

Lillian de Lissa Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103137
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	323767
Inspection date	14 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3-4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Ritson
Headteacher	Jane Froggatt
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2006
School address	Bellevue Birmingham B5 7LX
Telephone number	01214 403421
Fax number	01214 404074

Age group	3-4
Inspection date	14 May 2009
Inspection number	323767

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- how effectively the school meets the needs of the increasing numbers of children who are joining with little or no English language
- the effect of strategies introduced to improve boys' personal, social and emotional development
- the impact of the school's creative curriculum on children's achievement and personal development.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form, assessment and tracking records, parental questionnaire responses, observations of the school at work, and discussions with staff, chair of governors and pupils. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

The school provides 78 full-time places and 16 places in after-school provision. The percentage of children from minority ethnic groups is very high, and increasing numbers are starting school at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has recently achieved the prestigious status of a National School of Creativity. It is designated as a Children's Centre and this aspect of its provision will be inspected separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It provides children with a very caring and extremely stimulating setting in which to learn. The vast majority of parents support the school and are very pleased with the rich variety of activities their children experience. Two parental comments are typical of many. 'Our daughter has enjoyed the nursery from day one and we will be sad when she leaves. We don't think she could possibly have had a better start to her education' and 'The nursery has a wonderful, vibrant atmosphere that encourages children to learn. My son always looks forward to attending and has thrived on the way the nursery works through learning by play in a very safe and happy learning environment.'

Children start school with skills and abilities that are well below those expected for their age. They make rapid progress and by the time they leave, most of them are working securely within the levels expected of them in most areas of learning. Children's achievement is outstanding because of consistently high quality teaching and learning. Adults are adept at providing activities that build upon children's own experiences and very effectively challenge all ability levels. Children respond very positively, showing a great deal of enjoyment in their activities and being very eager to learn. For example, they talked excitedly about what they were finding out when creating bubbles in soapy water and exploring what happens when plastic gloves are filled with water and then frozen. They exceed the expectations for their age in creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world because of the exceptional opportunities in the curriculum to develop their skills in these aspects of learning. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same excellent progress as other children because of the very well targeted extra support they receive.

The school has introduced a variety of initiatives that successfully meet the needs of the increasing numbers of children joining with little or no English. These children make very good gains in acquiring language and communication skills. The initiatives include developing the school site to include Forest School activities that enable small groups of children to explore a natural habitat, with emphasis on developing their confidence and communication skills. The school is currently working on a local authority project that provides additional support in school to develop children's language skills. Leaders constantly evaluate the provision to ensure the school provides a supportive and stimulating environment that emphasises every child learning language through practical, enjoyable activities.

Outstanding leadership and management have been at the heart of the school's sustained success over recent years. The headteacher is an inspirational leader whose passion for ensuring all children achieve to their full capability is shared by all involved in the life of the school. As a result, a very strong team ethos is evident. Self-evaluation is accurate, and correctly identifies and prioritises areas for development. Leaders then act quickly to bring about improvement. A good example of this is the way that boys' personal, social and emotional development was assessed as being markedly lower than that of girls at the start of the autumn term in 2008. The school introduced a variety of strategies to engage boys fully in this aspect of their learning. Many of the boys were interested in superhero play. Staff put aside concerns that the play might become aggressive and, instead, successfully encouraged boys to channel it in different directions. As a result, boys effectively instigated play that involved map making, pirates, finding treasure and a fascination with keys. Staff then developed practical opportunities based on these interests, across the curriculum, for boys to develop their learning further. Extended use of the Forest School area has also been used successfully to capture the interest of boys and

motivate them, and this has resulted in their improved behaviour. Overall, boys' personal, social and emotional development has improved greatly and they now show the same level of development as girls.

Leaders at all levels promote community cohesion extremely well. They ensure a common vision for, and sense of belonging to, the school and the wider community. All in school are treated equally and fairly, and are helped to appreciate and value the range and diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances. Governors are very supportive of the school and are fully involved in helping it move forward. Leaders show unrelenting commitment to further school improvement. For instance, they now intend to raise parents' awareness of how to help their children, when at home, to use the creative thinking skills they are developing at school.

Attaining the status of a National School of Creativity recognises the exceptional impact of the curriculum on children's achievement and personal and social development. The flexible nature of the curriculum allows staff to provide opportunities for spontaneous activities, and for extending the independent learning that arises from children's interests and experiences. Children are challenged to think critically by using what they already know to respond to new situations and to make decisions for themselves. In so doing, the curriculum very effectively develops children's skills as independent learners. Excellent curriculum enrichment enables children to work with a wide variety of visitors, including a potter, storytellers, dancers and musicians, and to go on a residential visit to a children's farm. Children's creative experiences are also very effectively extended by the school's year-round artist in residence, who supports staff and children in interpreting ideas and problems by making use of many different methods and materials.

Excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means that children's behaviour is exemplary and they are very polite and considerate to others. Children show great respect for the different traditions and beliefs of the wide variety of ethnic groups represented in the school. In so doing, they make a very good contribution to the life of the school and the local community. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. Children are cherished as unique individuals and all staff are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being. Parents very much appreciate this aspect of the school's provision. Leaders have worked successfully to improve attendance since the last inspection, and it is now good. However, despite their best efforts, a small minority of parents do not ensure regular attendance and this hinders their children's progress. The excellent links with outside agencies, such as the speech and language service, mean that extra support for individual children is readily available when required. The progress that individual children make is checked rigorously, therefore adults know clearly the level of work that needs to be set to advance each child's learning. The after-school club extends children's learning effectively because activities are matched very well to their individual needs and they build on their daytime experiences.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise parents' awareness of how to help their children, when at home, to apply the creative thinking skills being developed in school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
The standards[1] reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

15 May 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Lillian de Lissa Nursery School, Edgbaston, Birmingham B5 7LX

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do. Your school is excellent and helps you make very good progress in your learning.

What we found about your school.

- You show a lot of enjoyment in coming to school and are very keen to learn.
- Your school is a very friendly place in which to work and play.
- Children who are only beginning to learn English do really well.
- Adults look after you very well and make sure you are safe in and around school and on visits.
- You are good at thinking hard and making decisions for yourselves.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you work really well with others in pairs and small groups.
- Adults in charge of the school are working hard to make further improvements and help you do even better.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Show your parents how to help you develop at home what you have learned at school.

You can help your school improve further by continuing to try your best in all you do. All of you are a credit to your school and your parents.

Yours faithfully

Melvyn Hemmings Lead inspector