

Bloomsbury Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103138
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	336014
Inspection dates	9–10 March 2010
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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	Maintained
Age range of pupils	0–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sonia Armstrong-Wheatle
Headteacher	Ms Carmel Faulkner (Acting Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2007
School address	Bloomsbury Street Nechells Birmingham
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Age group	0–4
Inspection dates	9–10 March 2010
Inspection number	336014

Registered childcare provision	Bloomsbury Children's Centre
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	25
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They spent half of their time looking at learning, saw six sessions and all teachers and staff. They met children, parents, governors and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's policies, records, assessments, plans and 50 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the way teaching promotes all aspects of children's progress and achievement
- how well governors challenge the school
- the quality of the temporary leadership and management arrangements.

Information about the school

Bloomsbury Nursery School provides integrated education for children from birth to four years. This includes day care managed by the governing body in Bloomsbury Children's Centre. This day care provision is for 25 children from fee-paying families or who have been referred by various local agencies. The Nursery provides full-time education for children aged three to four years. Children come from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, the largest groups are Black British - African, White British, Black British - Caribbean. About half of the children speak English as an additional language, a very high proportion. The centre has been led by an acting headteacher since the start of 2010.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Bloomsbury is an outstanding school. Many staff and parents say it is a privilege to come to Bloomsbury nursery. It is an inspiring place to grow and learn and makes a significant difference to the lives of children and families. All staff feel completely responsible for the quality of what the centre provides and act together to maintain excellence.

Close engagement with parents and carers is fundamental to the school's work. The work of the family support team is creative and empowering and does much to diminish children's barriers to learning. Parents and carers are almost universal in their praise of the centre. They are hugely appreciative of the splendid opportunities available, as this typical response shows, 'This is a wonderful nursery that offers my daughter so much more than any Nursery I know - freedom to play and learn in a fantastic park-like garden, work with an artist, visits to the ice rink, museum and swimming. They even have classes for me and my husband.'

Classrooms are happy hives of activities. Sessions are rigorously planned, offering a wealth of learning activities, with expert teachers and other staff always nearby to encourage and inspire learning. The creative use of space, indoors and out, provides variety and inspiration at every turn. Regular thorough assessments ensure no child lags behind for long without some intervention to boost their progress. Relationships are based on mutual love and respect between children and adults and vice versa, so classrooms are happy and harmonious. Behaviour is excellent. Children's energies are cheerfully dissipated in outdoor activities and they know about the importance of their healthy snacks and meals. Careful attention to hygiene promotes good health. Children's care and safety are paramount and are woven into the school's daily routines. Very effective local community cohesion is not yet mirrored by links with Nurseries in contrasting areas in the United Kingdom and abroad.

These significant strengths help children thrive. From well below expected starting points, children leave the Nursery with standards that are similar to national expectations. This represents exceptional progress for all, regardless of their ethnicity, gender or needs.

The calm authority of the acting headteacher has enabled the school to continue to provide top quality provision, despite changes in the leadership team. The centre's continuing pursuit of excellence has maintained and improved its provision, especially in the superb outdoor area. Rigorous monitoring ensures leaders are clear about where improvements need to be sought and these are clearly laid out in the impressive improvement plans. Staff share an ambition for continuing development and this

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ensures that leadership changes have not interrupted the school's continuing excellence. Capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the depth of the Nursery's work with the local community to develop links with similar settings in contrasting environments.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children**1**

Small groups of children start in the pre-school setting with standards that are below those normally seen for their age. The nature of the provision offered means that standards on entry vary widely. The quality of teaching and nurture for these young children is exceptional and they make excellent progress. Staff are well-qualified in looking after this age range and very skilful in providing very good care and ascertaining and meeting their needs. Excellent liaison with parents enables all children to settle into the pre-school very well. Staff work very hard to address the requirements of those children who have been referred to the centre and provide very effective support to these families. The inspectors observed the centre at work and found very good provision for these children's welfare and development. Children happily played outside, decorating flower pots with a variety of paints and other decorations, ready to plant seeds that they hope will grow.

Most children starting the Nursery at three years old have not experienced any previous schooling. Many face significant linguistic barriers and their abilities are well below those expected for their age. The school quickly develops a precise awareness of children's aptitudes and skills. It uses this information to target effective support towards each child. This means that all groups make excellent progress during their period in the Nursery. By the time they leave, children's standards in all areas are at national expectations for their age. Although these standards are a little lower in communications, language and literacy, all children make excellent progress.

Parents' views correctly reflect how happy their children are at the school. Adults' kindness and consideration for all mean activities are enriched with smiles. Children are encouraged to be themselves and are expected to behave well and be good to one another, which they are.

A consistent but not overbearing emphasis on safety means the environment is secure and children know how to act safely. For example, running indoors, despite myriad temptations, is rare. Children develop valuable life skills in speaking, writing, number and computing and also learn how to work independently and together as well as how to use simple tools.

Children contribute fully to the school community. Their views are listened to and acted upon, for example the fence between the play areas for younger and older children was lowered so that each group could see what the other was doing and to help siblings to keep in touch. Links with the local community were utilised when children requested contributions from local shops to support a fund-raising barbeque, which supported the

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Haitian disaster appeal. Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exemplified in children's excellent social development and strong understanding of other cultures.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Children's attainment ¹	3
The quality of children's learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children's behaviour	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Children's attendance ¹	1
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The Nursery and Children's Centre promote children's development and progress in an integrated way, seamlessly combining excellent care for individuals with thoroughly planned, dynamic teaching that fully exploits the numerous exciting curriculum opportunities available.

The accommodation and resources in the Children's Centre are excellent and staff keep a close eye on their charges while promoting their independence very well. The centre is extremely well organised, every adult knows their role well so the day proceeds seamlessly. Staff take every opportunity to further children's development. The preparation and serving of lunch was an excellently organised routine involving hygiene preparations, singing songs and children managing serviettes and cutlery. Throughout,

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

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the children were provided with every possible opportunity to express themselves.

The school has completely remodelled its environment for learning, fully addressing concerns about the outdoor area raised in the previous inspection. Whilst the interior is spacious, with numerous intriguing small areas and excellent stimulating resources, the outdoors also provides adventure and wonder and a delightful area to explore and learn.

Staff are thoroughly organised and deployed so children are never far away from an adult, whether being led in making music or drawings or independently role-playing as firemen and women. Staff are well qualified and work as a cohesive team, flexibly taking over one another's roles as needed. The inspired appointment of a speech therapist as a member of staff has improved all adults' understanding of how best to promote language development. For example, staff are now constantly alert to the possibility of developing children's communication skills, giving opportunities for emergent letter formation, asking probing questions and being always ready to listen to what their charges want to say.

The kindness and tolerance of adults models behaviour for children, so that they develop social skills of playing together, sharing toys or working alone as required. They are managed with subtlety and tact, unaware of adults' light touch. As a result, children's behaviour is calm and mature and makes an important contribution to the peaceful but purposeful ethos that pervades the whole school. The curriculum maintains a strong focus on children's personal development and is enriched by an artist in residence and numerous trips, short and long, that help to broaden children's horizons. Precise, effective planning of sessions ensures a good balance between child-initiated and teacher-led activities as well as between learning indoors and out.

Children know who to turn to if they are tired or distressed. The key worker system ensures close links with children and their parents and many of the latter are on first name terms with staff. Daily, informal contacts are invaluable to both parties. All adults keep a very close eye on children. They assess how each one is getting along, taking notes and photographs and displaying the highlights on each child's display area, to the evident pleasure of parents and carers. Progress is very carefully tracked, identifying trends and triggering extra help for some. Staff keep a kindly eye on children at play or working on their own, encouraging their independence but making very sure they come to no harm.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

The quality in depth of leadership and management is evident in the way the school has adapted so well to the present temporary arrangements. Comprehensive systems for planning ensure that the centre runs smoothly day by day. Excellent teaching is the expectation and regular, highly rigorous monitoring maintains the highest standards. All staff work closely together, sharing responsibility for ensuring that children enjoy the best possible opportunities to learn and develop.

The school's identification of parents' involvement as fundamental to each child's development and growth plays a large part in its long-term plans to raise standards. Parents who experience difficulties are certain of sympathy and practical support and this does a great deal to promote their children's happiness and success.

Governors are enthusiastic and committed supporters of the school. Their knowledge of many elements of school life and constructive relationships help them discharge their duties effectively and influence the school's priorities for improvement. They currently do not have formal mechanisms to monitor some aspects of provision and this limits the challenges they are able to offer. Their influence on safeguarding is strong. Governors and staff show a comprehensive understanding of these issues. Outstanding safeguarding is a result of the centre's sensible application of high-quality everyday procedures that are a natural aspect of the school's daily business.

Partnerships enhance the school's provision and underpin much of its pastoral work. Numerous local bodies, such as social services, benefits advisors and 'Relate' contribute significantly to children's and families' well-being and provide excellent value for money. The school's audit of its community cohesion indicates a very thorough understanding of its local context, with all its ethnic and linguistic diversity. Numerous events, like those linked to Black history month, make a strong contribution and the centre has effective plans to promote better engagement beyond the local area. For example, the school is working towards the Unicef Rights Respecting Award and is at an early stage in developing links with institutions further afield. The school has active inclusion and accessibility plans. The careful tracking of each child's progress ensures excellent equality of opportunity and no discrimination.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

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The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers showed very strong support for the school in the Ofsted questionnaire. None expressed any significant concerns but a few thought that the school did not help children to have healthy lifestyles or prepare them well for the future. The inspection found no evidence to support these views. All parents who responded report their children are happy at the school and all are pleased with their child's experience there.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Bloomsbury Nursery School 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 inspection team received 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 101 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	86	7	14	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	40	80	10	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	36	72	12	24	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	66	17	34	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	35	70	15	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	64	16	32	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	58	17	34	3	6	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)	32	64	14	28	3	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	58	18	36	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	60	17	34	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	56	17	34	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	62	18	36	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	80	10	20	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.



Thursday 11 March 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Bloomsbury Nursery School, Birmingham, B7 5BX

Thank you so much for the way you welcomed the inspectors when we visited your school recently. Bloomsbury Nursery School provides you with an excellent education. It was very good to see how happy you are and your behaviour is excellent. Well done!

Teachers organise fantastic sessions to help you learn and, because all staff also look after you really well, you all make outstanding progress. We thought that the rooms and outdoor areas are very exciting places to grow and learn. It was good to see how well the Nursery works with your mummies, daddies and carers and we know they are very happy to have such friendly links with the school.

All these good things spring from the excellent leadership and management of the Nursery. Although there have been changes, the place is still very well run with every adult lending a hand to make sure you grow up happy and safe.

I have asked the Nursery to improve one area:

- there should be links with other Nurseries in different areas and other countries.

Once again, thanks for all your help. It was lovely meeting you.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan

Lead inspector

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