



Perry Beeches Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103123
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 286565
Inspection date 25 January 2007
Reporting inspector Kathryn Taylor

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	256 Beeches Road
School category	Community		Great Barr
Age range of pupils	3-4		Birmingham B42 2PX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 3602199
Number on roll (school)	58	Fax number	0121 3604467
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Moya Cotton
		Headteacher	Jackie Lewis
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2002		

Age group 3-4	Inspection date 25 January 2007	Inspection number 286565
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Perry Beeches is a popular nursery school, which offers full- and part-time places. It also has 'Stay and Play' facilities and a Mums and Babies group. It has recently been designated as a Children's Centre. The nursery is also part of a collaboration of five schools that share the same site. The campus is designated as a Public Arts Centre and has recently been given Extended School Status. Children join the nursery in the September after their third birthday. The intake is ethnically mixed, but only a very small number of children are new to learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is average. Children are drawn from a range of social backgrounds. The school has been awarded the Gold, Silver and Bronze Quality Framework Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Perry Beeches is a good school with a number of outstanding features. This is a similar picture to the school's evaluation of its own performance, which although generally accurate, is occasionally too modest.

The staff provide a very safe, welcoming, stimulating environment that enables children to quickly settle into school and really enjoy learning. The staff welcome and value parents' and childrens' views about the school and these views contribute to how the school makes improvements. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and highly appreciative of what it provides for their children. Typical comments included, 'I would like to say a big thank you to Mrs Lewis and the staff for providing such a fantastic nursery,' and, 'One of the most impressive and good things about Perry Beeches is how caring, patient and friendly all the staff are.'

All groups of children achieve well during their time in the nursery and almost all attain standards that are at least as good as those expected by the time they leave. This is because teaching and learning are good and the school provides a good, very interesting and stimulating curriculum that is carefully tailored to children's needs and interests. Furthermore, the staff quickly establish children's starting points. This enables them to identify and target those children who need extra support with their learning, and those who already know quite a lot and therefore need stretching.

Children's behaviour, attitudes to school and their personal and social development are outstanding and they make exceptionally good progress in this area. This is because of the staff's very high expectations, the outstanding levels of care, support and guidance and the excellent way in which staff work in partnership with parents and other providers to support all children's needs.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher's leadership is particularly strong. This is evidenced by the very good improvements since the last inspection. The school is characterised by strong teamwork, staff's high expectations of themselves and the children and a forward thinking and innovative approach that readily seeks improvement and embraces new challenges. Staff very regularly review provision and the impact it makes on children's learning, so as to determine what works well and what might need to be adapted. This and the very good monitoring of individual children's progress are particular strengths of this school. Nevertheless, there is scope to analyse the data about all children's attainment and progress more effectively and to sharpen up the judgements made in formal lesson observations.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen school self-evaluation processes by make better use of data and sharpening the judgements made in formal observations of lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Individual children's attainment on entry to the nursery is quite varied. Overall standards were below the local authority average at the start of last year, and were at least average by the end of the year. A good proportion of children attained above average standards in each of the areas of learning. This shows that more able children are being challenged, and indicates that the introduction of full-time places for some children last year is having a positive impact on accelerating progress and raising standards. All groups of children, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make good progress and achieve well. This is because children are challenged by the teaching and those who need extra support or extending are quickly provided for.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Children make exceptional progress in this area, which is given a very high priority from the time when they first join the nursery. Children love coming to school. At the start of the day they quickly settle to work, selecting and joining in activities enthusiastically. They also enjoy sharing their activities with their parents and carers for a few minutes at the start of the day. Most children are very confident. They readily share equipment and relate very well to adults and to each other. Children develop very good relationships and their behaviour is excellent. This is the result of the staff's very good example, their high expectations and well established routines. Children recognise that it is important to take care of each other and to stay friends. They listen well to their teachers, follow instructions carefully and make sensible choices about their own learning. Their spiritual and cultural development is very strong. This is because children's imagination is fired through the many exciting and interesting activities and experiences through which they learn about their immediate environment and the wider world.

Children understand in simple terms how to keep safe and healthy. For example, they are well aware that they must take care when running so as not to bump into anyone or fall over. They are careful to wash their hands regularly. When planning menus, children talked about why orange juice is better than fizzy drinks, and noted that in order to be really healthy they recommend water!

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall and some teaching is outstanding. Particular strengths include staff's high expectations of children and the way they work very well together to share their expertise and make effective use of time to maximise

learning. Because staff have good knowledge of how young children learn best, activities are very well planned to match their age and interests. Resources are also used very well to present children with new ideas and experiences that extend their thinking. In the very best lessons, the pace of learning is very brisk and questioning is excellent. This maximises opportunities to extend children's vocabulary and develop their confidence to speak at length. Occasionally, opportunities to extend children's speaking skills are missed. Assessment of children's learning is very good and staff are well informed about the strengths and weaknesses in children's attainments. Therefore, they know how to plan the next steps in learning to best advantage and which children to target for extra support or extension work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and covers all six areas of learning very well. It is responsive to children's interests, backgrounds and abilities. Staff successfully link different areas of learning together and ensure a very good mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. A particular strength is the way that staff are constantly adapting the curriculum to match children's needs. They also take full advantage of incidental learning opportunities that arise, such as the recent windy weather or the finding of a very large spider's web outdoors. The school is effectively developing its provision to ensure that children who attend full time are challenged and extended. The excellent outdoor facilities are used well to promote learning across all six areas. The school has identified the need to find even more ways to extend children's physical skills. Regular visitors and visits, which include swimming and community activities linked to the designation of the school campus as a Public Arts Site, enrich children's experiences well. These also have a good impact on standards, children's personal development and their understanding of healthy lifestyles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school works very closely with parents to ensure that children are safe, happy and achieve well. Excellent and well established procedures help the children to settle quickly into nursery, gain confidence and develop independence. This also helps children to make a smooth transition to the infant school later on. The staff give children lots of individual attention. They also draw on an exceptionally wide range of external expertise to support vulnerable children and help them to progress well. Two of the staff are specifically trained to work beyond the school and go into the community, supporting parents and carers of children with significant additional learning or medical needs. The arrangements for protecting children are very thorough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership, management and governance are good and provide the school with a good capacity to continue to improve. The headteacher provides very strong leadership. She has a very good track record of making improvements and a very clear vision about what needs to be done next. This includes developing the Children's Centre. The headteacher promotes very effective teamwork and inspires her staff. Consequently, staff share her enthusiasm. They think carefully about what they do and constantly look for ways to bring about improvements.

The overall leadership and management have been strengthened since the last inspection by the fairly recent decisions to appoint a governing body and increase the number of senior posts. This is already making a positive impact on, for example, how recent staff changes have been managed. The changes have also strengthened the level of expertise in areas such as the curriculum and assessment. The governing body has quickly become established and offers good support. Because governors regularly visit the nursery during the school day, they are well informed, recognise the school's strengths and are proud to be a part of it. The school has very strong links with teacher and childcare training institutions, community services, other nursery schools and with the collaboration of schools. This facilitates considerable sharing of expertise and promotes children's progress at many levels. The school's evaluation of its own performance, although generally good, and in some respects very thorough, could be extended further.

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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, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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 effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I am writing you a letter to tell you what we found out when we visited your school. Thank you for talking to us and letting us look at your work. Your mums and dads think the nursery is really good and we agree.

What we liked most:

- You behave really well, work very hard and listen very well.
- You make good progress and learn to do lots of things you could not do before.
- Everyone in the nursery makes sure that you are very safe, happy and well looked after.
- The staff make sure there are lots different and exciting activities for you to do indoors and outside.
- Your headteacher and staff lead the school well.
- The staff check your progress very carefully and give you extra help if you need it.
- We have asked the staff to do some things to make the nursery even better:
- We have asked the staff to get even better at checking how well you and the nursery are doing.

We know that you really enjoy school and hope that you continue to do so.