

Weoley Castle Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103133
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	355326
Inspection dates	16–17 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Raminder Arora

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bruce Harvey
Headteacher	Lesley Harris
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2008
School address	109 Weoley Castle Road Weoley Castle, Birmingham B29 5QD
Telephone number	0121 4271058
Fax number	0121 4265692
Email address	enquiry@wlycstln.bham.sch.uk

Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision

Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected
--	--------------------------

Age group	3–4
Inspection dates	16–17 February 2011
Inspection number	355326

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed eight sessions and 11 members of staff who were working directly with the children. Inspectors spoke to parents, carers, children, governors and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement plan, activity planning, assessment records, reports from an external consultant, 9 staff questionnaires and 55 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well is the teaching challenging all children, particularly the more able, in developing their language and mathematical skills?
- Are there features of the curriculum, care and welfare arrangements and children's personal development that stand out in this school?
- The impact of the school's work with parents and carers and the community on outcomes for children.

Information about the school

Weoley Castle Nursery School is of a similar size to other nurseries and provides education to children who are predominantly from White British families. All children took up part-time places in September 2010, attending 15 hours over three days, and some children receive extra hours due to their needs. A small percentage of all children come from minority ethnic groups, including Asian and Eastern European families. Currently, eight children speak English as an additional language of which five are on the early stages of learning the language. The number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than in most other nurseries. The Nursery is part of a developing children's centre that provides a range of services which support local families and their children. This provision is managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection. The Nursery offers lunch care and before- and after-school activities. There is also provision of a 'Nurture group' to support children who need extra help to boost their confidence and learning. The school has attained the Business Link award and the Healthy Schools status.

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: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Children make exceptional progress in this nursery school due to excellent teaching, extremely broad opportunities for learning and very high levels of care. Almost all the staff have been at the school for many years and are highly committed to children's learning, development and well-being. They fully recognise the needs of families as imperative to this and are highly successful in supporting and engaging parents and carers. Parents are extremely positive about the Nursery and say they appreciate what a wonderful place it is for their children. One expressed these views by saying that it is a, 'Fantastic nursery with amazing staff that understand each child's strengths, joys and family context, and create the best possible environment for them.'

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below what is normally expected of three-year-olds, particularly for aspects of communication, language and problem-solving, reasoning and number. From their low starting points, children make outstanding progress and, by the time they transfer to local primary schools, the attainment of most children matches their age expectations. The school's data show that the number of children exceeding the expected goals is increasing year on year. The most significant factors in the children achieving well, is that the school is exceptionally well staffed. At times there are as few as five children to each adult, and this has a real impact on developing their skills, for example in reading and writing. The key workers in particular are highly skilled and know how very young children learn. They show great expertise in carrying out their high quality and detailed day-to-day assessments so that planning for learning is tailored for each individual. The outstanding teaching is highly effective in ensuring that there are consistently challenging activities for the more able. Children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those new to learning English make excellent progress because their needs are assessed quickly and they are sensitively supported. Children's learning journey books show that they receive excellent support as they learn and play. The expertly planned curriculum focuses particularly well on all areas of learning but especially in relation to the development of early language, literacy and numeracy skills, and children's personal, social and emotional skills. These valuable skills particularly support their future economic well-being. As a result, children are extremely well prepared for their next school. Children's excellent personal development has a very positive impact on their progress. They behave exceptionally well and develop excellent attitudes to keeping healthy and safe.

The headteacher shares an excellent drive for improvement and strives for outstanding provision that enables all children to achieve their best. She has created an excellent team spirit that runs through all parts of the school. As a result, morale is high, staff are all involved in the work of the nursery and everyone feels valued. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and ensures

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

that all legal requirements are properly met. However, governors are not all sufficiently involved in monitoring the nursery's provision and providing challenge to leaders.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion by ensuring that children have sufficient opportunities to learn about the local community, for example, through projects such as, 'Being three in Weoley'. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to appreciate people from communities nationally and around the world. Self-evaluation is of top quality because of the on-going focus on adjusting and refining provision to meet children's changing needs. Developments both inside and out have improved the provision since the previous inspection. For example, provision for the teaching and learning of information communication technology (ICT), has greatly improved, particularly with regard to enhancing children's skills and developing teachers' confidence when teaching. The commitment and teamwork of the staff in responding to the wide-ranging needs of the children. These successes amply illustrate the school's outstanding capacity for sustaining continuous improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the school's strategy for community cohesion by:
 - creating more opportunities for children to appreciate people from communities nationally and around the world;
 - ensuring that the governing body provides sufficient monitoring and challenge to leaders.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

1

Children clearly become self-assured, happy, confident learners during their time in the nursery. In all of the activities observed, both indoors and out, children were seen to have excellent relationships with the adults who helped them learn. Individual needs are catered for very well. As a result, all children, especially those whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those new to learning English, progress exceptionally well. The exciting outdoor areas are interesting places to learn and play. Children thoroughly enjoy all that is on offer, especially the exciting role play area. They were seen playing safely and with great enjoyment. For example, children were seen being very well supported by an adult as they built models with stickle bricks. In this session, in another activity learning was extended expertly as the names of shapes and repeat patterns were reinforced to a group printing with different shapes. The learning environment is very inviting and child-friendly. An activity that focused on dropping colour in water and watching it make patterns, attracted lots of interest. Learning was excellent in another activity using the interactive whiteboard to help a child learn to 'dress for weather'. The adult intervened expertly to extend learning. Teamwork among the staff is exemplary and this contributes very significantly to the outstanding learning that takes place. Enjoyment, enthusiasm and much excitement are evident wherever the children are learning and playing. By the end of their time in nursery, children's attainment is as expected for their ages with some exceeding these levels.

Children from different backgrounds get on extremely well. They quickly learn to share and take turns because adults promote the development of personal and social skills as excellent role models. Children's spiritual, moral and social development is catered for

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

extremely well. Cultural development is good, although children's understanding of wider communities, nationally and globally, is limited. Even so, there are plenty of local opportunities for celebrating the traditions and values of other cultures. For example, children recently talked about the Chinese New Year and made artefacts to reinforce their understanding. Snack and meal times are excellent social occasions. Children are very aware of why they should eat healthily. Adults do not miss opportunities to promote basic language and number skills during these sessions. For example, children in the Nurture group were asked to look at their roundly cut orange pieces and learn about circles and semi-circles. Children feel safe and very happy, and know that there is always someone to comfort them if they feel sad. They learn to work together as a team when they tidy up at the end of sessions. When they work in their allotment or help on the playground project, or raise money for charities, children become aware of working together and helping others. Attendance is average and, despite effective procedures to encourage full attendance, it has been affected by the illness of some children.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Children's attainment ¹	3
The quality of children's learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children's behaviour	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Children's attendance ¹	3
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The intervention and support sessions observed in the nurture group were outstanding. This enabled those who are most vulnerable to be supported and cared for well. Children

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

make excellent progress because sessions are well organised and adults use a range of methods successfully to involve children in their own learning and ensure lessons are fun. For example, staff regularly share photographic evidence of children engaged in learning, collated during the session to help children's recall of what they have learnt. They also bring learning alive by using the electronic boards to display photographs. The gifted and talented group receives regular extra support to challenge their thinking. Learning opportunities are excellent and, consequently, all children show immense enjoyment in learning, both indoors and outdoors. They participate eagerly in small group time, independent play and exploration and when taking part in singing sessions. Children are challenged to experiment, collaborate and explore through a wide range of activities. Staff are skilled at knowing when to intervene and when to stand back to enable the children to find things out for themselves. They assess children's development carefully with very clear notes about what they are able to understand and do, and they skilfully identify the next steps children need to take. There are attractive displays and high-quality resources, which together stimulate children's interest and encourage them to explore and investigate.

Care, guidance and support for families, as well as for children, are excellent. Staff provide regular sessions for parents to keep them in touch with children's work. For example, as part of the school's Creative Partnership, the artist-in-residence involves groups of parents with their children in regular photography sessions around the locality. These are extremely beneficial in promoting parental involvement in children's learning. In the after-school club and breakfast club, superb care is shown and excellent attention to safety is evident.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has an exceptionally clear vision for the future of the school and has embedded many improvements since the last inspection. Improved assessment and tracking procedures, increased training for staff and the successful development of the recent part-time sessions with increased numbers on roll, are all testament to leaders' ongoing commitment to moving the school forward. Governors are rigorous in ensuring that children and staff are safe and meet their statutory duties effectively. Safeguarding arrangements, including child protection procedures, are excellent. Governors are supportive of the school and know its strengths. They have productive relationships with parents. They tackle weaknesses effectively. However, not all governors are regularly

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

involved in making focused monitoring visits to the school or challenging leaders. Nevertheless, they ensure that there are equal opportunities for all children and are rigorous at eliminating discrimination. As a result, all groups have outstanding access to all that the provision offers and they achieve equally well. Links with parents, the community and local schools are excellent, resulting in additional experiences for children and very good transition arrangements. Staff share a common sense of purpose which is to secure the best possible outcomes for children. However, although the school promotes community cohesion well and there are excellent local links, there are insufficient opportunities for children to widen their understanding of national and global communities. Links with a school in Spain and the United States of America (USA), are being developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents are exceptionally supportive of the school and greatly value the lunch provision and before- and after- school care. Almost all parents who responded to the inspection questionnaires said that their children like school and that it keeps them safe and secure. Parents are unanimous in their appreciation of all that the nursery offers. No negative comments or queries were received. The most positive written response related to parents' and carers' satisfaction with their children's rich experience at the nursery and the way staff cared for their children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Weoley Castle Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 104 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	82	9	16	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	85	7	13	0	0	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	35	64	16	29	3	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	67	16	29	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	71	15	27	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	69	15	27	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	69	16	29	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	31	56	19	35	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	69	16	29	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	65	18	33	0	0	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	69	16	29	0	0	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	43	78	11	20	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	80	9	16	0	0	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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 children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
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 children. 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

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.



18 February 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Weoley Castle Nursery School, Birmingham, B29 5QD

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your nursery. Thank you especially to those of you who talked to us and shared their work. It was wonderful to see some of the many exciting and interesting things you do. We found that Weoley Castle is an excellent nursery. This letter is to tell you all the things we found out about your school.

You are all learning such a lot and are developing extremely well.

You told us how happy you are and how much you enjoy coming to school.

We could see that you are all looked after and supported exceptionally well.

We were very impressed with your behaviour, confidence and independence.

You have lots of interesting things to do and a lovely outdoor area to play in.

You are learning new things fast and getting better at others all the time.

You told us that you really enjoy all the activities that you do at school.

Your teachers and other staff are kind and helpful.

You know all about keeping fit and healthy.

You told us that you feel really safe at school because your school's leaders keep you safe.

All the staff know you and your families extremely well and work very hard to keep on improving everything. We have asked them to help you learn more about how people live in other parts of England and other countries. We have also asked the governing body to provide more challenge and keep closer checks on the school. You can help by always working as hard as you can.

We wish you well for the future

Yours sincerely

Raminder Arora

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.