



St James and St Agnes Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108901
LEA Bristol, City of
Inspection number 278074
Inspection dates 9 May 2006 to 9 May 2006
Reporting inspector Hazel Callaghan AI

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	Halston Drive
School category	Maintained		Bristol
Age range of pupils	3 to 4		BS2 9JE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0117 9030337
Number on roll	59	Fax number	0117 3772361
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Steve Hartnell
Date of previous inspection	29 November 1999	Headteacher	Ms Lucy Driver

Age group 3 to 4	Inspection dates 9 May 2006 - 9 May 2006	Inspection number 278074
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St James and St Agnes is an average-sized nursery. The vast majority of children are from Somali, Pakistani or Afro-Caribbean backgrounds. Over half of the children are in the early stages of speaking English as an additional language. The school is set in a very deprived area of Bristol and a large proportion of families are refugees or asylum seekers. A small number of children have been identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities. Attainment when children start in the nursery is well below that expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St James and Agnes Nursery is an effective school that provides a very good standard of education. It is well on its way to becoming an outstanding school. Children of all abilities and ethnic groups achieve well because of good teaching and effective support. Leadership and management are good overall and the leadership provided by the headteacher is excellent. She provides a strong sense of purpose and her enthusiasm motivates all around her. Staff feel they are part of a successful team that puts great emphasis on valuing all children and their parents. This united approach is responsible for the exceptional quality of care and support given to all children and the introduction of many effective strategies that promote children's good learning. Evaluation of the school's performance is accurate and the result of effective monitoring systems. The tracking of children's work and progress are good but a new system for recording this data has been introduced to work alongside that being used in the infant schools. Staff showed high levels of expertise in their use of the old system, but as yet they are not as secure in using the new one. There have been many changes in the governing body and many governors are not yet fully aware of, or involved enough in, strategic planning. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and has the secure capacity to improve further. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Complete and implement fully the new assessment system that will enable children's progress to be tracked throughout the Foundation Stage.
- Develop governors' knowledge and skills so that the governing body has a clear view of strategic planning and is fully involved in that process.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in all areas of learning. In the aspect of personal, emotional and social development children make very good progress and this prepares them well for other learning.

When children start in the Nursery, many have had little experience outside their own families and they find adjusting to a large number of other children and many new adults very difficult. Over half of the children do not speak English at home and have no knowledge of English when they start school. Experience of numbers and mathematical calculations is also very new and many have had very little experience of using pens, pencils, paint or scissors. Teachers take tremendous time and employ great sensitivity in helping children adjust and develop new skills and knowledge. By the time children transfer to the primary school, standards in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development are similar to those expected for children of this age. Although good progress has been made in developing children's language skills and vocabulary, standards in communication, language and literacy remain below those expected. Good

progress is made in many aspects of mathematics, but children's ability to make simple calculations is also below the standards expected. This is recognised by the school and additional support is being given. All staff set challenging targets which children meet successfully.

Children in the early stages of learning English achieve well. Opportunities to work in very small groups with adults who speak their own language enable children to explore new ideas and vocabulary with confidence. Similarly, the needs of children with learning difficulties or disabilities are quickly identified and good levels of support enable them to make effective progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being are good. Within a very supportive environment, children develop good levels of self-esteem and belief in their own abilities and so they enjoy learning. Children's attitudes to their tasks are very good and they tackle their activities with interest. Children like school and attend regularly. One parent wrote that her child would like to come to school at weekends.

Children's social and moral development is good and most behave well. They show care and consideration for each other and usually share toys and resources happily. They understand how to be fair and what is not fair. Children's spiritual and cultural development is good for children of such a young age. They are beginning to recognise what is special about themselves. They are developing a good understanding of their own culture and that of other children in the nursery. The many different festivals celebrated in school are much enjoyed. Children contribute effectively to making the school a better place. They enjoy doing simple jobs and make simple decisions about how to improve their ways of working. They take turns and help to clear away toys and equipment at the end of a session. Relative to their age, children are developing a good understanding of how to keep safe and to be healthy. They are developing an important range of skills, such as cooperation and perseverance, and an enjoyment of learning that will help them in their future education and the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching throughout the nursery has a very positive impact on the children's development as learners. Adult-led activities are well planned and effectively matched to children's needs, so extending their understanding and skills. Children were fascinated, for example, by tadpoles, and their knowledge developed rapidly as they observed them carefully and discussed them with an adult. Children's interests and activities are well promoted within the attractive and stimulating environment. Good levels of support consolidate children's learning and, often, good use of questioning promotes new ideas. Because all staff have high expectations, children try hard and

behave well. Bi-lingual staff effectively promote children's understanding of English, using a successful balance of home language and English to develop children's understanding and vocabulary. Children's efforts are praised and targets for what they are to learn next are discussed so they understand how to get 'even better'. Effective systems have been developed to assess children's progress so that achievement is monitored, but the school is in the process of adapting its recording system so that progress can be tracked more easily throughout the Foundation Stage. This is still to be completed and teachers are developing their use of the new structure, which focuses more closely on children's progress to the Early Learning Goals.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well balanced and focused on stimulating children's interest and enjoyment in learning so they do well. Provision for their personal, emotional and social education is very good and children's confidence and self-esteem are actively encouraged. Teachers have devised highly effective strategies to develop children's concentration, perseverance and collaborative skills. This is fundamental to the progress they make as they 'learn how to learn'. There are very good opportunities to apply and develop their knowledge and skills through exploration and practical tasks in many areas. Two role-play areas set out as part of a house are effective in supporting children's language development. Opportunities to extend their experiences through a variety of role-play settings, however, were not in use. A good range of visits out of the nursery are made and this significantly extends children's experiences. Similarly, specialist support is employed to promote children's learning in many areas, for example, in ICT, art and dance. The school celebrates the wide range of cultures and religions represented by the children's families, thus promoting racial harmony and children's awareness. The importance of healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe are promoted well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The curriculum is well balanced and focused on stimulating children's interest and enjoyment in learning so they do well. Provision for their personal, emotional and social education is very good and children's confidence and self-esteem are actively encouraged. Teachers have devised highly effective strategies to develop children's concentration, perseverance and collaborative skills. This is fundamental to the progress they make as they 'learn how to learn'. There are very good opportunities to apply and develop their knowledge and skills through exploration and practical tasks in many areas. Two role-play areas set out as part of a house are effective in supporting children's language development. Opportunities to extend their experiences through a variety of role-play settings, however, were not in use. A good range of visits out of the nursery are made and this significantly extends children's experiences. Similarly, specialist support is employed to promote children's learning in many areas, for example, in ICT, art and dance. The school celebrates the wide range of cultures and religions

represented by the children's families, thus promoting racial harmony and children's awareness. The importance of healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe are promoted well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. She provides a clear sense of direction and enthusiasm that motivates all around her. Teamwork is promoted strongly and all staff feel they are a valued member of a successful team. This united approach is responsible for the exceptional quality of care and support given to all children and the introduction of many effective strategies to stimulate children's good learning and outstanding equality of opportunity. The headteacher monitors the school's performance rigorously and evaluations of the school's effectiveness are accurate. All staff are well involved and self-critical. There is, therefore, a culture of self-evaluation that ensures continued improvement. The school is very well organised and leadership of all areas of the curriculum is effective. Although the system to record information about children's progress is in transition, staff still have a secure hold on children's progress and needs.

Governors are supportive of the school, but there have been changes on the governing body and some governors are new and inexperienced. Statutory requirements have been maintained but new governors are not sufficiently aware of strategic planning. Under the leadership of the new chair, however, the governing body has the capacity to improve. The school's links with parents from all ethnic groups and with the local community are successful. The school's inclusive ethos is outstanding because staff take extraordinary care in ensuring that all children and their families are treated equally. Parents are well informed and staff have a good understanding and appreciation of their life and cultures. This is of great benefit to children's learning.

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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	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	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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	Yes
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

I am writing to say thank you for making us feel welcome in your school and for helping us with our questions. We really enjoyed chatting to you and found everything you said very interesting. I thought you would like to know what we found out about your school.

What we liked about the school:

- It is a good school where you are happy and enjoy your activities because the staff help you and make your work interesting.
- Your excellent headteacher wants to do all she can to make the school even better.
- You get on well with each other and with the adults in the school and most of you behave sensibly and are kind to each other.
- We think you try hard to do well in your work.
- You understand how important it is to keep safe and to eat things that are good for you.
- You are given lots of jobs to do and you do them well.
- All the grown ups look after you very well and help you feel safe.
- The school works very hard at helping your families understand what you are doing.

What we have asked the school to do:

- We have asked your teachers to make sure that their new way of checking how well you are doing works as well as possible.
- We have asked the governors, who help your school, to find out more about it so it can get even better in the future.

Thank you again for being so friendly to us.

Hazel Callaghan Lead inspector