

Garretts Green Nursery School and Children's Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103122
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	336011
Inspection dates	30 November –1 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Jackie Barnes

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Harris
Headteacher	Linda Jones
Date of previous school inspection	0 May 2007
School address	117 Garretts Green Lane Sheldon Birmingham
Telephone number	0121 675 2284
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Age group	3–4
Inspection dates	30 November –1 December 2009
Inspection number	336011

Registered childcare provision	Garretts Green Nursery School Playgroup
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	14
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector made nine observations of varying lengths of children's learning and held meetings with governors, staff, parents, carers and children. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at policies and other documents, including the school improvement plan, information on safeguarding, the curriculum and past activities, and the questionnaires completed by 25 parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work, and looked in detail at the following:

- the progress made by children last year and so far this year from their different starting points
- the improvements the school leaders have put in place since the previous inspection
- the impact on children's learning and welfare of the school's partnerships with other settings and specialists.

Information about the school

Garretts Green Nursery School provides full and part-time provision for children aged three and four years, together with play group for children age two to three years. The setting is designated as a children's centre and also provides a range of integrated services for families and young children from birth onwards. These are to be inspected separately. The nursery is situated in a residential area in east Birmingham where social and economic circumstances are mixed. The majority of children come from White British backgrounds, with a small number from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A few are learning English as an additional language. A small proportion of children have special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly related to speech, language and communication. The nursery has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

The nursery provides a good quality of education. The children are happy and are stimulated by the opportunities the good curriculum provides. They are keen to learn and this makes a major contribution to their good progress and achievement. They clearly see the nursery as a place they want to be and on arrival eagerly hurry to explore the activities, often with only the briefest goodbyes to parents and carers. The high level of confidence the children have in the nursery environment, and particularly in the staff, shows that they feel safe and valued. They are keen to work independently, but readily go to staff, and to other children, if they need help.

Arrangements for children's welfare and safety are thorough and staff take great care of every child which parents' particularly value. Good behaviour enables the children to make the best of the freedom they have to choose most of their activities. It also underpins the calm attentiveness evident when they need to listen to an adult. Most children have a good knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy, especially about the value of exercise and good food. They try to put their knowledge into practice when choosing snacks and in outdoor play. As one child explained, 'running is good for you, but my legs don't know that yet'.

Children's achievement is good. They have a wide range of starting points when they enter the nursery and some have significant barriers to their development such as not being able to attend regularly, or difficulties with speaking. Through individual support and skilful guidance, particularly for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, they make good and sometimes very good progress, especially in personal development, and their attainment improves quickly. Staff assess and record each child's development frequently and use the information well to provide suitable activities and to identify small groups of children who need additional support. This works very effectively for most groups, although occasionally the provision is not well matched to the needs of the more able children in mathematics and those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.

By the time they leave the nursery most children have successfully developed the aptitudes expected for their age. Staff use a range of teaching strategies which successfully capture children's interest and ensure they have a high level of involvement in their learning. Excellent relationships between staff and children encourage curiosity and the children love the excitement of discovery through stories and investigations, as well as through physical play. They take great pride in taking responsibility for themselves and others.

Good leadership and management promote close teamwork between staff and common

goals for improvement. This has been a major factor in ensuring that good management of teaching and learning has been maintained, despite some staff changes, absences, and the challenges of extensive new building and refurbishment since the last inspection. Due attention is given to keeping children safe and the required safeguarding procedures are in place.

The experienced headteacher, with the support of a good governing body and staff, has successfully led the school to a wider involvement in the local community. The partnerships that have been established with other institutions and specialists are outstanding in their impact on the learning and welfare of individual children. Parents value the good contact they have with the school. The child care provided in the pre-school group is well managed and of good quality. Governors are committed, experienced and knowledgeable. They work closely with the headteacher and provide both support and challenge. As a result, development plans are based on an accurate knowledge of the school. The leadership's good record of acting decisively to bring about improvement, together with the commitment of staff and the good quality of governance, contribute to the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the focus on children's mathematical development, particularly taking account of the challenge needed by the more capable children.
- Extend the provision for children at the early stages of learning English as an additional language to include activities which are well matched to their specific language needs.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

2

When the children enter the nursery their attainment is often below that expected for their age. Many do not have the confidence to mix with other children, are not used to being independent and have difficulty communicating. However, individual children differ considerably in what they know, understand and can do, with a small minority having sound skills in literacy and numeracy. They all make good progress and achieve well because the staff get to know them quickly, provide a wide range of stimulating experiences, and skilfully use these to develop understanding and skills from each child's starting point.

In a warm and nurturing environment the children grow in confidence and quickly begin to take an active part in their own learning. They make decisions about what they want to explore, but also work with enthusiasm in adult-led activities. Staff continually observe as children investigate and discover, and progress is assessed. Flexible arrangements successfully link the assessments with developing further learning. For example, adults work with small groups of children who have common needs, particularly in specific aspects of language. The children have great fun in these activities, as well as increasing the pace of their learning. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from the additional support they receive to

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ensure they achieve as well as other children.

Children clearly enjoy their learning, and parents confirm this is the case, with almost all having good or excellent attendance records. A very small minority do not attend regularly; this is partly due to ill health but also to domestic circumstances. The school's arrangements for checking and improving attendance are very thorough while recognising the challenges faced by some families. Staff set high expectations for behaviour and children respond well, helped their by excellent relationships. Most show remarkable care and respect for others given their age. As a result, the nursery is calm although there is a busy buzz as the children move about, work on their activities or talk with friends and staff.

The staff's strong commitment to including every child in the nursery's activities leads to complete acceptance by the children who mix readily and accept others in their play. This contributes significantly to their feeling of being safe. One child, when asked who her special friends were, looked around the nursery and said 'I can't count big numbers'. The children have a good sense of community. Within the nursery, they know they must take responsibility for caring for themselves and others, and they also engage with issues that affect the wider community, such as the importance of recycling. They are developing a sound understanding of what is healthy eating, helped by the provision of healthy snacks. Those who stay for lunch take an active interest in what others are eating. They love outdoor play, and make good use of the interesting play areas and gardens. Children make good choices about when to be boisterous and when to be careful about the living things that share the environment.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment ¹	2
The quality of children's learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
Children's behaviour	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Children's attendance ¹	2
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good because staff know each child well through detailed monitoring of their progress. Care is taken to record individual assessments in the children's personal journals. Together with the results of useful discussions between staff, these provide valuable evidence which is then used to plan the activities and support needed for the next stages of the children learning. Carefully considered arrangements are in place for children to move between the two rooms and the outdoor area of which make up the main nursery provision. These work very well in enabling children to make choices about their activities. This free flow of movement is underpinned by the exceptionally strong teamwork of staff, so that there is a good balance of time working with adults and the children pursuing their own interests.

The children are familiar with the routines of the nursery and make good use of the opportunities this arrangement provides. They settle well to activities which have adult help, such as the small group using puppets to role play the story of the Billy Goats Gruff. The children took great delight in making up the voice of the Troll, while the adult skilfully drew their attention to the sequence of the story, key words and characters using a large illustrated book without disrupting their play. Outdoor activities also include similar good quality teaching and learning. When children are engrossed in activities they have chosen, staff gain an understanding of their progress and needs through asking questions or just watching. Overall the approach to teaching and learning works well and this is reflected in the good progress children make.

Occasionally, such as with the more able pupils in mathematics and those at the early stages of learning English, the match of learning opportunities to their specific needs is more limited.

The curriculum addresses all areas of learning well and makes very good use of the outdoor facilities. These are being extended to provide more natural areas for the children to explore. It includes a range of visits to the locality, and visitors such as the fire service, which broaden children's experiences. It is a curriculum based on making learning fun, and it clearly does, as children's enjoyment demonstrates. Opportunities to develop their personal skills, make friends and take responsibility are planned into the day-to-day activities. A high priority is given to talking and to developing reading and writing skills which has successfully improved this aspect of learning. The outdoor area is very popular and linked to a small library which provides a warm and quiet area for enjoying books. The curriculum is generally well resourced with good use by the children of large electronic white boards.

Children are very well cared for by staff and welfare arrangements are good. A

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particular strength of the nursery is the use of the excellent links with other agencies which result in advice and support being quickly available to meet the needs of individual children. The links with vulnerable families are strong and help to ensure access to the support they need. The school makes regular contact with parents and carers as they bring and collect their children. Parents say they are confident they can discuss issues with staff and are made welcome at all times. During the inspection a large number of parents were working with their children in the nursery to share an understanding of what they were learning, and to see the arrangements for care and safety.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is well led and has the confidence of parents. Challenging circumstances since the last inspection, especially the building of a new children's centre attached the school and changes in the leadership team, have been effectively managed. The headteacher, with the support of governors, has provided a clear direction for development and taken an active part in the planning of the facilities in the new building. Her drive and enthusiasm has played a major part in developing the school's links, with an exceptionally wide range of partnerships with other agencies and institutions. Ready access to these provides outstanding advice and practical support and enables children and families undergoing difficult times to participate in all the nursery offers.

The staff also respond well to challenge and their teamwork is very effective in ensuring the good management of children's learning is maintained. Individual staff take on different roles and responsibilities in response to changing circumstances. They work particularly well together in ensuring that boys and girls across the full range of ability and cultural backgrounds have equal access to all the nursery offers, and using the assessment data to check discrimination is avoided.

Due attention is paid to children's safety. Policies are in place, including for the play group, on aspects such as child protection and there are well-understood strategies and procedures for checking the safety of the site and risks to activities and outings.

The community cohesion within the school is strong, and exchanges with staff and children from other institutions in the locality broaden the children's experiences.

Provision for adult learning, such as happy parenting courses, adds to the school's knowledge of the local community. Policies and arrangements for reviewing community cohesion are emerging as the children's centre work develops. Governors are active in the work of the school and in reviewing its strengths and weaknesses, and ensure resources are well used.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents are very supportive of the school and made positive comments about the welcome they receive and their children's enjoyment of learning. They consider the school is well led and appreciate the willingness of staff to discuss any issues they may have. These comments agree with the findings of the inspection. No significant concerns were raised apart from a problem with adults closing the gate. The school has already taken steps to respond to this concern.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Garretts Green Nursery School and Children's Centre to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 82 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	84	4	16	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	80	5	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	76	6	24	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	68	8	32	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	72	7	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	64	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	64	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	13	52	10	40	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	64	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	60	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	56	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	80	5	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	84	4	16	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



4 December 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Garretts Green Nursery School and Children's Centre, Birmingham B26 2JL

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I saw how much you enjoyed your learning in the nursery and how well you look after each other. I agree with you that your nursery is a lovely place where you feel safe, like being with your friends and have exciting activities. All the grown-ups are good at helping you to learn. They take good care of you and make sure you are safe. You help them by being well behaved, taking care of yourself and being kind by tidying up and taking messages. You are making good progress in your learning and development. I saw that you learned a lot about how to tell stories about Billy Goats Gruff and the Troll, and you made a good job of building a bridge for them, and making up their voices as you pretended to be one of them. You know about making good choices in what you eat and how much you exercise so that you can stay healthy

Your headteacher, governors and other grown-ups work hard to make sure that each of you is happy and makes the best progress you can while you are in the nursery. To make the nursery even better I have asked them to:

- provide more activities that help you to learn about mathematics especially about numbers and what you can do with them
- check that those of you who are learning English in addition to your family language have just the right help to make sure you make the best progress you can.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Barnes

Lead Inspector

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