skills
- set out carefully in their plans how they want you to improve and how they will know when you have improved.

All of you can help by always doing your very best and continuing to behave well. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley
Lead Inspector

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