

Valley Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104137
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	323974
Inspection date	5 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

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

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barry Dutton
Headteacher	Dawn Kelly
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2006
School address	Blakenall Heath Blakenall Walsall WS3 1HT
Telephone number	01922 710518
Fax number	01922 710518

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Introduction

- The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the Nursery and investigated the following issues.
- The achievement of boys and the rates of progress for all groups of children especially in mathematics.
- The use of assessment for learning in helping all groups of children to make accelerated progress.
- The impact of the outdoor environment in learning.

Evidence was gathered from a wide range of nursery documentation, lesson observations, and interviews with the headteacher, staff, chair of governing body and governors. Interviews were also held with parents and children. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but 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 this report.

Description of the school

The Nursery is part of the Children's Centre and is open 50 weeks a year from 8.00hrs to 18.00hrs. The Nursery provides a range of extended services which include before- and after-school care, a holiday play scheme and a very recent crèche for two-year-olds. Children spend between three to six terms in the Nursery before moving on to Reception classes in six local schools. A very small proportion of children are from a minority ethnic background, and one in ten children has learning difficulties and/or disabilities which include speech and language delay.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The Nursery provides an outstanding quality of education for its children and gives them an excellent head start. The Nursery provides many effective facilities for parents including a recently registered crèche for two-year-olds, wrap-around care, breakfast club and holiday play scheme. Parents are delighted with what is on offer, as they attend many workshops to learn alongside their children. 'If this Nursery was open on Christmas day, my child would want to attend', said one parent..

Children enter the setting with very limited skills in communication, language and literacy, problem solving, reasoning and numeracy, and personal, social and emotional development. They are confident, courteous, very well behaved and highly excited about learning. All children, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, more capable children and the very few who are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language, make exceptional progress. This means that on entry to Reception classes, standards are similar to those seen nationwide for children of this age group. Their early literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills develop well because they have opportunities to practise them in play. Boys' achievement is on the rise due to many recent changes made to the teaching of mathematics using the outdoor resources as a stimulus.

The emphasis placed on addressing issues for improvement identified in the previous inspection report has led to excellent teaching, an exceptionally well planned curriculum and outstanding care, guidance and support. Teaching is characterised by very effective questioning, explanation, hands-on modelling and intervention in children's learning. When one boy found a spider, the teacher quickly captured the moment to develop children's mathematical awareness by counting its legs. Judicious use of praise and encouragement ensures that children understand that their efforts are valued and every step in learning is celebrated. Children's welfare is at the top of the Nursery's agenda. Safeguarding and child protection arrangements fully meet government requirements and supervision is extremely rigorous. Children are exceptionally well cared for and all safeguarding procedures are well known and expertly executed by staff. Relationships are excellent. The Nursery works very closely with the Children's Centre and parents are expertly signposted to any services that they require.

Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding due to the first-rate provision for independent learning and welfare arrangements. Children work in family groups and their needs are exceptionally well known to each key worker. They are given plenty of opportunities to plan their own learning and the very good quality of resources encourages high levels of involvement. Expert observations of children help staff to identify the next steps of learning, and very effective modelling, such as that seen in phonics, contributes to children's success. Children are exceptionally secure in their learning because there is always help at hand from all the staff and learning opportunities offered are very exciting, such as playing with cooked spaghetti in green water and problem solving, such as making tents in the main playground.

Learning opportunities are first class. All children have an outstanding range of opportunities to explore both indoors and outdoors and learn to play with others in an atmosphere of fun and support. Each child's background is valued and children eagerly talk about the long journey to India while making a cardboard aeroplane. Children discuss the value of eating with chop sticks when trying to practise their dexterity skills when picking up small objects. The youngest children eagerly compose African music and keenly peruse the very good range of books about

multicultural Britain. Children's concentration rarely wavers because of the many interesting learning experiences provided. Excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is clearly apparent. Children show an exceptional knowledge of choosing healthy foods for snacks. They develop very good awareness of personal safety, complying with and understanding the needs for making rules. Children very quickly develop self-help skills, for example, knowing to put on their aprons when playing with spaghetti in the water tray. They are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their learning and have a very good basis in early literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

Outstanding welfare arrangements support children's excellent rates of progress and their security in learning. Children are extremely well cared for in the Nursery and all safeguarding procedures are well known by staff. Regular risk assessments are undertaken and all staff are familiar with the basics of first aid. Very good links with external agencies successfully promote children's health, learning and well-being. Staff are working very hard to raise children's satisfactory attendance.

Leadership and management by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body are outstanding and are the cornerstone of the Nursery's success. The headteacher's passion, dedication and high aspirations for the community underpin all aspects of the school's work. Exceptionally high targets and expectations are set with clear management strategies established to support their achievement. Community cohesion is outstanding and is seen in excellent partnerships with the Children's Centre, primary schools and health and social workers. Each faith, culture and creed is represented in learning experiences provided for the children. Self-evaluation is very rigorous and the governing body are actively involved in all aspects of school life. They ensure that the equality of opportunity policy is regularly monitored and that all staff and pupils are treated fairly.

Improvement since the last inspection has been outstanding. Assessment procedures have improved and now clearly inform planning. This contributes to effective curriculum delivery and impacts positively on children's learning. The school development plan supports the Nursery's ongoing drive to raise standards but children's achievement is not emphasised in the plan's success criteria. This results in a slight lack of precision in evaluating the success of initiatives. A strong team ethos, with staff and governors united in their clear vision, resolve to take the school forward successfully, and the way children flourish in their learning and development mean that the school has excellent capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that success criteria in the school development plan are linked more precisely to children's achievement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

8 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Valley Nursery School, Walsall, WS3 1HT

Thank you for making us feel so welcome in your Nursery. We really enjoyed meeting you all and your parents. Your Nursery is magnificent and here are some of the things that we found out during our stay with you.

- You are exceptionally well behaved and have excellent relationships with each other and your teachers.
- Staff are excellent teachers and show you what you need to do. That is why you are excellent learners.
- You are exceptionally well looked after and teachers know you very well.
- You are making very good gains in your learning and teachers find many interesting things for you to do both indoors and in outside play. They are exceptionally good teachers!
- Your parents are very pleased with your Nursery and your headteacher, staff and governing body are doing an excellent job for you and your community.

We have asked your headteacher to think about how to improve your learning. You can help by telling her about what works well in the Nursery and helps you learn even more.

Good luck in the future.

Yours faithfully

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley Lead inspector