
CELEBRATING

BIRMINGHAM'S

NURSERY

SCHOOLS

Pre 1900-2010

Birmingham • Pre 1900-1909

Pre 1900

1870 School Board was set up in Birmingham.

1899 Birmingham Settlement was established in Aston as a neighbourhood response to poverty and deprivation.

1900-1909

1902 The People's Kindergarten was formed.



Julia Lloyd

1904 Julia Lloyd (of the Lloyd banking family) opened (and managed) the Free Peoples' Kindergarten at the Friend's Institute at 251 Warwick Road, Greet, funded by the Cadbury family and influenced by Pestalozzi, Froebel and later Montessori. It was set up "to bring to the smaller children of the poorer people the same advantages as we desire and arrange for our own".

Prior to 1906 Education (Provision of Meals) Act, a charitable association called Birmingham School Dinner Society had for 23 years provided meals for the poorest children in school and for 7 years provided free breakfasts.

1907 The Birmingham People's Kindergarten Association was formed (later to become the Birmingham Nursery Schools Association).

1907 A second kindergarten opened at the Women's Settlement at 318 Summer Lane, again organised by Julia Lloyd. She said of that time: "Our infant schools were far from ideal. The children sat in rows, dull and lacking in imagination, just repeating parrot-wise whatever I tried to teach them" (Cusden 1938).



Nationally

1870 Elementary Education Act introduced compulsory schooling; some infant schools already had under 5s attending. Prior to 1870 the Church of England had a hold on elementary education in this country.

1873 The first free kindergarten, following the ideas of Froebel, was established by a local authority in Salford and, as well as nursery education based on play, it offered baths, meals, rest, and parental training.

1880 Attendance at Elementary Schools for 5-10 year olds was enforced.

1899 Board of Education Act established a Board of Education to superintend matters relating to education in England and Wales.

1899 The school leaving age was raised to 12.

By 1900 more than 50% of 3 & 4 year olds and many 2 year olds attended Infant Schools.

1905 Katherine Bathurst, Inspector with the Board of Education, called for the provision of national nurseries to provide appropriate care for under 5s (she was concerned about the number of under 5s in Elementary Schools that were not being properly catered for). Froebel ideology began to enter the discussion and understanding of educationalists in the UK.

1906 Education (Provision of Meals) Act allowed - but did not require - local authorities to provide school meals.

1907 Education (Administrative Provision) Act required education authorities to provide medical inspections immediately after admission to school.

September 1908 The Acland Report on the 'School Attendance of Children Below the Age of Five' recommended:

- that although ideally 3-5 year olds should be at home with their mothers, many of the homes were not satisfactory and the best place for these children was therefore in a Nursery School
- the 1/3 of all children between 3 & 5 who had been on the registers of Elementary Schools should be educated instead in Nursery Schools
- the premises should be roomy, well-lit, warm and ventilated
- there should be no formal lessons in reading, writing and arithmetic for young children, but they should be provided with freedom of movement, constant change of occupation, frequent visits to the playground and opportunities for sleep
- there should be singing, brick-building, modelling, sorting, nursery rhymes, story-telling and equipment to include sand troughs, boxes for planting, pets and a piano
- the nursery teacher was to be specially trained and selected, have an assistant and not care for more than 30 children
- new Nursery Schools should be built and existing ones be improved
- Local Authorities should estimate the numbers of children for whom provision should then be made, for admission at the age of 3.

Pre 1900-1909

Birmingham • 1910-1919

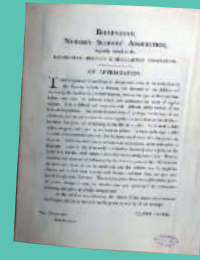
1917 The Birmingham People's Kindergarten Association become the Birmingham Nursery Schools Association, with the main aim being to advance nursery education. This was dissolved in 1919 because of the new role of the LEA in providing Nursery Schools under the 1918 Education Act.

September 1917 The Greet Kindergarten was re-named as Greet Nursery School and families paid 6d per child to cover milk and a dose of castor oil.

1918 A third Nursery (Class) opened at Memorial Hall, Farm Road, Sparkbrook but closed the following year.

By 1919 following a brief closure, the Settlement Kindergarten became known as Summer Lane Nursery School.

1919 Birmingham proposed that there should be more Nursery Schools and a Nursery Schools Sub-Committee reporting to the Hygiene Sub-Committee was established.



Nationally

1911 Margaret McMillan (1860-1931) and her sister Rachel established an open-air nursery for poor children in Deptford.

1910 Education Act moved responsibility for the provision of Nursery Schools to LEAs:

- it enabled LEAs to provide nursery education for children aged between 2 and 5
- Nursery Schools became officially recognised under Clause 19, although their provision was optional
- with the move from kindergartens to Nursery Schools came a greater emphasis on children's physical health, hygiene and welfare.

1918 The school leaving age was raised to 14 and full time education to the age of 14 became compulsory.

1919 The Labour Party endorsed nursery education and advocated its universality.

1910-1919

Birmingham • 1920-1929

July 1921 Greet Nursery School closed and moved to its present site at 26 Tiverton Road, Selly Oak.

August 1921 It re-opened as Selly Oak Nursery School in purpose built premises for 60 children, funded by Mr & Mrs George Cadbury. The premises allowed 15 sq ft per child, the maximum floor space allowed at the time.

1924 An open-air Nursery Class opened at Dartmouth Street School.

1926 The first NSA (Nursery School Association) branch was formed in Birmingham. Julia Lloyd talked of the need for Nursery Schools because of the physical condition of children, their bad housing and inadequate feeding.

December 1927 An edition of the Birmingham Post also advocated Nursery Schools. They reported that 90% of children were born healthy, but by 5 yrs of age 45% had physical defects, which could have been cured had they received the right treatment at the right time.

December 1927 29 members were present at the first AGM of the Birmingham branch of the NSA.

December 1929 Birmingham Education Committee prepared a scheme to provide 1500 extra nursery places in central areas. Consequently Rea St South, Tilton Rd & Steward St were later to open Nursery Classes for 150 children in total, in 1937.



Nationally

1920s and 1930s Margaret McMillan promoted nursery education.

1921 Education Act set out the circumstances in which children were eligible for free school meals.

1923 The national NSA (Nursery School Association) was founded (later to become BAECE in 1972, the British Association for Early Childhood Education, and more recently re-named Early Education). Margaret McMillan was NSA's first President.

By 1923 there were 24 Nursery Schools throughout England that were recognised by the Board of Education.

1924 Education Enquiry Committee recognised the work of Nursery Schools in promoting good health through their early intervention and preventative work.

1927 Archbishop of Canterbury's commission on education urged that the church should lend its influence and active support to the Nursery School movement.

1928 NSA circular was sent to MPs regarding the Nursery School movement plans:

- the need for Nursery Schools
- a description of the Nursery School day, to include physical and educational aspects
- staffing and the need for specially trained and certified teachers with a 1:40 ratio.

1929 Education Enquiry Committee Report: 'The Case for Nursery Schools' was published. Following this 9 Nursery Schools were opened in England.

By 1929/1930 there were 40 Nursery Schools in England.

1920-1929

Birmingham • 1930-1939

By 1932 there were 93 members of the Birmingham NSA branch. They continued to publicise the need and work of Nursery Schools, search for sites in overcrowded areas and provide training.

1935 Meals at Dartmouth St Nursery School were 1/6d per week. Midday meals were also provided at Summer Lane Nursery School.

1935 A site was acquired and plans drawn up for Heneage St Nursery School.

1935 Deritend 'Fellowship' Nursery School at 1 Derby Street, Deritend was opened for 38 children, built and funded by private donations and subscriptions under the Birmingham branch of the NSA.

Julia Lloyd remained an active member of the committee of Selly Oak Nursery School, until her resignation in early 1935.

By 1936 there were 2 Nursery Schools under the control of the education committee: Summer Lane with 82 children and Dartmouth Street with 36 children.

February 1939 The Birmingham Nursery Schools Sub-Committee which had reported to the Hygiene Sub-Committee, was transferred to the Elementary Education Sub-Committee. 406 children attended voluntary and maintained Nursery Schools and pressure was maintained on the LEA to expand nursery education.

August 1939 The first (mainly school age) children were evacuated from Birmingham, 25,000 children accompanied by 4000 teachers and helpers. In addition, mothers with babies and young children were evacuated, in all a total of 43,000 people.

1939 28 children were evacuated from Selly Oak Nursery School for 8 months to Avoncroft College, Worcestershire.

October 1939 Edith Cadbury (voluntary) Nursery School opened in Weoley Castle. It was gifted by George Cadbury in memory of his wife Edith who had supported nursery education in Birmingham and was run by Bournville Trustees.

1939 Brearley Nursery School was built to replace Summer Lane Nursery School but children did not attend until after evacuation in 1941.



Selly Oak Nursery



Selly Oak Nursery

Nationally

1931 Hadow Report 'The Primary School' was commissioned by the government and again recommended nursery schooling, but was followed by the recession in the 1930s.

1932 Only 13% of children were accessing nursery education.

1933 Board of Education experienced financial stringency and was unable to extend Nursery School provision.

1933 Hadow Report 'Infant and Nursery Schools' stated that most children would benefit from nursery schooling and mentioned the need to provide Nursery Schools with garden playgrounds in housing schemes. In addition it recommended that:

- the Nursery School should 'provide an environment in which the health of the young child – physical, mental and moral should be safeguarded'
- nursery education should be widely available – especially in poorer areas
- nursery children should be encouraged to explore and experiment and should not be expected to perform tasks which require 'fine work with hands and fingers'
- Nursery School heads (superintendents) should be specialist teachers of very young children
- classroom helpers should be provided.

1933-1934 NSA pamphlet 'Nursery Schools in Relation to Slum Clearance and Re-Housing' stated: "Again Nursery Schools have been found to form the natural nucleus of a Community centre. Social activities for children who have passed through the Nursery School tend to develop and flourish".

By 1934, 8 emergency open-air nurseries were established through cooperation between NSA and Save the Children Committee. This was in response to concerns about the healthy growth and development of young children due to the effects of poverty, malnutrition and illness. Overall there were 32 maintained Nursery Schools and 27 voluntary ones at this time.

1935 Hadow Report stated that most children would benefit from nursery education.

1936 The NSA called for Nursery Schools for all children (not just for the deprived) and for 2-7 year olds.

1937 Susan Isaacs published the 'Educational Value of the Nursery School'. This stressed:

- the importance of child-centred provision
- a focus on play, exploration, imagination and problem solving underpinned by language and logical thinking
- the need for an appropriate environment and for an adult supporting and extending learning
- the differing needs of the 2, 3 & 4 year old
- the need for air, space, exercise, rest and good food.

Just before the war there were 166,000 3-5 year olds attending Nursery Classes and less than 10,000 2-5 year olds in Nursery Schools.

1938 With the threat of war imminent, the NSA was involved in arranging escorts and cars for the evacuation of 14000 children attending London nurseries.

1939-1945 The Second World War gave a huge impetus to the creation of provision for young children through women being recruited to work on the land and in industry, to include working in the munitions factories.

1930-1939

Birmingham • 1940-1944

All schools had to close until air raid shelters could be provided, by July 1940.

October and November 1940 Following heavy bombing in the East of the city, a second wave of evacuation took place.

1941:

- Brearley Nursery School opened
- 542 children attended voluntary and maintained Nursery Schools
- Birmingham LEA opened some Nursery Classes in Primary Schools.

December 1941 The Education Committee and the Public Health Committee set to work to implement government policy and to establish war-time nurseries in Birmingham. This enabled women to work in the munitions factories. The Public Health Committee established the day nurseries throughout the city and the Education Committee arranged for recruitment and training of staff.

March 1942 The first trainees completed their course at Rea St South Elementary School and 1475 children attended voluntary and maintained Nursery Schools.

72 day nurseries and 5 24hour nurseries, many under the Public Health department, were established in Birmingham during the war years. However they were always short of staff, part of a great labour shortage in Birmingham throughout the war, which saw at least 80,000 people brought into Birmingham for employment purposes during the war period.

June 1942 Contracts were placed for the erection and completion of pre-fabricated hutments, on 24 sites in Birmingham, which the Ministry of Health was supplying free of charge. Each was to accommodate 60 nursery children, a total of 1440 in all. 13 of these hutments were later to become Nursery Schools: Allens Croft, Bloomsbury, Bordesley Green East, Garretts Green, Goodway, Highters Heath, Kings Norton, Marsh Hill, Perry Beeches, Rubery, Washwood Heath, Weoley Castle, West Heath.

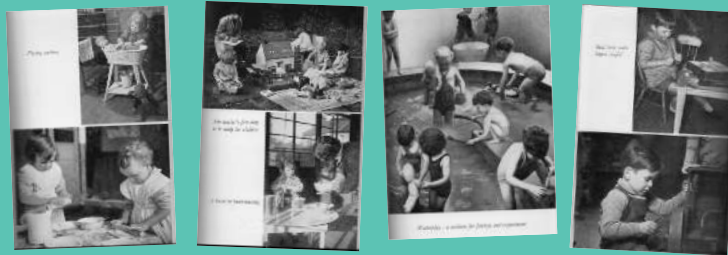
June 1942 Hansard records that the Midlands had 6,300 nursery places by the end of April 1942. Of these, Birmingham had places for 1,696 children with prospective additional accommodation for a further 1,978 children, to give provision for 3,600 in all. Women in war work contributed 1s per day for nursery provision and free school milk and meals were also provided.

1942 Garrison Lane Nursery School opened and was to have an important future training role (log books 1942-1958 are held by The Library of Birmingham Archive Department).

1943 'Exhibition of Toys' made for Birmingham nurseries was opened by the Lord Mayor. Nursery School films were shown during two days of exhibition.

1944 Birmingham proposed 30 new Nursery Schools in their development plan but they did not all come about.

By July 1944 children were being evacuated from London and the South of England to Birmingham and in total more than 15,000 people arrived.



Images from Lillian de Lissa Book

Nationally

1940 Joint circular from the Board of Education and Ministry of Health urged authorities in reception areas to set up nursery centres which would be eligible for 100% grant for upkeep and materials.

1941 NSA offers the Borough of Guildford the first pre-fabricated nursery centre building in the country. The building consisted of two main rooms with French windows opening on to a paved terrace, and with cloakroom, bathrooms, staff room and bed store.

During WW2 1500 war nurseries providing for 71,250 children were established in England under the Ministry for Health. There was a training programme for 15+ year olds to work in them.

1940-1944 370 maintained and a further 41 voluntary Nursery Schools also provided for a total of 19,182 under 5s.

1942 Exhibition of Nursery School education 'Learning to Live' was held at Harrods and visited by the Queen.

1943 Government White Paper stated: "There is no doubt of the importance of training children in good habits at the most impressionable age, and of the indirect value of the Nursery School in influencing the parents of the children. There is equally no doubt of the incalculable value of the school in securing medical and nursing care, and the remedial treatment of defects which may be difficult to eradicate if they are left untreated until the child enters school in the ordinary way at the age of 5". The White Paper proposed a duty on LEAs to provide or aid the supply of Nursery Schools, as necessary. It stated clearly that self contained Nursery Schools (as opposed to Nursery Classes) were the most suitable type of provision for children under 5 and should mainly form the new provision. It recommended Nursery Schools for all children, to include those from 'good homes', but especially for those living in the poorest parts of the larger cities.

During 1940-1944 LEAs had to produce development plans for Nursery Schools and Classes and submit them to the Minister for Education to show how they would implement expansion of nursery education.

1940-1944

Birmingham • 1945-1949

April and May 1945 An impressive exhibition of nursery work was displayed at Lewis's Ltd in order to inform public opinion. Areas of the city were canvassed and public meetings held to promote the value of nursery education.

June 1945 The day nursery capacity was for 3695 children and 3472 children were on the day nursery registers: 1215 under 2s and 2257 over 2s.

3143 mothers were also on the register, most of whom were employed full time. When fully staffed, the nurseries would have 3 highly qualified nurses or nursery nurses plus 9-12 other staff.

August 1945 2000 children attended voluntary and maintained Nursery Schools.

February 1946 Reaside was also re-designated as an LEA Nursery School after years of being Rea St South Nursery Class. This was followed by the closure of 11 Nursery Classes in order to provide extra primary accommodation.

1946 There was a proposal that 15 of the war-time Public Health day nurseries should be purchased by the Education Committee to become Nursery Schools supported by the Local Authority.

Between 1946 and 1948 a total of 675 additional Nursery School places became available at the following 13 schools: Allens Croft, Bloomsbury, Bordesley Green East, Garretts Green, Goodway, Highters Heath, Kings Norton, Marsh Hill, Perry Beeches, Rubery, Washwood Heath, Weoley Castle and at West Heath.

1947 Natalie Blackie was appointed as Birmingham's first Nursery Adviser. She served for 25 years and was later awarded the OBE for her services to nursery education.

October 1949 Dudley Road Nursery School opened for 60 children but it closed in 1982.

1949 Miss Caine was appointed a Nursery School Adviser in Birmingham and was also responsible for Garrison Lane Training Centre.

In the late 1940s or early 1950s 9 residential nurseries were established. Some of these had been war-time nurseries, including Field House, Flint Green, Pype Hayes & Wassell Grove in Stourbridge.



Images from Lillian de Lissa and World of Children Books

Nationally

1944 Education Act:

- established Nursery Schools for 2-5 year olds, to release women for work in industry
- put a duty on LEAs to cater for under 5s in Nursery Schools and Classes
- introduced free milk and under Section 49, placed a statutory duty on local authorities to provide school meals and milk
- raised the school leaving age to 15
- introduced free nursery, primary, secondary and FE education.

Following this Education Act, the NSA continued to press for universal nursery education, but due to post-war financial constraints, resources were mainly used for Primary Schools.

March 1945 Hansard records that day nurseries were for children up to the age of 2 and Nursery Schools were for children aged 2-5; it supported the idea that the war-time nurseries should continue as Nursery Schools and talked of the need to teach 'parent craft'.

1945 Family Allowance Act.

1946 National Insurance Act.

1946 National Health Service Act.

1946 School Milk Act provided free milk for all school children under 18.

1948 National Assistance Act.

1948 Children Act required Local Authorities to set up children's committees and departments to look after the interests of children in their care and to employ child care officers.

1948 NSA building advisory panel designed a minimum cost Nursery School building and the Ministry of Education approved the erection of a prototype at Cookham, Berkshire. An NSA publication 'Designing the New Nursery Schools' described the work of the committee in planning the new prototype.

1945-1949

Birmingham • 1950-1959

1950 Dodford Children's Holiday Farm was founded by Mrs Lucy Cadbury and Dr Dorothy Beaumont for children under 9 years of age. The first children stayed there in 1951.

September 1950 Highfield Nursery School opened for 30 children.

1950 There were 2315 children on the rolls of Nursery Schools and Classes throughout Birmingham, 1070 in 22 Nursery Schools and 1245 in 50 Nursery Classes attached to 31 Primary Schools. Nursery 'education' became firmly accepted as education as distinct from welfare, and made for itself a permanent place in the education system.

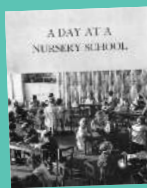
The Nursery Day – Edith Cadbury Nursery School

- 8.45am the day begins. Children arrive at nursery school with mothers or elder sisters, put on overalls and have a cup of milk
- 9.30am. School opens for 'Morning Ring' when children gather for prayers, talks, songs then free play - a love of nature is learned, active games, physical exercises, music and stories
- 11.40am. Wash before dinner. Tooth brushes, mugs, face clothes and towels for each child. Each child knows its own by the coloured picture on its cloakroom peg and on its bed
- 12.00. Dinnertime – say grace. Simple, varied and nourishing meals are provided at cost to parents 41/2d
- 12.30pm. tooth cleaning
- 12.40pm. get blankets and lie down until 2.30pm
- 2.30pm. free play – action and singing games arranged
- Outdoor play – keeping of animals, sewing seeds and care of plants. Sand pit
- 4.00pm. go home

1953 Gracelands Nursery School opened and later Shenley Fields Nursery School.

1955 Julia Lloyd died.

1958 Part-time sessions were offered in some nurseries.



Nationally

By the 1950s LEAs had opened 76 new training colleges as there was a shortage of teachers after the war.

Spring 1951 NSA gave written evidence to a committee set up by the Minister of Education "to enquire into the medical, educational and social problems relating to maladjusted children with reference to their treatment within the educational system".

Spring 1952 NSA branches at Brighton, Nottingham, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, Weston-Super-Mare, Wigan and Kent were all engaged in campaigning against the threatened closure of Nursery Schools and Classes.

December 1952 Thanks to swift and strenuous action, the threat to maintained Nursery Schools was partially averted.

June 1954 NSA newsletter reported that while the number of new Nursery Schools was still increasing, the government was still refusing to withdraw Circular 155 which banned the opening of new Nursery Schools.

At the end of the 1950s some part-time Nursery School attendance was introduced.

1950-1959

Birmingham • 1960-1969

1960s There was still a lack of housing in Birmingham and much poverty and deprivation. There were some houses without hot water and bathrooms.

June 1960 27 Nursery Schools participated in an 'Open Week' to commemorate the Margaret McMillan Centenary.

1964 Local Colleges of Education were approached to start Nursery/Infant courses as there was concern about the diminishing number of Nursery School teachers. In time all 4 colleges started Nursery/Infant courses.

1966 4 new Nursery Classes were opened in Birmingham Primary Schools mainly to accept children of teachers, thus enabling them to return to teaching.

1967 Birmingham still had 6 residential nurseries, 3 in Birmingham and 3 outside the city, supporting a total of 202 children.

During the 1960s and 1970s Birmingham underwent massive urban re-development.



Rubery Nursery School



Rubery Nursery School



Rubery Nursery School

Nationally

In 1960 4,000 children aged 2-4 were attending nursery education part-time and 196,000 were attending full-time.

1964 NUT Survey 'State of Nursery Education' found there were 2 year waiting lists for a third of existing Nursery Schools and Classes and estimated that "the total demand for places...exceeds supply in a ratio of eleven to four".

1965 White Paper on Housing.

1965 Local authorities were allowed to open Nursery Classes for teachers' children to encourage qualified teachers to return to the classroom.

1967 Plowden Report 'Children and their Primary Schools':

- focused attention on the needs of young children and praised child centred approaches to education
- supported the expansion of nursery education especially in areas of social deprivation
- stressed the need for verbal stimulus, opportunities for constructive play, a more richly differentiated environment and the access to medical care that good Nursery Schools can provide
- suggested that as a minimum ,all children aged four to five who live in the (deprived) areas should have the opportunity of part-time attendance and that perhaps 50 per cent should have full-time places.

1967 24 authorities were invited to submit proposals for the provision, expansion or improvement of Nursery Schools or Classes, day nurseries and children's residential homes. As a result 16000 more Nursery School places were made available.

1968 The end of free milk for secondary children.

By the end of the 1960s there was a new model of provision, a combination of Nursery Schools with day nurseries, catering for 0-5s. An example is Hillfields Nursery Centre in Coventry which was to open in 1971.

During the 1960s the Playgroup movement started and developed particularly in areas where there was little nursery education provision.

1960-1969

Birmingham • 1970-1979

Part of this urban building programme also involved providing new nurseries in deprived areas; in 1970 10 new nursery units were established and over the next few years 6 new Nursery Schools were opened:

1970 Adderley and Newtown Nursery Schools

1971 Lillian de Lissa and Jakeman Nursery Schools

1974 Osborne Nursery School

1976 Castle Vale Nursery School.

1972 Pre-School Provision Sub-Committee was set up and first met in June.

1973 2 additional residential nurseries were established (Beechcroft and Chaddesley).

1975 Adderley Nursery School became Adderley Nursery School and Centre, a combined Education and Social Services Centre.

1976 Castle Vale Nursery School opened as a joint centre also.

1977 Deritend Nursery School moved to become a separate unit at Wyndcliffe Infant School.

March 1977 Rea St South Nursery School moved to Mowbray Street and was re-named Reaside Nursery School.

Late 1970s Children sleeping during the nursery education day was phased out.

Easter 1979 As part of the 'International Year of the Child', a Nursery School room was set up in Rackhams store for 8 days, in order to bring about a focus on young children and their education and to publicise the 'Rights of the Child'. Nursery toys and activity sessions were run by teachers and nursery nurses, and parents were able to see and discuss the benefits of nursery education.



Reaside Nursery School



Reaside Nursery School



Reaside Nursery School



Reaside Nursery School

Nationally

1971 The end of free milk for 7-11s.

1972 The Nursery School Association (NSA) became the British Association for Early Childhood Education (BAECE).

1972 The White Paper 'A Framework for Expansion' talked of nursery education in 1972 costing £42 million a year.

1972 Margaret Thatcher as Minister of Education, proposed the wholesale expansion of nursery education to accommodate all 3 & 4 year old children whose parents wanted it for their children; however an economic crisis prevented this from happening.

1972 The school leaving age was raised to 16.

May 1973 Margaret Thatcher addressed the NSA/BAECE Conference and talked of the building programme for nursery education.

December 1973 Thatcher speech talked of nursery education expansion plans for buildings, places and training of staff. The provision was to be mainly PT with FT places for 15% of the population.

1974 The National Association of Day Nurseries, founded in 1906, was incorporated within the NSA.

By 1975 7 more integrated Nursery Centres had opened, to include Netherton Park, Dudley and Adderley Nursery Centre in Birmingham.

1974-1976 Local Authorities planned for expansion of PT Nursery Classes.

1976 Government Conference on 'Low Cost Day Provision for the Under Fives'.

1970-1979

Birmingham • 1980-1989

1980 Birmingham closed all its residential nurseries as it wanted to reduce the numbers of under fives in residential care.

1983 Birmingham participated in the BAECE Diamond Jubilee Year, with an exhibition of the work and history of the organisation held at the Central Library.

In the late 1980s many new Nursery Classes and Units were opened in Birmingham's Primary Schools.



Passide Nursery School



Bloombury Nursery School



Newtown Nursery School

Nationally

1980 Education Act removed the obligation on LEAs to provide school milk and meals (other than the provision of free school meals for those who were eligible).

1985 'Better Schools' report recognised that about 80% of children attended Nursery Schools or Classes before the age of 5 and that places were prioritised for those most in need. It also committed the government to continue funding this proportion of places.

1987 Corporal punishment was banned in all state schools.

1988 Education Reform Act set out a National Curriculum for England & Wales.

1988 Government inquiry into educational provision for under-fives recommended that all children should be entitled to nursery education.

January 1989 Publication of the 1988 inquiry led to another committee being set up, to consider the quality and content of the educational experiences offered to three and four year old children (Rumbold inquiry).

1989 Children Act.

1980-1989

Birmingham • 1990-1999

From the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s there was a growing focus on computers and ICT in Nursery Schools.

Throughout the decade there was also a focus on curriculum projects, research and innovation. Nursery Schools worked together on a variety of projects including:

- the Computing Project
- 'Young at Art' Project
- 'Fax the Face'
- EPPE Research
- Story Sacks Literacy Project
- 'Walk to School'
- 'Top Start' (PE initiative)
- Early Years Guarantee
- 'INSPIRE' (workshops for parents)
- Development of community rooms and services for parents and the community
- Teacher mentors supporting the private and voluntary nursery sector.

Mid 1990s Nursery School Ofsted Inspections began.

Autumn 1997 Nursery School Financial Delegation pilot began.



Newnham Nursery School - parent computer workshop



Newnham Nursery School

Nationally

1990 Rumbold Report 'Starting with Quality' (the quality of the educational experience offered to 3 and 4 year olds):

- highlighted opportunities for all regardless of race, sex, social background or special needs
- guarded against too much formality
- stressed the importance of play and talk
- considered the process of education as being as important as the content
- valued the vital role of parents in their children's learning
- valued the importance of the child's all-round development
- encouraged the need for closer links between day nurseries and schools.

By 1993 30% of nursery education places were in Nursery Classes rather than Nursery Schools.

1994 'Start Right' Report also stressed the importance of quality (and raising quality) in early years education and the need for expansion of provision.

1995 90% of under 5s in nursery education (in Nursery Schools or Nursery Classes) attended PT rather than FT.

1996 The Conservative government introduced the first stage of a Nursery Voucher scheme which linked to a curriculum framework/set of guidelines for pre-statutory settings: 'Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning on Entering Compulsory Education' (SCAA, 1996), later revised as 'Early Learning Goals' (QCA, 2000).

1996 'Transforming Nursery Education' book by Peter Moss and Helen Penn argued for an all encompassing and cohesive early childhood service for 0-6 year olds.

September 1996 Eppe Research Project into the 'effective provision of pre school education' for 3 and 4 year old children was announced by the government. It was funded by a £1.4 million contract and was the first in depth longitudinal research to be undertaken in this country. This study established that the best progress was made by children who attended either integrated centres or Nursery Schools (as opposed to other forms of early years provision).

1997 The incoming Labour government abolished the voucher scheme and provided direct funding for 3 and 4 year olds, with institutions to be inspected in future against the 'Early Learning Goals'.

July to August 1997 Early Education presented 'The Hundred Languages of Children' exhibition from Reggio Emilia at the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood.

December 1997 Early Excellence Centres were introduced and funded until March 2006. They were intended as models of good and innovative practice, combining education and childcare for under fives along with parental support, adult education and training, care, health and community development.

1998 National Childcare Strategy introduced a programme for the expansion of childcare in England from birth to 14 (16 for children with disabilities).

1999 Sure Start Programme designed to give every child the best possible start in life accompanied by a broad range of support services for parents and the family:

- outreach services and home visiting
- services to support good quality play and learning
- childcare
- primary and community health care and advice about child health and development
- support for children with special needs.

October 1999 Government published Early Learning Goals and introduced a Foundation Stage to precede the National Curriculum Key Stage 1.

1990-1999

Birmingham • 2000-2009

January 2000 Reaside Nursery School relocated and was re-named St Thomas Centre Nursery with the remit to establish Birmingham's first Early Excellence Centre. It was designated as such in September 2001.

Early 2000 Nursery Schools were involved in producing 'Standards for Inclusion'.

Autumn 2003 Governing Bodies were established for Nursery Schools.

April 2004 Nursery Schools were given full financial delegation.

2009 Birmingham had more 'Looked After' children than any other authority and had the highest number of children in residential care (270). It also had the highest rate, with 83/10,000 children being 'Looked After'.

During this decade there was renewed interest and focus on the outdoors environment and on 'forest schools'.

Many Nursery Schools became Children's Centres and 2 Nursery Schools (Lillian de Lissa and Brearley) were designated as Beacon Schools.



Ferry Beaches new school building 2000



Newdown Nursery school - day trip



Newdown Nursery school - garden centre visit

Nationally

2000 Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage was issued.

2001 Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative was launched with the aim of providing high quality and affordable child care.

2004 The rollout of Sure Start Children's Centres was announced.

2004 Children Act.

2008 Childcare Act established the 'Early Years Foundation Stage' and the EYFS curriculum which was implemented in September 2008.

2000-2009

Birmingham • 2010-

Selly Oak Nursery School ceased to be voluntary aided and was taken under the full control of Birmingham LA.

2011 Despite a strong campaign in Birmingham the Single Funding Formula was introduced and significantly reduced the number of FT places in Nursery Schools.

Some Nursery Schools were designated as 'Teaching Schools'.

Nearly 17,000 children in the West Midlands are eligible for the 2 year old funding.



Allens Croft Nursery School



Allens Croft Nursery School

THE UNIQUENESS OF BIRMINGHAM'S NURSERY SCHOOLS

Birmingham Nursery Schools have always been at the fore-front of new developments and curriculum initiatives and have responded positively and with enthusiasm over the years to the many new challenges faced from government and the local authority. Some of these include:

- providing training and disseminating good practice to others
- participating in research
- establishing day care, neighbourhood nursery and extended facilities
- working with parents and the wider community
- becoming Children's Centres
- representing the early years on local and national committees and bodies
- lobbying for the nursery and early years sector
- becoming 'Teaching Schools'
- ...and many more!

Birmingham Nursery Schools have always prioritised safe-guarding children and supporting young children with special and additional educational needs.

They have highly skilled and well trained staff and have a long history and philosophy of inclusion and of working with children and families, particularly those in the greatest need.

The Nursery Schools have uniformly and regularly received high recognition and praise in their Ofsted Inspections for the quality of provision that they offer and they are all currently rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. Indeed many have received 'Outstanding' designations over a period of 10 years or more.

Nationally

March 2010 The campaign against the Single Funding Formula was a success, as the Minister for Children announced a delay to its implementation.

March 2011 Tickell Report 'The Early Years: Foundations for Life, Health and Learning' (a review of the EYFS) was published and recommended 3 prime curriculum areas and a reduction in bureaucracy.

2012 Statutory Framework for EYFS was updated.

2013 The school leaving age was raised to 17.

Sept 2013 The '2 year olds in nurseries' pilot was extended. 20% of 2 year olds in England (130,000) became eligible for 15 hours of funded early learning places, to improve attainment and life chances of some of the most disadvantaged children and to support working parents.

November 2013:

- Guardian newspaper article about starting school at 2 years of age stressed the value of teachers in the early years and the benefits to the most disadvantaged
- BBC News reported on the lack of funded places for 2 year olds with "South East England, Birmingham and Manchester struggling the most"
- another BBC News item stated that only 92,000 of the current population of 130,000 2 year old children were being provided for, leaving a shortfall of 38,000 places.

2015 The school leaving age to be raised to 18.