

Brearley Nursery School

Brearley Street, Newtown, Birmingham, B19 3XJ

Inspection dates 4–5 December 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Brearley Nursery is a haven for children; it opens their eyes to the wider world and prepares them extremely well for starting primary school.
- The headteacher is an inspirational leader. She is ably supported by the deputy, a highly effective staff team and a supportive governing body. All have high expectations for the children in their care.
- Leaders know the school very well and think hard about how to improve it further. They are determined to stay at the cutting edge of early years practice. This has enabled them to maintain their outstanding provision for a fourth inspection.
- The school has an excellent reputation within the local authority, and is the hub of the community.
- Parents are all extremely positive and delighted that their children come to this nursery. They particularly appreciate the warm, friendly atmosphere and how quickly their children acquire English skills.
- Teaching is outstanding. Well-planned, exciting activities grab children’s attention. Learning is fun so children persevere for good periods of time.
- Children’s behaviour and understanding of safety are outstanding. They are given sensitive support to think about what to do if a problem arises. This leads to very independent, motivated children who share and take turns in their play.
- The support and guidance provided for disabled children, those who have special educational needs, and those at the early stages of learning English and their families is exemplary.
- One parent summed up the views of others by saying, ‘this school cares and supports the families as much as they support the children’.
- Strong partnerships with other professionals and staff in the children’s centre mean that children’s needs are well met before they start the Nursery.
- The progress that children make is outstanding in almost all areas of learning and never less than good. Particularly rapid progress is made in children’s communication and language skills and in their personal and physical development.
- Achievement in early writing and mathematical skills is strong. Reading progress, although good, is not as rapid as that in mark-making and writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed children's learning in seven sessions, or part sessions, including two jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, members of staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. A session of the lunchtime arrangements was seen, and opportunities were taken throughout the inspection to talk with the children.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for the inspector to be able to access them. The inspector spoke to parents as they brought their children to school, and took account of the school's own consultation with parents.
- Thirty-three responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.
- The inspector looked at documentation such as data on children's progress, the school's evaluation of its strengths and areas for development, records of children's work, documents relating to safeguarding and the school's plans for future development.

Inspection team

Mary Hughes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a large nursery school. The majority of children attend on a full-time basis.
- The school is situated in a building shared with the Brearley/Teviot Children's Centre. The centre is subject to a separate Ofsted inspection. The report is available on Ofsted's website, www.ofsted.gov.uk. The headteacher is also the head of the children's centre and the governing body has responsibility for both settings. Some staff are shared between both settings.
- The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs is above average. Almost one-third of children are on support plans.
- Nearly three quarters of all children are learning English as an additional language. The children speak 22 different home languages. Children are from a range of ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups are from other Black African, Somalian, and Black Caribbean backgrounds.
- No children are entitled to the pupil premium funding because of their age. However an above average proportion of children are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The deputy headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection and is in her second year at the school.
- The school leads the Aston Nechells Early Year's Network for the Brearley and Limetree Hubs and supports early year's practitioners in schools and in private, voluntary and independent settings.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the good progress that children already make in reading so that it matches the outstanding progress they make in writing.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Everyone involved in the school shares the headteacher's enthusiasm, enjoyment and belief in children and in going the extra mile to do everything they can for them. Her leadership is inspirational and is underpinned by exceptionally strong teamwork. This leads to an extremely caring, nurturing ethos which enables children to thrive. The high ratio of adults to children makes a significant contribution to the excellent progress that children make.
- Staff, from the headteacher to the caretaker, work as a united team. There is a consistency of approach which has led to improvement to the already high levels of achievement seen at the last inspection. Staff have ownership of their areas of responsibility and know their contributions are valued. This leads to high staff morale, as seen in the very positive feedback in the staff questionnaires.
- Middle leaders effectively support the development of teaching and learning. They lead training and curriculum reviews and make an active contribution to the ongoing improvement of children's learning opportunities.
- The ways in which the performance of teachers is managed are well organised and linked effectively to salary progression. All staff have targets that are linked directly to their role and aimed at helping them to develop their skills. Training opportunities are carefully planned to support the development of school priorities.
- The school reviews all aspects of its work thoroughly and acts quickly to address any gaps so that no one becomes complacent and the drive to sustain the school's effectiveness is not slowed.
- The quality of teaching is regularly checked by senior leaders who ensure that examples of high quality practice are shared amongst all the staff. Other strategies, such as staff observing one another, help ensure that best practice is regularly discussed and shared throughout.
- The school prides itself on giving children opportunities to fulfil their potential and to give them as wide a range of experiences as possible. The curriculum is exciting, based on children's interests and highly engaging. It is very well-structured to promote routines, language and physical skills. As a result children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. The school is a harmonious community, with children from a diverse range of backgrounds effectively working alongside one another. Enrichment activities such as African drumming, yoga sessions, visiting a Chinese restaurant and making a residential visit to a farm, help develop children's high levels of enthusiasm for learning.
- The school forges extremely strong relationships with its parents and carers. The integration of the school within the children's centre means that families can quickly be signposted to help and support as needed. The school provides an extensive range of support and training for families to better help with their children's education. For example English classes are provided to help families whose home language is not English and the 'Talking Tips' programme helps parents better communicate with their children. In addition it provides many opportunities for parents and carers to develop themselves, for example, through computer, cooking and parenting courses. One parent commented that 'This school breaks down all the barriers for this community'.
- The school's work with a range of partners has a significant impact on children's learning. During the inspection one of the school's artists in residence was working with the children making clay models for a nativity scene. The children were very excited as they transformed a plain piece of clay into a cow or a sheep.
- Staff value all children individually and effectively celebrate their similarities and differences. A well-developed programme ensures that traditions, festivals and celebrations from the diverse groups represented are regularly celebrated. This helps effectively prepare children for life in modern Britain.
- All groups are protected and cared for. Their progress is looked at carefully to ensure that they all do

well. All policies and procedures relating to safeguarding are securely in place and reviewed regularly. Support for children and their families whose circumstances make them vulnerable is sensitively given.

- The local authority supports the school as needed at a 'light touch' level. The local authority recognises the quality of the school's work and values the work that it does in supporting other early years' settings in the local area.

■ The governance of the school:

- Members of the governing body are very proud of the school and know it well. They correctly identify strengths, such as its highly inclusive nature and its welcoming ethos. They evaluate the information they receive carefully and contribute to planning priorities. They are very supportive of the headteacher and staff and offer good challenge. Governors understand the quality of teaching and the importance of a clear link between pay and performance. They manage finances carefully and fully appreciate their responsibilities. They ensure that staff and children are safe by meeting their statutory safeguarding requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. When they start nursery children are carefully taught what is expected of them. Songs, photos and visual cues lead children step-by-step through how to behave at different points in the day. As a result ordinary routines, such as washing hands and clearing plates after lunch, are quickly and effectively managed.
- Staff provide a nurturing atmosphere where manners, courtesy and respect are highly valued and consistently encouraged. They model positive behaviour to children, including taking turns, sharing and helping one another. There is an emphasis on thinking about and including 'our friends'. Children respond very well to the high expectations of staff.
- Children's enjoyment of learning is evident throughout the day. They show high levels of enthusiasm in all activities. They settle quickly and concentrate hard on what they are doing. They make choices about their learning and show high levels of independence. This is evident in their independent dressing for Nature School activities and in pouring drinks during snack time. Children persevere and display a 'can do' attitude. The excellent learning attitudes helps children move confidently into school.
- Transition into nursery and then into school is carefully planned and tailored to meet the individual needs of each child. This ensures that children settle quickly and feel secure. The excellent relationships throughout the nursery also make a significant contribution to children's high levels of confidence.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Parents and carers agree absolutely with this and are very confident about leaving their children in school.
- Children demonstrate a highly developed sense of safety when they use the stairs, use wheeled vehicles in the grounds and climb and balance on the play equipment. Staff encourage children to think about what they do so that they learn to manage tools and equipment carefully. Children making stars out of willow twigs knew how to pull the twig safely so that it pointed away from their face.
- Children are taught to identify risks when going to the outdoor area in the school next door. They know how to cross the road carefully, to walk outside the fire-pit, and to watch out for branches at different heights.
- The care and safeguarding of the children has the highest priority. Staff create a nurturing, positive

environment and as a result children feel valued, safe and secure.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding over time and never less than good. Practitioners have an excellent understanding of how young children learn. Staff believe in giving children lots of opportunities to think for themselves and to solve problems. This leads to children who are independent learners and resourceful in finding solutions.
- A significant strength is the emphasis on children's acquisition of language skills. Every opportunity is used to model language, introduce new vocabulary and integrate songs and rhymes to develop communication and understanding. Signing, pictures, visual cues and artefacts are well used by staff to reinforce language. Daily group sessions include closely targeted teaching to develop language skills and knowledge.
- Staff are highly skilled in playing alongside children and intervening appropriately to move on their learning. Effective questioning helps children to think about their learning. More able children are encouraged to give reasons and explanations. For example, when exploring blocks of ice, they were encouraged to think about why it was melting and how long this would take.
- Both personal and social skills and physical development are expertly taught in a way which captures children's interest. Children effectively developed their fine-motor skills as they made Christmas trees from lollipop sticks and bobbles and danced to music, which, whilst great fun, also developed children physically.
- Adults always make learning fun, as when children banged ice cube trays to find frozen paint cubes or when waving kites to aid understanding of a story.
- All staff provide an exciting and highly stimulating environment which promotes high quality learning. All areas, indoor and out, are thoughtfully designed and all resources and equipment are easily available for the children.
- Practitioners carefully assess how children respond to activities and what they can do. They then use this information to ensure that learning opportunities challenge, support and excite each child. No opportunity is overlooked. Children's ideas and interests are well planned for. An initial interest in pirates, led to planned activities which included making treasure maps, telescopes and hats. Pirate role-play then took place.
- Support for children with disabilities or special needs is highly effective. Children often work individually with staff to help them overcome their difficulties and to increase their achievement.
- Teachers use every opportunity to develop children's understanding and use of numbers, space and measures. Spontaneous activities, such as counting the number of stairs climbed or the number of cups needed at snack time, help extend children's learning. Regular cooking activities help develop mathematical language as children discuss how many spoonfuls of ingredients are needed.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Almost all children enter nursery with skills which are well below those typical for their age. This is particularly so in language and communication skills, and their personal and mathematical development. All groups of children make at least good, and often outstanding progress in all areas of learning. Although for many children their skills when leaving nursery are just below those typical for their age, they have made rapid progress from their starting points and the gap has closed considerably.
- Almost three-quarters of children currently in the nursery speak English as a second language; some have had little experience of English. The emphasis on language provision, particularly the quality of adults talk

with children, enables them to quickly understand simple instructions, build vocabulary and link words with objects.

- Children use signing very well to help express their needs to staff. Children make excellent progress in speaking skills and their acquisition of English. This is because of excellent relationships with families, accurate early assessments and the use of individual and small-group sessions to develop English vocabulary. In one session the teacher used a series of activities and artefacts to aid children's understanding of the book 'Dear Santa'. This involved the children in rolling balls, wearing animal masks and blowing a trumpet. Support from bi-lingual staff also contributes to outstanding progress in language acquisition.
- The very few children who start in the nursery with skills at typical starting points make excellent progress and exceed the expectations for the end of nursery. This group is defined as the more able in this nursery. A more able group of children was seen making excellent progress in early writing skills as they used frozen paint to make marks and shapes outdoors. A high degree of challenge was given through careful questioning. As for all children, activities are closely matched to children's individual abilities.
- From a low base on entry, children make rapid progress in their mathematical development. Children show a great interest in numbers and shapes. Some can already count accurately. Opportunities are woven into daily activities for counting, comparing, matching and ordering. For example, are there enough seats for everyone in Nature school?
- Children make particularly rapid progress in their physical development, with the majority reaching skills typical for their age when they leave. The indoor soft-play area and the high-quality outdoor equipment help children become increasingly confident in challenging their bodies while running, jumping, climbing and balancing on different surfaces.
- As a result of the outstanding progress children make in their personal, social and emotional development, they are well prepared for school and are confident, enthusiastic and independent learners.
- Children with disabilities or who have special needs make excellent progress as a result of the high levels of support given. Staff work very closely both with staff at the children's centre and with a range of agencies to ensure that children's needs are very well met.
- All groups make excellent progress in their early writing skills. They make marks with sticks, water and paint. Some are able to draw letter shapes and record their work through drawing and early writing. The many opportunities available in both indoor and outdoor learning, helps contribute to children's outstanding progress. Progress in reading, although good, is not as rapid as that in writing.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- All children in this school are in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The report sections above evaluate the school's effectiveness.

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

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| Unique reference number | 103121 |
| Local authority | Birmingham |
| Inspection number | 448079 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Nursery |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3–5 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 105 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Geraldine Henry |
| Headteacher | Susan Stewart |
| Date of previous school inspection | 18 January 2012 |
| Telephone number | 0121 3592309 |
| Fax number | 0121 6757296 |
| Email address | enquiry@brearley.bham.sch.uk |

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