

Allens Croft Nursery School

Allens Croft Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B14 6RP

Inspection dates

30–31 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Leadership and management are excellent. Leaders motivate staff with aspirational targets. Self-evaluation is robust and linked to development for improvement. As a result, the impressive quality of teaching and learning has been maintained.
- Children from all groups, including disabled children and those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language all make excellent progress in the areas of learning for young children.
- The quality of teaching is consistently at least good and usually outstanding.
- The provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children are given excellent opportunities to feel proud of what they have achieved and time to reflect on what they see and hear.
- Children's behaviour is excellent and this is as a direct result of the consistency of approach and exemplary role model provided by all adults in the school.
- A suitably high emphasis is placed upon developing children's reading, writing and numerical skills. This has ensured that children's progress is always at least good. Where it is outstanding, adults provide high-quality examples of writing of letters and numerals for children to read and copy.
- Activities are matched very well to children's needs and interests. Where teaching is at its very best, adults pay extremely careful attention to children's responses, so that they can immediately fine-tune questions and challenges exactly to each child's current need.
- The range of different learning opportunities provided for children is impressive.
- Governors demonstrate clarity of vision and clear strategic direction. There is a high regard for safety, and the care provided by the school is excellent.
- Parents are extremely supportive of the school. As a result, attendance levels are high.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all parts of the school in eight lessons, of which five were shared observations with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with members of the senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and with a representative of the local authority.
- The views of the nine parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account. The inspector spoke with a number of parents as they brought or collected their children. Consideration was also given to correspondence from parents and the 13 responses to the staff questionnaires. In addition, the school's own questionnaire results over previous years were examined.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including those relating to safeguarding, planning and monitoring, records relating to children's behaviour and attendance, and the school's own data on children's progress.

Inspection team

Sheelagh Barnes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average.
- Day care is provided for children from six weeks old. This is inspected and reported on separately. The Children's Centre with which the school shares its accommodation is also inspected separately.
- The majority of children attend part time, for either a morning or afternoon session. A few children attend for the full day.
- Although most children come from White British backgrounds, the proportion of children who come from a range of minority ethnic groups is much higher than average.
- An above-average proportion of children speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled children and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is average. No child currently has a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of children who are at school action plus, which involves external advice and support, is above average.
- The school does not use alternative provision to support any of its pupils.
- The school is not eligible to receive pupil premium money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To ensure that the outstanding elements of teaching occur even more consistently:
 - adults should anticipate, from careful observation, where they might need to intervene during sessions to ensure the best possible impact on children's learning
 - all adults should model the highest possible quality of writing of letters and numerals for children to see and copy.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- The great majority of children start in the Nursery with skills and understanding that are below and, for many, well below, the standards expected for their age.
- Children from all groups, including disabled children and those with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language make excellent progress. By the time they leave the Nursery to attend Reception classes in other schools, standards are at least in line with, and frequently above, the expected standards for Reception children.
- Children have very good attitudes to school. They demonstrate stamina in their learning and concentrate for relatively prolonged periods to achieve their aims, such as making marks and 'writing' in chalk, or listening with rapt attention to a story.
- The support given to children with particular needs is effective in enabling all to make the rapid progress they are capable of, so that their achievement is in line with that of their classmates.
- The three core areas of learning for young children of personal, social and emotional development, physical development and communication and language are given suitably high focus. As a result, children make excellent progress in these aspects.
- Early reading and writing skills develop exceptionally well because of the well-planned teaching of phonics (learning of the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent) and the regular opportunities children are given to practise these skills and develop confidence and motivation.
- Children are given excellent opportunities to count and to learn about numbers and the numerals that represent them, both in English and also in Punjabi. They show great pride in their achievements. There are also opportunities to hear and speak Mandarin and Italian.
- Children's progress in understanding the world is excellent and, in particular, in learning about technology. This is because adults ensure that sessions are interesting and challenging, and very effectively build children's confidence that they will succeed.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is always at least good and usually outstanding. This is because great care is taken to make sure that learning is exciting and captures children's interest. For example, children were thrilled to draw and paint dragon puppets, to use magnifying glasses to look at seeds and to join in with action songs.
- The expectations of children's achievement are high and children are visibly delighted with what they manage to do. This was demonstrated by one child, who performed a small silent dance of pleasure each time he correctly identified a numeral when using a program on the interactive whiteboard.
- Adults match work very carefully to each child's specific needs. Where teaching is outstanding, adults are very proficient in fine-tuning what they do and the questions they ask very exactly, because they are extremely alert to each child's responses. This contributes to highly effective

learning by children.

- Children are effectively involved in evaluating the progress they make in their learning by looking through their learning journals with staff and each other. The photographs provide discussion points about the progress they have made.
- All adults work together collaboratively to ensure that children are given the precise level of support and encouragement to enable them to make the best possible progress. They are also sensitive to times when children become completely engrossed, such as when they balance coloured blocks on the light box, and do not break the flow of children's learning.
- Adults ensure that children are given excellent opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding by allowing time for reflection, celebration and investigation. The resulting pride children feel about their work is shown by the way they eagerly rush to show their parents what they have achieved.
- Work to help children to recognise letters and numerals is always at least good. Where it is excellent, care is taken to ensure that the best possible examples of text are used for children to emulate.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour is excellent. Children's levels of concentration and application are extremely good and they keep on task without adult intervention for good amounts of time. They have exceedingly positive attitudes to learning and this, in turn has a positive impact on their achievement.
- Because disabled children and those who have special educational needs are supported very well, they integrate fully with others and have equality of access to all activities.
- Leaders ensure that all adults are aware of the way behaviour is managed in school. Because support and training are given to new staff, there is a consistent approach and children always know what is expected of them. As a result, behaviour in the Nursery is orderly and children are happy.
- Because staff all model the courtesy the school expects, children copy this and, with very little prompting show great respect for the needs and wishes of others.
- Safety is given a suitably high focus and adults gently explain when actions could cause harm to others. The manner in which this is done is effective in encouraging children to conform and consider those around them.
- Aggressive or unpleasant behaviour is not tolerated and staff are swift to defuse any potential conflicts before they occur. Children are taught to acknowledge when their behaviour has upset others and they apologise with good grace.
- Parents are very happy with the safety in the school and with the way children behave. All those who expressed a view said that they would recommend the school to others.
- Attendance is high, especially in relation to children's ages. The headteacher swiftly follows up any absence to check that all is well. Groups with the best attendance are given a small reward

and a note to thank their parents. This is eagerly sought by children.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The leadership of the headteacher and senior staff is excellent. The school aspires to maintaining the highest standards and this is achieved by accurate and rigorous self-evaluation, linked to clear-sighted planning.
- Management is outstanding in that it enables all staff to work exceedingly effectively. Wise and carefully planned spending on resources enables aims to be achieved. This includes ensuring that a priority is placed on attaining the best possible ratio of well-trained and motivated adults to the numbers of children.
- Links with parents are very strong and have a very positive impact on the progress children make in their learning. Parents are encouraged to attend at least three training sessions per year to help them to understand what their children are being taught and how they can help to continue this at home.
- The range of experiences that are provided for children is exceptionally wide and includes opportunities for children to hear, speak and see written words and numerals in English, Punjabi, Italian and Mandarin. Among the many other opportunities on offer is the chance to plant, care for, harvest and eat vegetables in the garden and investigate and explore in the woodland area.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The stated aim of the Nursery, to enable plentiful opportunities for children to investigate and reflect on what they see and to gain a real sense of their own achievements, is woven very effectively into everyday practice.
- The support by the local authority has been of a light touch because of the school's impressive track record. However, the support through training and advice that has been given has been of high quality and is readily accessible whenever requested.
- Leaders' excellent capacity to bring about further improvement is shown in the maintenance of very high levels of achievement over a sustained period.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement because they visit regularly and actively seek out information. As a result of regular well-targeted training, they have confidence to question and challenge decisions and provide outstanding support for the headteacher. They are very aware of the quality of teaching and have taken positive decisions, with regard to financial management, so that this excellent quality is maintained. The performance of staff is evaluated with relation to children's progress and high performance appropriately rewarded. As a result, governors have ensured that the gap between performance of less advantaged children and the rest is being steadily eroded. Governors carry out their responsibilities extremely well and ensure that safeguarding arrangements fully meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	103130
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	400585

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	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Creavin
Headteacher	Laura Brodie
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2009
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Fax number	0121 675 8111
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