



Brearley Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103121
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 276849
Inspection dates 9 May 2006 to 9 May 2006
Reporting inspector Julia Coop AI

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Brearley Street
School category	Maintained		Birmingham
Age range of pupils	3 to 4		West Midlands B19 3XJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 3592309
Number on roll	104	Fax number	0121 3597296
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms Geraldine Henry (Acting)
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2000	Headteacher	Miss Susan Stewart

Age group 3 to 4	Inspection dates 9 May 2006 - 9 May 2006	Inspection number 276849
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Brearley Nursery is situated in a disadvantaged and culturally diverse area of Birmingham. It provides extended care. All children attend full time. Most are of British-African or Caribbean heritage. Around a quarter of the children are at the early stages of acquiring English. The proportion with learning difficulties is average. Recently, the school has admitted a small number of children from asylum seeker and refugee families. The numbers claiming free school meals is high. Attainment on entry is low compared to the expected levels for children of this age. Building work is currently taking place as the school is in transition to being a Children's Centre. The current headteacher started in April 2006 following a term with an acting headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Brearley is an outstanding school that provides excellent value for money. It is rightly cherished by parents who appreciate the outstanding care and guidance their children receive. Excellent teaching and an exemplary curriculum ensure that children are fully absorbed in and excited about learning. Because of this, children's achievement is excellent in all areas of learning. Children are treated as individuals and sensitively encouraged. Consequently, they thrive in the supportive learning environment, really enjoy school and become polite, confident and independent learners. The school judged its effectiveness to be good as it is always striving for something even better. Inspectors judge effectiveness to be outstanding as even the very best schools will always want to improve on some aspects of its work.

The overall leadership and management are outstanding. Teamwork is highly effective. All staff are constantly striving to develop their skills and to improve children's learning. The school has a very accurate view of its strengths and areas in which it might develop further. There is a wide range of systems to check on the school's work. The school recognises formal systems for observing teaching and learning by senior staff require further development to ensure strengths are maintained and shared as the nursery expands. The new governing body is very supportive and knowledgeable but governors recognise they are not yet confident enough to challenge the work of the school. The school is forward thinking and innovative in harnessing international links to develop provision and is very well placed to go from strength to strength.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen the current system for the monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure very best practice is shared.
- Develop the skills of the governing body so they can confidently challenge the work of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children achieve exceptionally well. When they start, many have lower than expected skills in all areas of learning. In their one year in the nursery, exceptional progress is made across all areas of learning. This is because of the extremely caring and supportive way that adults help children to settle. As a result, girls and boys of all abilities, including children new to speaking English, very quickly become confident and independent learners. For example, the more able children can write some letters under their work or drawings and read back their notes to their friends. Most can eagerly discuss the shapes and patterns they see around them when they play. Children develop a real enthusiasm for learning because each child has activities tailored exceptionally well to meet individual learning needs. As one parent said, 'That's what is so wonderful about this school. Children want to learn all the time.' By the time they leave, most are already well on the way to meeting nationally expected standards for five year olds.

The school does not set particular targets for children but has very high expectations of what children can achieve and works extremely hard to ensure all children reach their potential.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. This is a busy and exciting nursery where children really enjoy their learning. Many skip happily into class in the morning and all become totally absorbed in their learning from the moment they arrive. Absences, except for illness, are rare. Their behaviour is exemplary. They readily share resources and take turns with other children.

The development of independence and a respect for others is a high priority. The nursery is based on the philosophy that children should be encouraged to make sensible, safe decisions about their work. For example, using woodworking tools and other equipment safely, they craft some interesting models. Because the nursery successfully makes the most of every learning opportunity, children very quickly learn to celebrate the different cultures in the community around them and develop a curiosity about the wider world. One class, for example, emailed their friends in Sweden to discover what they eat for breakfast. Children make an excellent contribution to the school community. Their ideas and hard work have helped transform the staircases and paths outside. Children show a mature understanding of the importance of eating healthy foods. As one child said, 'Eating my vegetables will make me big and strong!' They also understand that it is important to wash their hands before eating. The skills they learn, together with the independence that they develop, is preparing them extremely well for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching is excellent. Parents say it is 'first class'. Team work is outstanding. Everyone has the interest of the children at the forefront of their thinking. Planning is meticulous and imaginative and based on a very good understanding of the way young children learn best. A particular strength is the way the adults seize upon the children's own curiosity as a basis to extend their learning. For example, one class is researching, planning and making mosaic tile patterns after children became fascinated by the different patterns they made with building blocks. Children are encouraged to use all of their senses to learn. This successfully captures the children's imagination. Adults explore activities alongside the children using high quality questions to stretch learning even further. Teaching is based on an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust, so that all children, whatever their level of need, try very hard to do well. Children beginning English do exceptionally well because bilingual staff are able to

support them by using their home language where necessary to help to explain activities or model correct sentence formation. Monitoring and the checking of children's learning are very thorough. This knowledge is used very well to guide children's learning and plan the next steps.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding, not only in its variety and richness but also because it is based on an understanding of how children learn. Staff achieve an excellent balance between following and extending the children's interests and ensuring all areas of learning are covered. Children's different needs are successfully met contributing greatly to their exceptional progress. Excellent use is made of the environment and children delight in exploring the secret 'bog' garden. The recent building work has prompted children to ponder 'how the builders climb so high without stairs'. Their own problem solving skills have become more sophisticated as a result. Special projects, such as an artist in residence and a residential farm trip, add great richness to the curriculum and successfully broaden the children's horizons. Teaching about health and safety, together with the promotion of very good relationships, very successfully enhances children's personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Staff care exceptionally well for the children. Children's welfare and support of their families are at the heart of its work. Parents say 'Children and parents come first, we are so lucky to have this school.' Adults are sensitive and friendly. This helps to create an atmosphere where children feel safe to play and develop socially and emotionally. Child protection procedures are robust. Liaison with outside agencies is very successfully supporting the health, well-being and development of all of the children, especially those with a particular need. Adults take every opportunity to encourage children to eat healthily. Fruit and vegetables are readily available for them to eat. One child, dressed as 'Bob the Builder', took the chance to eat some apple, in a break between his jobs. Adults have a very clear awareness of the needs of their children and skilfully guide them to become successful learners.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding, based on an impressive team spirit where everyone is constantly seeking to improve still further. The planning of the Children's Centre has been a mammoth task involving considerable management skills. Despite this, the leadership team have very successfully maintained and extended the school's many strengths. Staff are ambitious and, because they are always encouraged to develop professionally, most have visited Iceland and Sweden to learn about other

practices. As a result, they have successfully created a nursery that is the hub of the community and where children from all backgrounds thrive.

There are effective systems to monitor key aspects of the school's work. All staff are involved in reviewing the school's work and parents and children's views are carefully considered. The new headteacher already has a very clear view of what is working well and what requires attention with the exemplary support of the deputy headteacher. The formal monitoring of teaching and learning and giving feedback has stalled recently due to the upheaval caused by building work. The headteacher recognises that this needs reinstating to ensure that the high standards are maintained when the nursery extends its provision. The recently formed governing body has played an important role in planning change, especially in managing the finances. All are very supportive, but they recognise they need more confidence to question and challenge the school to ensure they are better able to support it through its forthcoming period of change.

Bearing in mind the school's very good track record, the commitment of staff and governors and full support given by parents and external agencies, the school is very well placed to build on its considerable successes.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	NA
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Children

Thank you so much for the friendly way you chatted to me when I visited. I really enjoyed seeing your smiling faces and visiting your secret 'bog' garden. I know your families think Brearley is a wonderful nursery and I agree.

I liked these things most

- You are very happy and you behave very well.
- I really liked your bright and cheerful classrooms and listening to you talk about all the wonderful things you do.
- I liked the colourful staircases you painted.
- All the grown-ups make every day exciting for you and help you learn as much as you can.
- Everyone takes great care of you and I know you like eating lots of fruit and vegetables.
- Everyone works hard to make Brearley a special place to learn.

There is something that the staff and governors want to do to make the nursery even better and I think it is a good idea

- They are going to make sure that they keep a check that everyone is doing the best they can to help you learn.

It is an exciting time with all the building work going on and I am sure you will enjoy the changes when it is finished. I hope you go on enjoying all of the exciting activities which help you learn and play.

Yours sincerely

Julia Coop (Lead Inspector)