

Washwood Heath Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	103132
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	376828
Inspection dates	27–28 February 2012
Lead inspector	David Speakman

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 sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jennifer Parchment
Headteacher	Valerie Daniel
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2009
School address	201 Sladefield Road Ward End Birmingham B8 2SY
Telephone number	0121 4641810
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Email address	enquiry@washwdhn.bham.sch.uk

Registered childcare provision	EY286950 Washwood Heath Nursery
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	46
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	12 May 2009

Age group	2–4
Inspection date(s)	27–28 February 2012
Inspection number	376828



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Introduction

Inspection team

David Speakman

Additional inspector

Victoria Turner

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors spent seven hours directly observing children learning in focus groups and in free-flow activities, talking to children informally during observations. Five teachers and 10 teaching assistants were observed. Inspectors observed support groups for disabled children and those who have special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language. Meetings were held with members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors scrutinised the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils. They took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including improvement plans, self-evaluation, and assessment data that is used to monitor children's progress. Questionnaire responses from 77 parents and carers and 26 members of staff were analysed.

Information about the school

This is a large nursery school. Most children are of Pakistani heritage, with others coming from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of children who speak English as an additional language is high and most are in the early stages of learning to speak English. There are a few children with disabilities and special education needs including children with a statement of educational needs. Children attend the nursery part time, either for the morning or afternoon sessions. The nursery is situated in the same building as Washwood Heath Children's Centre. The governing body is responsible for the nursery school, the children's centre and the registered childcare, which offers full day care for children from birth to four and before- and after-school care for children up to the age of eight. The registered day care was inspected alongside the nursery inspection.

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. It is highly effective in giving children an excellent start to their education. It instils in them a spirit of curiosity and the knowledge that learning and finding things out are enjoyable.
- Children achieve exceptionally well across all areas of learning. They enjoy exploring a wide range of learning opportunities that are specifically planned with their interests in mind and which engage them in independent learning through investigation and purposeful play. They learn to communicate very quickly and develop a secure understanding of number. Children become extremely confident physically and learn a great deal about the world around them. They are very creative in their art activities and appreciate different types of music.
- Children behave exceptionally well at all times. They are highly stimulated by activities so they remain focused for extended periods. They are polite and thoughtful towards each other, which is reflected in the way they work and play together. The school gives the children’s safety high priority. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe while in the nursery through talking to adults about safe practice and identifying hazards for themselves. They approach adults for help with confidence.
- The quality of teaching is consistently outstanding. All adults provide high quality teaching so that children can move from one activity to another and experience the same high quality support. Adults monitor individual children’s learning closely to inform curriculum planning and to ensure everyone is busy learning and has a similar learning experience.
- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and works very effectively with an experienced and knowledgeable senior leadership team. Together, they have achieved high quality provision by ensuring all staff are skilled in teaching and give of their best at all times.

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?

- Improve the systems for recording the administration of medicines to children so that all entries are kept confidential.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

All children achieve exceptionally well from starting points well below those expected for their age. By the end of the nursery year, most children are close to reaching age-related expectations in all areas of learning, with some exceeding them. The attainment gap between the lowest attainers and others closes rapidly. Assessments are meticulously carried out, moderated with the school to which children are transferring and provide secure evidence on which to base progress. The inspection endorses the view of the overwhelming majority of parents and carers that their children have come on really well since being at nursery.

Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are identified quickly and receive well focused support. They make excellent progress. The school places high priority on enabling children to communicate, particularly the very large majority who speak English as an additional language. They are very successful and soon become confident in speaking and listening so that they achieve their full potential.

Learning and progress are outstanding. Children are inquisitive learners because of the strong focus on them discovering things for themselves. They talk knowledgeably about what they are learning and why. Adults help through carefully chosen questions, which offer prompts for the lines of enquiry children may wish to take, and which help guide their thinking. As a result, the children know what they have achieved and think carefully about what to do next. One parent commented that since starting the nursery, her son has begun to watch what is going on around him at home, has started to reason and ask leading questions such as 'Why does the flour go in next?' when watching her bake. This typifies the spirit of enquiry promoted in this nursery.

Children make excellent progress in developing early reading skills to prepare them well for learning in school. They respond well to the numerous and varied opportunities to enjoy books and to retell familiar stories, particularly using the pictures as cues. During the inspection, a very few children who speak an Asian language were observed looking at books, starting from the back. The teachers are aware and confirm that the practice of starting at the front soon develops.

Children have excellent levels of independence. They are confident to try new experiences and to be adventurous because they know that they will receive the

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

support they need to be successful. For example, a group of boys worked collaboratively to build towers out of building blocks and had to work out how to safely reach up to put the roof on without knocking the tower over.

Children concentrate equally well in adult-led learning groups. They focused exceptionally well, even though they could hardly contain their excitement, when they were learning how to give instructions to a programmable 'bee' robot to move across a grid to catch other insects. This activity was exceptionally challenging for this age and involved counting and ordering commands. They achieved and consolidated this skill very quickly. Children show great confidence and good skills in operating and using computers and other technology to aid learning.

Quality of teaching

Inspection findings endorse the view of the very large majority of parents and carers who returned a questionnaire that their children are exceptionally well taught and that the school meets their individual needs well. Adults have a deep understanding of how young children learn and plan activities that are matched well to each child's preferred learning styles and interests. They respond exceptionally well to children's interests when planning the curriculum and reviewing learning so children become interested and engaged. Activities are very effective in promoting children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, especially in developing their curiosity and desire to find out about why things are as they are. Children were fascinated when observing and touching Giant African Snails. They were carefully taught to respect the snails as living creatures.

The organisation of the nursery into themed areas enables adults to focus on specific knowledge, understanding and skills and ensures that all areas of learning are very well resourced. Highly focused questioning when adults join in with the children's play develops vocabulary and language particularly well. For example, in the outdoor area children were given the opportunity to make their own salt dough. They talked about change and were asked leading questions that effectively guided their observations of the change in texture during the process.

During regular planning meetings, adults discuss and make detailed notes of how well different activities have gone, how to make the activities easier or more challenging and how to deal with difficult issues such as boys' fascination with guns. This information helps adults to identify and decide on the next learning steps for all groups of children and different actions to be taken. As a result, adults target specific skills and language when children visit their areas.

Teaching is outstanding because all adults have a consistent approach. They all encourage children to be independent. They have high expectations and foster curiosity and enquiry exceptionally well. Adults have the ability to stand back and let children make mistakes but know when to intervene, encouraging them to take controlled risks. They use assessment very well to plan the next steps in learning.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Children enjoy coming to nursery. This is reflected in their high levels of involvement in activities and improving attendance. Children know what behaviour is expected and so are eager to cooperate. For their age, children are very adept at managing their own behaviour in class and in social situations. They soon learn to share and take turns. They take great care and behave in a safe manner when manoeuvring trikes and scooters around the outdoor space, climbing alongside friends on the apparatus, and using a wide range of apparatus and equipment. They have a very clear understanding of the risks because adults encourage them to talk about potential dangers and make their own risk assessments.

Children are very considerate and cooperate well in lessons. They are respectful of others' views and listen respectfully to each other. They feel safe in school and all questionnaire responses confirm that parents and carers are confident of their children's safety and have no concerns about behaviour. Children with a concern turn confidently to an adult knowing that it will be quickly resolved. No incidents of bullying and inappropriate behaviour have been recorded for several years. Excellent levels of pastoral support ensure that there is sensitive support for children whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and senior leadership team work exceptionally well together in leading a highly skilled staff to provide an outstanding level of care and education. Day-to-day management and professional supervision are of a high quality and support ongoing improvement. Roles are clearly defined and there is an excellent sense of teamwork. At the time of its previous inspection, the nursery was judged as outstanding. Since then, standards have risen further and children achieve more. Strengths have been continuously built upon. Consequently, the school provides excellent value for money and has an outstanding capacity to improve even further.

The governing body has a clear understanding of the nursery's effectiveness. Its members are fully involved in monitoring and self-evaluation and in strategic planning. They are proactive in seeking and using the views of parents and carers. They meet all of their statutory duties in relation to safeguarding. It is given high priority, and arrangements for keeping children safe are very well managed. Although the system used for recording medicines administered to children fully meets requirements, it does not ensure confidentiality. Leaders ensure the safe recruitment of staff and full checks are made on any adult working in the nursery. Staff are well trained in child protection and qualified in first aid. They are vigilant about site safety and make very careful daily checks of any potential hazards.

The curriculum is designed to provide children with rich opportunities to develop their communication, language, numeracy and personal skills by planning activities that are set into real and meaningful contexts and appeal to their interests. It

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prepares them exceptionally well for the next stages of their education. The focus on investigation and exploration is highly effective in promoting children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The nursery operates as an ethnically mixed but highly cohesive community, based on understanding and respecting all others. Children show respectful attitudes to learning and other children. Equality is promoted exceptionally well and there is no discrimination of any kind. Staff celebrate diversity and value all children in all that the nursery has to offer and those showing they can cope with more difficult tasks are challenged. This ensures that all children have equality of opportunity to succeed.

The Early Years Foundation Stage delivered in the registered childcare provision

The registered childcare offers full day care for children from birth to four and before- and after-school care for children up to the age of eight. The overall effectiveness of the day care is outstanding. The needs of children are routinely met through recognising the uniqueness of each child. All children make outstanding progress in their learning and development. The setting promotes children’s welfare exceptionally well. The strong partnerships and cohesion between each of the different aspects of provision on site – the children’s centre, the nursery and day care – enable the staff to provide an outstanding quality of education and care. The provision is exceptionally well led by the headteacher of the nursery and children’s centre. Planning for improvement is outstanding. It is very well targeted to bring about further improvement to provision and outcomes for children and babies. The staff work exceptionally well with parents and carers, which contributes further to the outstanding outcomes.

The provision is well staffed to care for babies and children alike. Child development is fostered from a very early age through stimulating learning experiences to promote babies’ sensory awareness. Children have excellent opportunities to experience and explore a range of materials, including light, sound and movements in the sensory room for example. This makes a highly effective contribution to their development. The staff focus on enabling children to communicate; they talk to babies to raise their early awareness of language, discuss with older children and give them opportunities for mark-making to encourage early writing skills. Adults ‘play’ at cooking with children and share books in a calm atmosphere. As a result, children and babies feel very comfortable in the company of adults and develop the ability to interact with others very well.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage of the registered childcare provision, inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage for the registered provision	1

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	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 2010 to 31 August 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.
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.



29 February 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Washwood Heath Nursery School, Birmingham, B8 2SY

Thank you for welcoming us to your nursery and for letting us watch you play and learn. We could see how much you enjoy the nursery because you all joined in with the activities and showed great pleasure whilst taking part. Your nursery is outstanding, which means it gives you an excellent start to your education. You all make excellent progress and join in so that you learn new things.

These are the things we liked best.

- Adults organise lots of interesting activities for you to enjoy and help you to learn new things every day.
- You all behave really well which means you feel safe in the nursery. It was good to see you all getting on so well together.
- Adults join in with your play and learning and ask lots of questions which help you to think, talk about what you are learning and find things out for yourselves.
- You are able to make wise choices about what you take part in and stick at tasks until completed.
- Your skills in speaking and listening, early reading and writing, counting and especially on the computers develop exceptionally well during the time you are in the nursery.

We have asked the adults just to check that the records of any medicines you may take are looked at and adjusted.

Your nursery is outstanding, but all the adults who look after you care so much about you and your progress, that they never stop trying to improve it further. You can help by continuing to do your best at everything and to keep trying new things, even when you find them hard at first. We hope you continue to enjoy nursery.

Yours sincerely

David Speakman

Lead inspector

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