

INSPECTION REPORT

**Lillian de Lissa Nursery School
Edgbaston, Birmingham**

LEA area: Birmingham City

**Unique Reference Number: 103137
Inspection Number: 188197**

Headteacher: Mrs H J Froggatt

Reporting inspector: Mrs A Coyle

Dates of inspection: 4 - 6 October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706661

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
Type of control:	Local education authority
Age range of pupils:	3 years 10 months - 4 years 10 months
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bellevue Edgbaston Birmingham B5 7LX
Telephone number:	0121 4403421
Fax number:	0121 4404074
Appropriate authority:	Birmingham City
Date of previous inspection:	June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Angela Coyle, RgI	Language and literacy Physical development Creative development Special educational needs English as an additional language	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management
Pat Edwards, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour & personal development Attendance Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnerships with parents & the community
Pamela Torrington	Mathematical development Knowledge and understanding of the world Personal and social development Equal opportunities	Curriculum and assessment Staffing, accommodation and resources Efficiency

The inspection contractor was:

Full Circle

35 Trewartha Park
Weston-Super-Mare
North Somerset
BS23 2RJ

Tel: 01934 412260

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The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Children under five achieve very high standards in personal and social development. They also achieve very high standards in information technology and artistic development. Children love coming to school and make good progress overall, towards achieving the Desirable Learning Outcomes¹.
- Children with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language are very well supported by adults. They make rapid progress in language and literacy and also in personal and social skills, in particular.
- Relationships between children are excellent. They work and play together exceedingly well. Attitudes to learning and standards of behaviour are very good. Children's personal development is also very good and this has a positive effect on their learning.
- The quality of education provided is very good indeed because teachers and nursery nurses are highly dedicated to the children's education and provide a very broad curriculum, with excellent extra-curricular activities. The quality of teaching is good overall; it is often very good, and sometimes excellent. Assessment procedures are excellent and they are used very effectively to promote children's progress.
- The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher provides excellent leadership to her staff, and monitors the school's provision very well. As a result, there is a very strong commitment to promoting high standards and a very calm, caring and excellent ethos for learning.
- A good number of experienced teachers and very well qualified nursery nurses are all given very good opportunities to develop their professional knowledge through in-service training.
- The good accommodation is used very well and there are excellent displays of children's work, which help to provide a colourful and stimulating environment. Learning resources are very good.
- The school's aims are met in full. There is excellent promotion of children's moral and social development. Opportunities for spiritual and cultural development are very good indeed and all children are highly valued by all adults.
- The school's provision for children's support, guidance and welfare is very good and the school's partnership with parents and the community is excellent. Parents are warmly welcomed into the school and take a great interest in their children's education.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. There are no significant weaknesses.

This is a very good school with many outstanding features. There are no weaknesses for the school to address in an action plan.

¹ On DESIRABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES

QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority), formerly SCAA (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority), has produced a set of 'Desirable Learning Outcomes for children's learning on entering compulsory education'. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of five in six areas of learning: language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development and personal and social development.

• **How the school has improved since the last inspection**

The school has fully addressed the areas identified for development during the last inspection. It has improved the provision for promoting children's independent learning by providing resources for role play and installing low shelving which is more accessible to children than previously. The attendance figures are now recorded systematically and registers are rigorously maintained. The curriculum has been developed in all areas of learning and is now very good indeed. The procedures for assessing children's work are excellent; teachers and nursery nurses record children's progress very carefully and make sure that these records are used to help them plan future work. Adults responsible for co-ordinating the areas of learning fully monitor the work of their colleagues and also manage their own budgets efficiently. The outdoor area has been improved; the perimeter fence has been raised to a more secure level and the grass mound has been removed. The outdoor area is currently being further developed to provide more play equipment and areas for imaginative play. The school is very well placed for future improvement, because it is so well managed by the dedicated headteacher and her committed staff.

• **Standards**

Children under five make very good progress and achieve very high standards indeed in personal and social development because teachers and nursery nurses have very high expectations and place great emphasis on developing children's skills. They also achieve very high standards in information technology and artistic development.

• **Quality of teaching**

• **Teaching in:**

• **Under 5**

Teaching is at least satisfactory in 100 per cent of lessons. It is good in 44 per cent, very good in 24 per cent and excellent in three per cent.

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses

• **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good. Children have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well. Their relationships with others are excellent.
Attendance	Very good. Children are usually punctual for their lessons.
Ethos*	Excellent. The school is committed to promoting high standards within a very calm and caring ethos.
Leadership and management	Excellent. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and the staff.

Curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is planned very well to the Desirable Outcomes for Learning, and the excellent assessment procedures are very well used to help teachers plan their work. Excellent extra-curricular activities are provided.
Special educational needs; English as an additional language	Very good. Children are very well supported by adults. They make rapid progress in language and literacy.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Excellent provision for children's moral and social development. Very good spiritual and cultural development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The school has a good number of teachers and very well qualified nursery nurses. The accommodation is good, and there are excellent displays of children's work. Resources for learning are very good.
Value for money	The school provides very good value for money.

**Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

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The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school

- II. The school is very warm and welcoming.
- III. It is a well-organised and stimulating environment.
- IV. Children are given very good opportunities to develop their confidence and social skills.

What some parents are not happy about

None.

Inspectors agree with all of the above comments made by parents.

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KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

There are no significant key issues for action.

There are a few minor areas for development, which should be considered for improvement. These are indicated in paragraphs 33, 41, and 44.

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INTRODUCTION

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Characteristics of the school

1. Lillian de Lissa Nursery School is situated in the city of Birmingham. It serves the Edgbaston catchment area, which mainly consists of council owned and housing association properties. The number of pupils on roll is similar to that of the previous inspection in 1996; there are currently 77 girls and boys in the school, who are taught in two classes. Seventy-three per cent of children are from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is very high compared to other nursery schools, and the percentage of children who are known to be eligible for free school meals is also much higher than the national average, at 49 per cent. The figures for last year showed that the school had 11 children on the register of special educational needs, which is lower than the national figure, and no pupils had statements for their needs. Teachers are currently assessing pupils for their special educational needs and the number is likely to be much higher this year. The majority of children enter the school with limited skills in English language and literacy because many learn English as an additional language.
2. The school aims to create a happy, secure, stimulating and inviting environment in which children are encouraged to show caring, sharing attitudes and become confident, independent and motivated learners. The school also encourages the active participation of parents in the education of their children. The priorities for development include improving the outdoor facilities, developing the curriculum, providing staff development training, continuing with research initiatives and extending links with parents and the community.

2. **Key indicators**

2. **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:	%
Very good or better	27
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

2.

2. **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

2. **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

2. **Attainment and progress**

3. Children under five make very good progress and achieve very high standards indeed in personal and social development because teachers and nursery nurses have very high expectations and place great emphasis on developing children's skills. Since the previous inspection, the school has made considerable improvements in promoting children's independent learning by introducing a wide range of well-planned activities that focus on helping children to think for themselves and take responsibility for helping teachers and nursery nurses.
4. Standards in English language and literacy are below the expectations for age, at this very early stage in the term, because the majority of children learn English as an additional language. Many children enter the school with little understanding of English and several have no knowledge of the language. However, they all make rapid progress because the quality of teaching is so good and teachers focus very well on promoting this area. Children achieve good standards in listening. They pay good attention to adults and listen carefully when being given instructions and guidance in their activities.
5. Overall, children achieve the standards expected for their age in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. They make very good progress in artistic activities and far exceed the standards expected. For example, they enjoy painting and three-dimensional work, and are able to mix primary colours together successfully, showing great delight at their results. Children also achieve standards well beyond those expected for age when using computers. Progress is very good in this area of learning and children show good confidence in using the roller ball to control the cursor on the screen.
6. Children with special educational needs make good progress in all areas of learning and achieve appropriate standards for their abilities. They make very good progress in language and literacy, and in personal and social skills. Children are developing their ability to concentrate for reasonable periods of time.

6. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

7. The school has maintained the very good attitudes, behaviour and high quality relationships found at the previous inspection and greatly improved the opportunities to extend the children's independent learning skills.
8. Attitudes to learning and standards of behaviour are consistently very good and the excellent relationships are a strength of the school. The children settle into school routines, for example, sitting quietly at the beginning of a session and moving off sensibly to take part in an activity. They have a very positive attitude to their work and play, and enjoy what they do. The children concentrate very well and listen very carefully to information and instructions. They work very well with each other and independently.
9. The children's behaviour is very good, both in planned activities and during playtimes. The rare instances of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with well by the staff. During the inspection no bullying was observed and children from different backgrounds and cultures

related very well to one another. The children are polite, friendly and happy. Despite some children's limited communication skills, they talk confidently about their work and are proud of their successes. They respond positively to the high expectations of the staff.

10. Relationships between children and all adults are excellent. The staff provide excellent role models by showing an interest in what the children say and do and encouraging their self-esteem.

11. The personal development of the children is very good. They are involved in helping at lunchtimes, collecting their utensils and laying their place at table. All children take it in turns to be the server for the day and collect and serve all meals for their own table. They move between activities confidently and readily help with tidying resources away. The children with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language have positive attitudes to all aspects of their education and respond well to the additional support they are given.

11. **Attendance**

12. Attendance is very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when attendance was judged to be good, overall. The school now keeps a record of attendance over time. Most of the children attend regularly and love coming to school. In the main, absence is attributable to illness and to the few children who take extended holidays. Many children arrive within the first few minutes of the start time of each session and punctuality improves as children and parents quickly establish a routine. The children carry out self-registration carefully and settle quickly in a calm and happy atmosphere. The registers are neatly and accurately completed at the beginning of each session.

12. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

12. **Teaching**

13. The quality of teaching is good overall, with a significant amount of very good teaching. In the lessons observed, 100 per cent of teaching was satisfactory, or better. Teaching was good in 44 per cent of lessons, very good in 24 per cent and excellent in three per cent. This finding shows that the school has improved the quality of teaching since the previous inspection, because there is now much more very good teaching with some outstanding features. In particular, teaching is notably very good in personal and social development. This is characterised by exciting and imaginative activities, which are sharply focused on learning objectives. For example, in one lesson, children were taught very well how to organise the pictures on a computer screen when the teacher told them, "food goes in the basket", "cooking pots go in the cooker", and "dishes all go in the sink". All staff use very good questioning techniques and lots of praise to promote high expectations. These features help to ensure that children enjoy their lessons and make good progress.

14. Teachers and nursery nurses have very good knowledge of the six areas of learning. It is notably strong in language and literacy and information technology. Their expectations are very high for all children, including those with special educational needs and children who learn English as an additional language. Daily planning is very good overall; lesson plans contain clear details of the activities to be covered and the key focus of learning. This has a positive effect on the good progress made by children because learning is clearly targeted. In addition,

all teachers and nursery nurses provide excellent displays of children's colourful artwork to stimulate the imagination on themes such as self-portraits, mini-beasts and the four seasons. Classrooms are very clean, bright and cheerful places with plenty of exciting photographs of children at work and at play. Big, bright 'Rainbow' screens are used very well to divide work and quiet areas, as lessons progress. Teachers also use the entrance lobby to offer a cheerful welcome to all, through interactive displays, good quality books and the sounds of taped music. Welcome signs displayed in 12 languages add to the celebration of the rich ethnic mix of children and their families and send out the message that all who enter the school are highly valued.

15. The control of children in lessons is very good indeed and many lessons contain excellent features. For example, a particular strength in teaching is that all adults are calm and quietly spoken; lessons are managed very well and conducted within a peaceful, happy ethos. Every child is highly valued as an individual and members of staff are excellent role models for their children. This has a very noticeable effect on children's very good behaviour and their good listening skills. Teachers make very good use of praise and they employ very good questioning techniques. Practical activities are purposeful, and firmly based on what children already know. For example, during snack times, teachers ask questions such as, "How many cups will we need?" and, "If we hide one, how many are left?" to help children think about adding and subtracting numbers. During lessons, teachers and nursery nurses split classes into small groups so that very focused attention can be given to individuals. Good questioning, such as, "Can you remember what to do before we go outside?" encourages children to think for themselves and plan ahead before embarking on a new activity.
16. Day-to-day assessment procedures are very good. Teachers keep careful records of children's successes, including details for children with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language. For example, they make excellent observations of individual children in order to help them plan their work and target specific support to those who require support for their language and social skills. In addition, the home-school literacy link is used very well to encourage parents to participate actively in their children's education by sharing books, games and toys in the 'Bear Bag'.
17. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language is very good indeed. All adults know the children well and they have very high expectations of behaviour. Individual education plans are used well to help teachers and nursery nurses support children very closely and, as a result, children do well.
17. **The curriculum and assessment**
18. The curriculum is very broad and balanced. It provides a rich curriculum for all children and is well designed to cover the recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes. Since the last inspection there has been a much greater emphasis on some scientific areas of knowledge and understanding of the world and mathematical development. There is now very good provision for children to learn through independent activities. For example, children are expected to put on, and take off, their own coats, lay their own place settings at lunch and register themselves in the mornings. The shelving has been lowered so that children can also choose their own resources. As the academic year moves on, children are carefully prepared for the next stage of their education. In the early part of the year, they are taught to recognise their names on laminated name labels which they use to self-register, for coat pegs and for dinner place markers. Towards the end of the year, family names are added to the label in preparation for moving on to the primary phase.

19. The school caters very well for children with special educational needs. There is excellent provision for early identification of special educational needs and for children with English as an additional language, using a rigorous programme of observation. Children are given equal access to the curriculum and are also encouraged to take part in all extra-curricular activities.
20. Planning for the curriculum is very good. Continuity is ensured through detailed long-term plans, agreed by the whole staff annually, and is structured around termly themes taken from the areas of Desirable Learning Outcomes. The medium-term plans provide for continuity across two classes and over a term. They include detailed planning for progression through the learning of skills, attitudes and knowledge. All staff contribute to the medium-term planning very effectively; they work well together and understand the aims of their regular meetings.
21. Staff give a high priority to the development of children's personal and social skills, during their first term in school. Language and literacy are very well catered for in planned speaking and listening activities, role-play, and daily story sessions. Mathematics is seen as part of every area of the curriculum and is also specifically planned for in practical activities. Very good opportunities are provided in the long-term plans for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world, especially in learning about the environment. Creative activities are well provided for in the many art activities and daily singing and music sessions. Since the last inspection, opportunities for physical development have been improved with the removal of a large grass mound, which has been replaced with a playground area. During the present academic year, a climbing frame and multi-use play-house will be added. This will provide for the full range of opportunities for physical development required for nursery children.
22. The provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent. Children take part in festivals, and visitors from a variety of cultures regularly visit the school. The school makes excellent use of the rich variety of cultures represented by its parents, in music, cooking, national dress and festivals. Every year a group of children take part in a five-day residential visit to a local farm, specifically catering for children of this age.
23. Assessment procedures are excellent. Individual profiles are compiled diligently for each child when they enter the school and are kept up-to-date. The parents contribute a detailed description of their child, which includes emotional, social and physical details. During the first few weeks in the first term, each child is closely observed and a general description is written on an observation form, covering all areas of development. Throughout the year, each child's success in the six areas of learning is monitored at regular intervals and recorded on assessment forms. These are then discussed at weekly staff meetings, any action decided upon is recorded and used by adults to assist their planning for individual needs. The parents are usually involved in any action and may be asked to assist development at home, which they willingly undertake. At the end of the year, all the aspects of the areas for learning are checked for each child and this monitoring form is sent to the child's primary school.
24. The school responds very well to the Code of Practice² for children with special educational needs. The assessment procedures are excellent. Needs are identified through the early

² On SEN CODE OF PRACTICE

Code of Practice - this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development.

observation system in which staff make exceedingly careful notes of children's difficulties and use the information gathered to devise specific targets for learning. Recently, the school has embarked on a new strategy for identifying special emotional and learning needs. This involves monitoring the child's levels of involvement and well-being. Any children who have a cause for concern are identified and early intervention is provided either within the school, or in partnership with outside agencies.

24. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

25. The highly effective provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children found at the previous inspection has been maintained.

26. The provision made for children's spiritual development is very good. The children celebrate the idea of being special every day, for example when they take turns to become a special helper. They are encouraged in many aspects of their work to be aware of themselves and others. Recognition of birthdays is an enjoyable part of the school's routine. The children celebrate many festivals throughout the year, such as Eid, Diwali, Christmas, Easter, Chinese and Korean New Year. Parents willingly help with these celebrations contributing costumes, food and artefacts. The children delight in the world about them and are taught to develop a reflective approach to what they are doing by, for example, studying the attractive display on the book, 'Circle of Days', based on the prayer of St Francis of Assisi.

27. The school's provision for moral development is excellent. The children know the difference between right and wrong and they are encouraged to be honest, fair and considerate. The school promotes clear values and principles and by regularly reinforcing very good attitudes and behaviour provides an atmosphere in which the children's moral development is encouraged. Above all, the examples provided by the adults in the school and mutual respect shown between staff and the children help to create an environment conducive to learning.

28. The provision for children's social development is excellent and a strong feature of the school. The children are actively encouraged to be courteous to one another and to adults. All children are offered opportunities to work independently and in groups and to take on responsibilities, for example, self registration. They are expected to help each other and to tidy up after each session, leaving an area as they found it. They are encouraged to listen to and show respect for each other's work and ideas. The opportunity of a residential visit to a holiday farm makes a significant contribution to the children's social development. The links with the nearby special school and the exchange visits that are made by the children allow them to develop an awareness of the wider community and the needs of others less fortunate than themselves.

29. Arrangements for the children's cultural development are very good. They are taught to appreciate the diversity and richness of their own and other cultures. These diversities are celebrated in music, books and the many attractive displays around the school. Staff are very well informed about a range of different religions and customs represented by the wide range of cultural backgrounds from which the children come. The school makes very good use of visits and visitors to the school to further extend the children's cultural development.

29. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

30. The school's provision for the support, guidance and welfare of its pupils is very good. The very warm, secure environment found at the previous inspection has been maintained. The inspection findings agree with the views of parents who are very happy with the support and

guidance offered to them and their children. They feel that the staff know their children well and are familiar with their backgrounds, which helps teachers to take particular care of individual needs. The parents feel their children are valued and treated with understanding and respect. The children love coming to school, where they feel safe and welcome in the very attractive surroundings. Very good support is given to the children with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language. Their activities are very well organised and this has a positive effect on the progress they make.

31. Members of staff have very high expectations of the children's behaviour and the nursery policy on behaviour is very effective and applied consistently by all staff. This helps to create a calm and purposeful atmosphere, which promotes the development of self-discipline. Children's academic and personal progress is monitored conscientiously by teachers, whilst absence is carefully monitored by the headteacher and any absence is consistently followed up. Parents are aware of the need to inform the school when their child is ill, and they do so willingly.
32. The school has very effective measures for child protection. The headteacher is the designated member of staff to deal with any incidents that may arise. All staff are aware of the procedures and regular staff training is undertaken. The school is successful in promoting the children's health, safety and well-being. The induction process takes account of the needs of the children and their families. The school makes time at the start of the autumn term to establish routines so that the children feel secure. The school has good links with the necessary support agencies. The procedures for first aid, recording accidents and informing parents are very good. A risk assessment is regularly undertaken and all necessary checks on fire appliances and electrical equipment are up to date.
32. **Partnership with parents and the community**
33. The excellent partnership established with parents and the local community and the outstanding parental involvement in their children's learning found at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. The school is held in high regard by parents who are very pleased with the information they receive from the school through personal contact, on noticeboards, in letters and at meetings. The school prospectus provides much useful information for parents but it does not do justice to the many exciting and worthwhile activities provided by the nursery. Although written translation of information is not freely accessible, verbal translation is provided for those parents who request it. The school day is organised well to allow time for staff and parents to talk together.
34. Many parents assist in the school, for example with puppet making, kite making and cookery. Good workshops have also been held for parents on developing core skills. These are to be repeated this year when a workshop on literacy will be held. The children take home a 'Bear Bag' containing a bear, books, games and toys for the children and their parents to enjoy together as part of the school's literacy programme.
35. The school has worthwhile links with Calthorpe Special School and pupils from the school visit the nursery and help with the wildlife garden and with the further playground developments. Students on placement are made welcome in the nursery and they are provided with a booklet of useful information about the school's routines. The nursery has been involved in a two-year art project with the Royal Ballet. These visitors to the school and visits made by the children to places of educational interest add to the children's learning and experience of life in the wider world.

35. **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

35. **Leadership and management**

36. The quality of leadership shown by the headteacher is outstanding. She provides excellent leadership to her colleagues and is highly committed to the school. There is very clear educational direction. The school is very well managed and there is a clear system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in classes. The school's strong sense of purpose and very good pastoral support of children has been maintained since the previous inspection. The school's aims to create a secure, stimulating community in which children are encouraged to show care and concern for others and attain their full potential are substantially fulfilled.

37. The roles of the co-ordinators have been improved since the previous inspection and are now very good. All teachers and nursery nurses are dedicated to the education of the children and have clear responsibilities in the running of the school, which they carry out efficiently. They give very good help and guidance to colleagues and monitor provision carefully. The excellent relationships between staff and the substantial amount of very good teaching, help to ensure that the school has an excellent ethos for learning

38. A very good school development plan is in place. It consists of a detailed annual plan, which has clearly prioritised targets, with financial implications, management responsibilities, short-term goals and success criteria all well defined. The school shows a clear desire to move forward and future targets have been identified, together with monitoring arrangements and management procedures. The school's capacity for future improvement is, therefore, very good.

39. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The headteacher oversees provision and provides very good support for colleagues by making sure that detailed records are kept of children's needs and the guidance they require. The school has a good policy for equal opportunities, which is consistently applied. The achievement of girls and boys is monitored carefully in order that any areas of concern are identified quickly and focused help given where appropriate. Children who learn English as an additional language are very well supported by the part-time specialist teacher who rigorously monitors progress and gives very close guidance to children.

39. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

40. The school has a good number of qualified staff with one teacher and two qualified nursery nurses to each class. All the teachers and nursery nurses have good experience of teaching this age of children and work very well together as a team. Nursery nurses are very well qualified and are keen to update their knowledge whenever possible. The classes are divided into three groups; teachers and nursery nurses share responsibilities well by planning and teaching their own groups of 13 children. This enhances the self-esteem of all staff and enriches and supports the ethos of equality, which pervades the school. Although appraisal is not being conducted at present, as the school is awaiting new guidelines from the government, the headteacher conducts individual professional development meetings with all the staff throughout the year. The arrangements for the professional development of staff are very good and meet the needs of the school development plan and individual needs. The lunchtime supervisors undertake a high level of training, when initially appointed, and subsequently in health and safety. They also take part in any training which the staff undertake focusing on emotional and social

development. All courses are evaluated and regularly shared with the rest of the staff. The high standards of provision for all areas of learning in the school demonstrate the effectiveness of the training undertaken by all staff.

41. The accommodation is good. The building was purpose-built for children of nursery age and the headteacher has ensured that every part of it is used to enhance children's experiences. Little used storage rooms have been opened up to provide carpeted story rooms and library areas. Since the last inspection, shelving has been lowered to provide storage for resources at child height, and to provide very good seating areas for children to gather during break and review sessions. The outside accommodation includes a covered courtyard onto which all the rooms open, and a recently enlarged tarmacked area. The courtyard provides a safe enclosed area for the children to play, and creates an atmosphere of privacy, calm and peace, which is such a noticeable characteristic of the school. Since the last inspection, the perimeter fence has been heightened and provides a secure barrier. As a result, all areas of the outside grounds are now used to enhance the children's learning. The grounds include a small, safe pond, and shrubs and large trees, which provide shade and seclusion. Under the trees in a secretive corner of the grounds there is a circle of log seats, which is used for music and reflective sessions, enhancing provision for the development of the children's spirituality. The school does not have a room specifically allocated for parents to use, but hopes to provide extra accommodation for this purpose and also intends to further improve the outdoor area by providing equipment, such as a climbing frame and play-house.
42. Learning resources are very good, overall. Since the last inspection, new resources have been purchased to increase the development of mathematical and scientific experiences. The resources match the needs of the curriculum, and are in excellent condition. New big books have been added to the library areas and house shaped storage facilities for the big books are particularly innovative. There is a wide variety of mathematical equipment, from sorting and sequencing resources, to giant sized plastic covered dice. Scientific development is enriched by collections of kaleidoscopes and other light resources, which add fun and delight to the children's experiences. There is a good variety of consumable materials for art and high quality musical instruments. The school is very well equipped with strong and well maintained outside play equipment, such as tricycles. The school is very well equipped with computers and software appropriate for young children. The sand and water trays are well designed and in good condition. A striking feature of the resources are the brightly coloured screens which divide the group learning areas and add to the feeling of privacy needed for the development of a sense of security in children of this age. In the home areas of each classroom, the dolls represent a variety of cultures and reflect the school's strong awareness of equal opportunities.
42. **The efficiency of the school**
43. Since the last inspection, the school now has a partially delegated budget. This has resulted in more efficient planning for long- and medium-term curriculum issues involving the purchasing of equipment. Decisions about budget spending are made by the whole staff and the curriculum co-ordinators are each allocated a budget entitlement for resources. Financial decisions are made by the headteacher in close consultation with the local education authority and the finance officer. There are very clear procedures for financial management within the school and the budget is very carefully monitored by an outside auditor. Recently, an audit declared the finances of the school to be sound. Educational developments are supported by very careful financial planning, with the school being involved with many educational research initiatives. These have often provided extra finance to the school and have had a positive benefit to children's learning.

44. The administrative assistant only works in the school part-time, and although she provides excellent service towards the financial and administrative running of the school, the headteacher has to do many of the tasks, which overload her duties. Very effective use is made of all resources and accommodation including storage areas.
45. Many children enter the school with limited skills in communicating because they learn English as an additional language. However, all children progress rapidly in personal and social development, artistic activities and computer skills; they attain very high standards in these areas of learning. Teachers and nursery nurses are very effectively and efficiently deployed. The quality of education provided by the school is very good, with many outstanding features. Therefore the school provides very good value for money.
- 45.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

45. AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

46. The school makes very good provision for children under five in the two nursery classes. Since the last inspection, the good quality teaching has been maintained and the children are provided with a very good start to their learning. The entry assessments conducted within the first few weeks of the autumn term indicate that children's competency and confidence with language are below that expected for their age. However, the children develop their skills very effectively in all areas of learning and make good progress overall. They make the best progress in personal and social skills, language and literacy, information technology and artistic development.

46. Personal and social development

47. All children achieve very good standards in their personal and social development. They are very well behaved, friendly and polite. They are confident and feel secure within the school. Early in the school year they are beginning to make relationships with each other and the staff. They work extremely well as groups and in pairs and are able to work and play independently. Children with English as a second language are welcomed by the other children into their games, and are already beginning to increase their vocabulary. *For example, two little boys were sitting together at the computer using mathematical software for 15 minutes. One of them could not speak any English but was squealing with delight as the other boy showed him how to make balloons disappear.* Children in the home corner are able to play for long periods of time making tea, sweeping the floor and going shopping, and all the time talking to each other, saying "please", "thank you" and "excuse me" to all present. The children are eager to explore new learning. For example, during the inspection, a group of children sitting in a row on a low bench were asked to wait a moment while the teacher fetched her story-board to tell the rhyme 'Five Little Frogs'. While they waited they were observed positively quivering with anticipation and delight at the new experience which awaited them. The children are beginning to initiate ideas as they play with construction sets, and in particular with the outside play equipment. They show that they can solve practical problems on their own when they tackle unzipping their coats, undoing buttons and putting their own coats on hooks after playtime.

48. Teaching is consistently very good and sometimes excellent. All staff have a very good understanding of child development and work with children sensitively. Staff act as excellent role models and are calm, offering gentle encouragement and positive praise, while setting clear expectations of behaviour. They encourage independent play, and yet provide security by always being available for the children to talk to. They always join in with play in the home area, sitting on the children's chairs or on the floor. They develop the children's social behaviour by suggesting compromise, where appropriate, to solve disputes. All the staff sit with their own group during lunch, encouraging excellent social behaviour and manners during lunchtime. The curriculum includes circle time as part of the planning for social and personal development, and the residential visit is an excellent provision for this area of development.

48. Language and literacy

49. At this very early stage in the academic year, standards in English language and literacy are below the expected outcomes for age because the majority of children learn English as an additional language. Many children enter the school with little understanding of English.

Several children have no knowledge of English and a few have special educational needs. However, they all make rapid progress because the quality of teaching is so good and teachers focus very well on promoting this area. Children achieve good standards in listening. They pay good attention to adults and listen carefully when being given instructions and guidance in their activities. All teachers of the under-fives see progress in speaking and listening as crucial and planning is very detailed. In addition, every opportunity is taken to develop these skills in all the activities. The children develop a clear understanding of how to handle books by observing their teachers and soon begin to show basic early reading skills because of the carefully chosen texts provided. They enjoy listening to stories, and are able to sit still and listen attentively. Many children like opening books from their class library and enjoy looking at the pictures. They particularly enjoy taking home a bear, books, games and toys in the 'Bear Bag'. Children are beginning to experiment with making their own marks on paper and many make successful attempts to recognise their own names on their cards in the morning. Children respond well to questions and comments from adults. They listen carefully to the person who is speaking and most are able to follow simple instructions. Children enjoy songs and stories. A few can recount a story from the pictures in one of their big class books, using simple language and all know that books are read from front to back.

50. All of the teachers work very hard to equip the children with the necessary language and listening skills. Teaching is very good. The teachers are clear and precise, intervene carefully with perceptive questioning to make teaching points and use expressive story telling skills. They encourage the children to reason and to predict. Provision is very good with book corners spacious and well displayed with a very good range of high quality books accessible to the children. Writing materials are readily available and give a very good choice of papers and writing tools.

50.
development

Mathematical

51. Most children are well on the way to achieving the expected outcomes by the age of five. Many can count to five and some of the children can count to ten. Children use their hands and paint to make prints and are then able to count their fingers. Some children recognise circles, squares and rectangles and use the correct vocabulary, within the first four weeks of entering the school. Children are able to sort objects according to size and some are beginning to recognise patterns using the computers. A significant number of children are able to recite number rhymes and all of them are beginning to use their fingers for counting while singing. A few children are able to record numbers and are well on target to be writing numbers independently by the time they reach five.
52. Children make good progress during lessons and over the year. Mathematical language is developed by encouraging the children to count when lining up, counting pieces of apple during snack time and counting the cups as they are handed out. During snack time children learnt about volume when the nursery nurse discussed whether the jug was full or empty. Progress was made during the frequent computer sessions when small groups of children learnt about number recognition, size and shapes. The evidence in the work scrutiny showed that progress over the year is good. By the time they leave the school the majority of the children show an awareness of number operations and understand and record numbers. They learn number rhymes and games and can tell a story using number. Children behave very well during sessions. They are able to share equipment and work together. For example, two children threading beads to make a sequence pattern were delighted to join in number rhymes and continue to sing them when washing for lunch. Concentration is sustained for a very long time

for such young children, some of whom have only just turned three. They are very willing to pack away the equipment at the end of sessions, and collaborate well in this aspect.

53. The quality of teaching is good. There is a mathematical focus planned for every day. Activities are play-related and practical and sustain the interest of the children. The activities are chosen to fit in with the theme in the long-term plan, and appropriately match the children's abilities. Assessment procedures are very good. Staff make regular observations and record the children's development for future planning. A portfolio of the children's work is kept which includes mathematical work on number, shape and size. The co-ordinator is very good. She monitors planning and has monitored and purchased new resources since the last inspection. The policy for mathematics covers all the aspects of the Desirable Outcomes for Learning and covers a wide range of teaching activities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

54. Children are well on their way to achieving the Desirable Outcomes for Learning. They achieve standards above those expected for their age in information technology. During the inspection, the topic studied was 'All about Me' and the children are finding out about their babyhood and the lives of the adults in the school. Children can cut and make shapes out of play-dough and use scissors and other cutting tools. They can fit construction toys together and make the bed for their babies in the home area. They are able to pour sand carefully into various sized containers in the sand tray and pour water into funnels. They can paint using large paint brushes and manipulate the keys on the computers.
55. Children make good progress. They quickly learn to dress themselves and turn on taps to wash themselves. They learn how to manipulate a wide variety of toys and learn very quickly how to pack them away. They are taught daily how to use the computer and make rapid progress in the use of the roller-ball, mouse and printer. They learn about living things through practical experiences, such as discovering worms in the garden, and learn about the lives of people in the present and the past through speaking and listening to a wide variety of people of all ages and cultures. They find out about buildings and shops by walking around the local area, and have first-hand experience of public transport and cities by going on a bus outing to the middle of Birmingham. They learn about farms through visits. Stories are used to teach knowledge of routes such as 'Rosie's Walk' followed up by outstanding inter-active displays. An excellent opportunity for equal opportunities provision has been made use of by inviting teenage pupils from a nearby special school to work on the environment in the school grounds. This opportunity to share experience with the special school has been extended to sending a group of children from the nursery school for regular visits to the nursery unit of the special school, and to repeat return visits. Children are inquisitive about the world and constantly ask questions. They work well together in making things, and playing in role-play situations and with toys. They wait their turn, share resources well and they concentrate on the task in hand. Children show obvious care and concern by the gentle and skilled way they hold and look after their 'babies' in the home area.
56. Teaching is very good. Planning is excellent for all areas of knowledge and understanding of the world and is very appropriately matched to the time of the year and to the children's stages of development. Excellent displays enhance children's experiences. Teachers spend time with children, and pace themselves to give all children equal share of their attention. They use skilled questioning and use pictures and actual objects to extend the children's vocabulary. The daily use of the excellent assessment procedures is very good; adults constantly check the children's previous knowledge and understanding through questions and answers. Resources

are very good and matched well to the children's ability. Experience of the real world is enhanced by the use of real woodwork tools, real yard brooms and shovels and brushes for sweeping the playground. Photographs show the children planting their own flower tubs in the spring and then maintaining them with weeding and watering. As part of the topic on 'Me' teachers plan to bring in a real baby, due to be born shortly, and there will be a baby clinic set up in the classroom. This shows an imaginative use of resources available to the school, as is the use of parents to talk about their own cultures. Very good opportunities for information technology, such as the recent 'Multimedia Challenge', help children to extend their computer skills very effectively in an exciting way.

56. **Physical development**

57. Children make good progress and achieve the standards expected for their age. They are able to handle the tricycles well outside, showing sound co-ordination; many children can manoeuvre well around objects and people, at a very early stage of the term. They enjoy the feel of the play dough as they push, pull, roll and cut it and handle small toys gleefully. *For example, in one lesson involving a shaky toy, children squealed with wonder and delight as the object wriggled in their hands.* Children sustain concentration well during physical activities. They are courteous and well behaved to adults and each other, and show willing attitudes to learning. Many are able to walk, jump and move around to find a space and can climb up, down and slide on the indoor climbing frame, reasonably confidently. They use construction kits with increasing confidence and tools, such as scissors, paint brushes, crayons and glue brushes, are handled increasingly well.

58. Teaching is good. Teachers plan their lessons well to teach skills progressively with choice provided in activities. A positive learning environment is provided by calm, firm discipline. The school is well equipped with large and small apparatus of a suitable size and type for young children. The accommodation is used very well. Provision is sound for climbing and crawling activities and for using a range of wheeled vehicles to develop other skills. The school plans to install large outdoor play equipment very soon, such as a climbing frame and play house.

Creative development

59. Children make good progress, building on their social skills through practice and interaction with teachers and other adults. They achieve very high standards in artistic activities. Children find enjoyment in expressing their feelings and ideas through a range of experiences in artistic, musical and imaginative play. For example, they enjoy painting at the easels and making prints, showing great excitement and wonder at the end product, especially when mixing primary colours together with their hands and when using mirrors to study their own reflections. They enjoy the discovery of playdough shapes when using the cutters. They know the primary colours well and also know a few secondary colours like pink and green. They work happily with a wide range of media. Children enjoy singing and making music and do so tunefully, using actions enthusiastically in their rhymes and songs. They use the resources well to aid their imaginative play in the home corner and are beginning to show very confident social skills when playing with each other. Resources are very good and the role-play areas are easily adaptable to a variety of themes during the year.

60. The quality of teaching is good. All adults support children in their learning and ensure that they gain from the activities through discussion, as they work. There is a good sense of fun encouraged in practical tasks, such as threading dried pasta shapes onto wool and hand

printing. Activities are organised very well and always suitably matched to the children's needs. There is always a well planned choice of materials in artistic activities and the children make good progress in developing their imaginative skills. Excellent displays of children's work help to create a vibrant and colourful environment in which all children are highly valued as individuals.

60. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

60. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

61. The inspection of Lillian de Lissa Nursery School was undertaken by a team of three inspectors who completed a combined total of 6.5 days in school.

62. For the majority of time, inspectors visited classes, talked with individuals and groups of pupils, evaluated the work they had done and observed 33 lessons, or parts of lessons. Observations were also made of breaktimes, lunchtimes and registrations. In addition, 15 interviews were held with the headteacher, members of staff with curriculum responsibilities, support staff and other interested parties.

63. Furthermore:

- seven children were observed for their early reading skills (ten per cent of the total number of children on roll);
- samples of children's work covering the full ability range were scrutinised;
- individual education plans for children with special educational needs were scrutinised;
- a wide range of documents, including policies and the school development plan, were analysed;
- the previous 1996 OFSTED report and the action plan were scrutinised;
- attendance registers, the records kept on children and teachers' planning documents were analysed;
- the budget figures were analysed.

• **DATA AND INDICATORS**

• **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with Statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Nursery Unit/School	77	0	11	38

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Teachers and classes

• **Qualified teachers**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	3.5
Number of children per qualified teacher:	22*

• **Each class of 39 children is divided into three groups and taught by one teacher and two nursery nurses.*

Education support staff

Total number of education support staff:	4
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	130

Average class size

Average class size:	39
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Financial data

Financial year:	1998/9
	£
Total budget	220,334
Total expenditure	205,667
Expenditure per child	2,999
Balance brought forward from previous year	14,667
Balance carried forward to next year	14,667

• **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out: 96
 Number of questionnaires returned: 33

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	88	12	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	82	18	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	41	53	6	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	42	48	3	6	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	67	27	3	3	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	76	18	0	3	3
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	72	25	0	3	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	0	0	0	0	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	85	15	0	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	79	21	0	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	100	0	0	0	0

• **Other issues raised by parents**

The majority of parents were particularly positive in their comments and took the opportunity to express their strong support for the quality of education provided by the school. There were no significant areas of concern. Parents feel that the school is very warm and welcoming. It is a well organised and stimulating environment in which children are given very good opportunities to develop their confidence and social skills.