

INSPECTION REPORT

MOSS HALL NURSERY SCHOOL

Finchley

LEA area: London Borough of Barnet

Unique reference number: 101253

Headteacher: Mrs M Knott

Reporting inspector: Penny Holden
2731

Dates of inspection: 27, 28 February and 1 March.

Inspection number: 186046

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	
Age range of pupils:	3 – 5 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	189 Nether Street Finchley London
Postcode:	N3 1NR
Telephone number:	020 8445 2518
Fax number:	020 8492 0280
Appropriate authority:	London Borough of Barnet
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr. Brian Salinger
Date of previous inspection:	2 October 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2731	Penny Holden	Registered inspector	Under fives Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9980	Joanna Adams	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21491	Carolyn Maples	Team inspector	Equal opportunities English as an additional language	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Moss Hall is a nursery school for 145 boys and girls aged between three and five, most of whom attend part time. There are a small number of places for children to have extended 'wrap around care'. These children may have breakfast, lunch and/or tea at school on a few days a week. The children represent the very varied cultural diversity of the area. All together 70 children speak English as an additional language and out of these 42 began to learn English when they started at the nursery. The main languages spoken by children at home other than English are Japanese and Gujerati, although 25 other languages are spoken. Three children are refugees. Only full time pupils are eligible for free school meals so only three children qualify. Thirteen children have special educational needs and three of these have help from specialists outside the school or are being assessed for statements. Achievement on entry is slightly below average overall although there is the full range of ability including some children who are very able. The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of its provision for pupils with special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Moss Hall Nursery School is a very good school. Considering the small budget the school has delegated for its control, the effective leadership, the excellent provision, children's personal development and their good progress and achievement: value for money is very good.

What the school does well

- Children's high achievements in personal and social and creative development.
- The opportunities children are given to become independent and to use their initiative.
- The rich and stimulating environment, indoors and outdoors, which interests and enthuses the children who concentrate and spend time at activities and learn.
- All adults in the nursery are skilful at teaching children to behave very well.
- The relationship with parents: helping them settle their children into nursery; the evenings held to explain what children will learn; the excellent reports written at the end of their time in the nursery.

What could be improved

- The link between assessment and planning so adults in the school can be sure every child makes the best possible progress.
- The ongoing information parents are given about how their child is doing.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in October 1995. It continues to provide a good education. The system for planning was developed six years ago and does not cover the new foundation stage curriculum; this is now ready for change. The governing body is regularly involved in financial decisions and has information about the curriculum. There is school policy for child protection and all staff have received training.

STANDARDS

Children achieve well in the areas of learning. They do best in personal, social and emotional development where many children reach the early learning goals by the time they leave Moss

Hall Nursery, before they reach the end of the foundation stage. Children do well in the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, physical development, and creative development as most are well along the stepping stones¹ by the time they leave the nursery. In most aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world they achieve well. In mathematics they achieve in line with what might be expected for their age.

Children who begin to speak English for the first time when they start at the nursery make very good progress and move well through the stepping stones of communication, language and literacy.

When children start school they have a very thoughtful and thorough induction so that they feel secure and are able to explore and learn. This leads to good progress particularly in personal, social and emotional development.

The majority of children start school with average skills and achieve well by the end of their time at Moss Hall Nursery. Children with special educational needs often make better progress than might be expected especially those who receive extra adult support.

CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: children are eager to come to school and readily get involved in activities.
Behaviour	Very good: they are co-operative and thoughtful and are keen to please adults who all encourage good behaviour extremely well.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent: this is a strength. Children become confident, explore and are very independent. They make strong friendships and quickly learn to work together well.
Attendance	Satisfactory: the school does all it can to encourage regular attendance.

The children quickly become engrossed in activities and work at them for good lengths of time. They are very independent and use their initiative, exploring both floors of the building and outside, to take part in activities that interest them. Children like, trust and respect the adults who work in the nursery. Adult voices are never raised and children learn to behave well and understand why this is important.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Sessions seen overall	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

¹ The steps towards the nationally agreed early learning goals children are expected to achieve by the end of the Reception year.

During the inspection 23 per cent of the teaching was very good and 66 per cent good: all the teaching was satisfactory or better. The emphasis of the teaching lies in developing the children's personal, social and emotional skills and all the adults in the nursery do this skilfully. They ensure children feel secure and then allow them space and time to explore and become independent. Children's learning begins quickly and surely because of this. Staff's good intervention develops the children's ability to spend time at an activity and to persevere if things are difficult. Adults ensure children are encouraged to talk and to use language to help them work out ideas as well as to communicate. They are very skilful at encouraging children learning to speak English to take a full part in activities and use and develop both their own language and English. Books, stories and rhymes play an important part in the nursery; consequently the teaching of communication, language and literacy is good. Where mathematical opportunities arise teaching is good but some children are not always involved in these activities. The school strives to meet the needs of all children well as it knows each individual's strengths and weaknesses and encourages them to develop. Evaluations of children are conscientiously carried out and recorded, however, they are not reflected in teaching plans. Adults work patiently and consistently with children who have a particular special need. The teaching of all adults working in the nursery: teachers, supply teachers, support staff and nursery nurses is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The nursery gives children a rich and stimulating range of experiences particularly for their personal and creative development.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good because adults know the children so well they keep their needs in mind and encourage their development.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Very good: adults communicate with children who speak English as an additional language in many ways, often using visual clues to help them understand. Adults value children's use of English so that so that they develop self-confidence.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for social, moral and cultural development is very good and for spiritual development is good. The school's welcoming ethos encourages them to care for, value and respect each other.
How well the school cares for its children	Good: adults are very good at observing children's progress in the learning goals. They care for and support children well.

All adults work consistently, teaching the children to behave very well. Parents value all the school does for their children and the good progress they make. They praise the good induction process and the evening meetings the headteacher runs on the work of the nursery. The end of year reports about children's achievements are of the highest quality. Parents receive less information about their child's progress during the year unless they come to the nursery and ask for it. The school is reviewing this.

Pupils are given a full and interesting experience in the nursery. They are introduced to a wide range of topics to interest and motivate them. Adults are very keen to allow the children

to discover for themselves but will intervene to enrich this exploration. The adults in the nursery visit the children at home before they start school, meet the families and get to know every child very well. This knowledge helps them take good care of each child. On a few occasions some children will select the same activity time after time and can miss out on other experiences.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher thoughtfully ensures everyone in the school community including teachers, parents and governors focus on how they can best help young children learn.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors take care to know the school well and work hard to help the school maintain its high standard of provision.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school tests itself against other nurseries in the area and against best practice. Everyone strives to improve.
The strategic use of resources	The school does not have a delegated budget and has to plan with only limited money. What it has it uses very well.

The staff are very experienced and well qualified to work with young children. The school is very fortunate to have a group of knowledgeable supply staff it knows well to call on to cover absence and other vacancies. Resources are used very well to enrich children's work. The accommodation is excellent and the school makes very good use of every room and all the different areas outside to give pupils a full education.

The lead provided by the headteacher and the governing body is strong and rooted in strong principles governed by how young children learn. Where common practice dictates something the leadership feel would be against the children's best interests, the children come first. For example, access to computers is restricted so that children make the most of their short time in the nursery to develop relationships and benefit from experiencing the wide range of activities on offer.

The school spends very prudently; applying the principles of best value appropriately.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children love school • Teaching is good and helps children make progress • The school is well led and managed • The multicultural background of the children is celebrated • The progress children learning to speak English make in the nursery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information about how their children are getting on

Parents are extremely supportive of the school and at the parents' meeting spoke with great praise and enthusiasm for all aspects of the school. The inspection team agree with these very positive views: Moss Hall Nursery is a very good school. The request from parents for more information about how their children are progressing during the year is also recognised by the inspection team and the school and it is being addressed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The majority of children start school with the level of skills slightly below those expected for their age. They make good progress and achieve well in the areas of learning by the end of their time at Moss Hall Nursery. Some children begin learning to speak English for the first time when they start at the school and make very good progress acquiring the language.
2. Children's personal and social development is excellent and one of the many strengths of the school. Children enter the nursery with only average levels of maturity and independence for their age, but then make very good progress, so that by the time they leave Moss Hall Nursery School when they are five, some of them have already reached the early learning goals in personal and social development expected at the end of the foundation stage.
3. Children's communication, language and literacy development is very good as most are well along the stepping stones by the time they leave the nursery. The majority will reach the learning goals by the end of the foundation stage. Those children who first learn to speak English when they start at the nursery make very good progress and move well through the stepping stones of communication, language and literacy.
4. Children's mathematical development is satisfactory. Children enter the nursery with very varied mathematical ability and overall make satisfactory progress, so that they are on target to meet the early learning goals expected nationally at the end of the foundation stage. Some of the most able are not sufficiently challenged. The child-initiated nature of teaching and learning in the school means that some opportunities to maximise children's mathematical development are missed. Staff are very alert to possibilities and when they spot a chance to develop mathematical understanding they do so skilfully, but only the few children who happen to be participating in that activity, at that moment, benefit.
5. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Some aspects of this area of learning are very strong. Children have a very good understanding of other cultures and they respect and take an interest in other religions, languages and customs. One girl thoughtfully described a globe as an earth ball and children show great interest in the world map that records where everyone in the nursery originated. Whilst children have opportunities to use tape recorders, calculators, toy mobile phones and cameras, they have very limited access to computers. This is deliberate school policy formed to ensure children develop their social and speaking skills rather than sit in front of a screen.
6. Children's physical development is good and they make steady progress along the stepping stones so that the vast majority are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the foundation stage. Children move around the large building assuredly, exploring stairways and dens, climbing up and down high, wide stairs both inside and outside. The outside stairs present a very challenging obstacle, which would daunt some adults, but most children take it completely in their stride.
7. Creative development is very good. Children have many interesting and inspiring opportunities to be creative and make very good progress during their time in the nursery. Music is a real strength in one of the classes where all children have timetabled high quality music sessions. Throughout the school children paint and draw with increasing skill as they

get older. Dressing up and role-play is often elaborate and sustained. Topics give children many opportunities to smell, taste and feel and to explore their senses.

8. When children start school they have a very thoughtful and thorough induction so that they feel secure and are able to explore and learn. This leads to good progress particularly in personal, social and emotional development.

9. Children with special educational needs often make better progress than might be expected, especially those who receive extra adult support.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Children thoroughly enjoy nursery. Indeed their great enthusiasm is evident from the time the doors are opened when some children are heard to shout 'hooray' on being let in. They quickly learn the routines of the nursery; finding their labels and hanging their coats up. Although some children are initially reluctant to be left, the very good routines for settling in, including allowing parents to stay, ensure that once settled, children are happy at school and ready to enjoy their learning. This is appreciated by parents, many of whom said that their child wanted to go to nursery at weekends. Children have very positive attitudes to their learning; they show great interest in the range of activities available and are very keen to get involved. This is evident both indoors and outdoors where children enthusiastically showed off their digging area and role-play resources.

11. Children's behaviour is very good. The consistent approach to managing behaviour and the clear rules regarding behaviour mean that children quickly understand that there is no running inside and no touching on the carpet and they behave accordingly. There are no exclusions. Some children starting in nursery find it hard to adopt the group rules but they quickly learn as a result of the teachers' and nursery nurses' skilful teaching; intervening appropriately and explaining why some behaviour is unacceptable.

12. The strong focus in the school on developing children's self esteem is very successful in promoting the children's personal development which is excellent. Although some of the younger children are shy, they become confident and independent during their time at school. Many are keen to discuss their work with each other and with visitors. For example, one girl, writing a letter to her mummy, was desperate to explain what all the letters meant and how it was going to be a surprise. Children become very independent; they are able to choose activities within the whole nursery happily moving from upstairs to downstairs. In the garden they show confidence in climbing apparatus and in scooting. At tidy up time, most children have a good awareness of their responsibilities and quickly sort out equipment and resources, putting them away in their right place.

13. Relationships between children and between adults and children are very good and this is an important factor in promoting children's learning. Children from all backgrounds are supportive towards each other, keen to work together and generally respect each other. Teachers work hard to develop children's understanding of how their behaviour impacts on others, for example, that throwing sand hurts other people. Children were observed guiding each other and explaining this without teacher intervention. Whilst working together, for example, with the water, children happily co-operate, filling up containers and passing them to each other to be emptied. Children develop confidence in the adults, quickly seeking them out if they are upset or needing assistance.

14. Attendance is satisfactory. There are a number of absences every day both in the morning and afternoon largely due to sickness but there a few parents who keep their

children at home at other times. The school regularly reminds parents of the disruption this causes to a child's learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. Teaching by all members of staff: teachers, nursery nurses, support staff and the school's regular supply teachers, is of good quality. Indeed, 66 per cent of the teaching observed during the inspection was good and none unsatisfactory. The result of the good teaching is that pupils learn well and develop very positive attitudes to work.

16. The emphasis of the teaching lies in developing the children's personal, social and emotional skills and all the adults in the nursery are very skilful at this. They ensure children feel secure and spend time settling them into the nursery. A relatively new girl came into school holding her mother's hand and appearing quite fearful was quickly included into the group reading with an adult. She sat on the adult's lap and became engrossed in the story so when her mother left, she felt very secure. Once children feel confident adults allow them space and time to explore and become independent. Adults are careful to give the children freedom to try out for themselves, for example, when children try to put on and fasten their own coats, adults do not hurry them up by doing them themselves. Children learn quickly and surely because of this and their curiosity is fostered.

17. Staff's good intervention develops the children's ability to spend time at an activity and to persevere if things are difficult. In the organised music sessions, children have well planned opportunities to handle and play instruments, to sing and to listen. The teacher is skilled at breaking the time up into a series of activities and in teaching the children to hold and play instruments properly. She teaches them the name of the instruments, to take turns, to play loudly and softly. Children have the ability to spend a good length of time absorbed in this. Some children find clapping in time difficult but try really hard and make progress, often achieving it at the end of the session.

18. Relationships are very good. Children know that the adults are there to support and help them. There is a very strong element of mutual respect. In one class a girl wrote her name in Japanese characters and the adult sitting with her began to discuss this; the interest she showed pleased the child who continued by trying to write the adult's English name in characters. The girl continued the activity by writing her brothers' names in Japanese and then drawing them. Next day this relationship continued when the girl wrote first name and surname in characters and then taught the adult to say and write some of the Japanese characters. The resources within the classroom enriched this activity as a poster of the Japanese alphabet was displayed at child eye level.

19. When children show a reluctance to do as they are asked, adults are extremely skilful at persuading them to obey. In a singing session a girl said, "I don't feel like singing," to which the teacher replied, "What a pity because it sounds so good if everyone is singing." The girl immediately said, "Alright then," and joined in.

20. Adults ensure children are encouraged to talk and to use language to help them work out ideas as well as to communicate. They are very skilful at encouraging children learning to speak English to take a full part in activities and use and develop both their own language and English. Books, stories and rhymes play an important part in the nursery; consequently the teaching of communication, language and literacy is good. Two boys were arranging the cut out characters of the story by Pat Hutchins 'Inside' and reading the book together. The book and illustrations had been carefully arranged on a tabletop display where children would notice them during the day. An adult had introduced the boys so well to the story earlier, that they could retell it using very similar words to those in the book, and

remembered to start with 'once upon a time' and when to include bird noises. They spent considerable time at this activity and were completely engrossed with no further involvement of an adult.

21. A weakness in teaching is ensuring that every child has tried out activities in all areas of learning. Whilst all activities are available for all children to take part it not all children choose to do all or they might miss it whilst involved in another activity. For example, where mathematical opportunities arise teaching is good but some children are not involved in these activities, some children spend every available minute outside and may not develop an appropriate level of skill in making. One girl became very frustrated when sticking a cylinder to a box because it kept falling off and was ready to learn the method of how to do this but this had not been planned into the activity.

22. Children are very eager to learn and are full of confidence. They will ask any adult for information and help or will start a conversation. They express themselves freely and make their ideas and feelings known. One boy asked when a birthday child's mother was arriving with birthday treats, the adult said "in a minute" to which he replied, "In a minute takes too long!"

23. The school meets the needs of all children well as it knows each individual's strengths and weaknesses and encourages them to develop. They work patiently and consistently with children who have a particular special need.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

24. The curriculum is broad, balanced and covers all required areas of learning. It provides children with rich and worthwhile experiences to develop their understanding and skills. The school places particular emphasis on developing children's self esteem and social skills and is very successful in achieving this through a programme which allows children to develop their independence, play purposefully, talk to adults and other children and pursue specific interests and initiatives of their own.

25. The learning environment, inside and out, is well planned. High quality resources, which are set out attractively, stimulate, interest and occupy children very effectively. Adults are very good at using the opportunities that arise during the day to develop children's knowledge and understanding. Children are encouraged to explore materials, experiment and consolidate their learning through skilful interventions from staff. Opportunities are provided for children to select and pursue activities for extended, uninterrupted periods of time. This enables children to develop initiative and take responsibility for deciding how they choose to spend their time. Children respond well to this, taking advantage of many of the activities on offer, maintaining interest for extended periods of time and moving confidently from one area to another. However, there is an imbalance between activities started by children and activities led by adults. The lack of adult-directed activities, designed to meet specific learning outcomes, means that some opportunities for learning are lost. Staff cannot ensure adequate curriculum coverage for every child or that children always build on what they already know, consequently, some higher attaining children are not being sufficiently challenged.

26. The strong emphasis on developing every child's self esteem ensures equality of opportunity for all. Provision for children with special educational needs is very good. Learning Support Assistants make a valuable contribution to the good progress that children make. Children who speak English as an additional language are well supported.

27. At the time of the inspection the school was hosting a trainee teacher as well as early years students from a local college. Links with the adjacent Infant and Junior schools are strong and there is constructive liaison to ease transition for those children who transfer to the Infant School.

28. The provision for children's spiritual development is good. The school's warm, welcoming ethos fosters children's spiritual development, encouraging value and respect for each other and enabling children to experience success. They sometimes show a sense of awe and wonder, for example when the school guinea pigs are taken out of their hutch and children are allowed to hold and stroke them. The school celebrates a range of major festivals such as Diwali and Christmas and provides children and their families with insights into the beliefs of people of different faiths.

29. The provision for children's moral development is very good. Through sensitive discussion, and strong teaching, the children learn what is right and what is wrong. All staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and reinforce agreed school procedures and routines so that the children understand that, for instance, there should be no running inside. In order to help children with special needs and those who do not understand English to know whether they are allowed outside or not, colourful symbols have been made to provide visual clues. Children, from their earliest days in the school, know the right thing to do and what they should not be doing.

30. The high quality of all relationships within the school impacts very positively on children's social development, which is very good. Adults treat children with respect, addressing them in a caring, supportive manner and children co-operate well, often being able to negotiate together if disputes do occur. The school promotes independence through encouraging children to explore independently along corridors and up staircases (both inside and outside) and to work in rooms without adults being present. They learn to care for property, for example, two girls brought a coat and hat to a boy, which they had found on the floor of the cloakroom. They had identified it as his and offered to hang it up on his peg, but needed to know which peg was his. Children show consideration for each other. When a child joined a group activity a boy spontaneously moved up, tapped the space on the carpet beside him and said, "I made room for you."

31. Provision for cultural development in the school is very good, with children benefiting from a range of cultural experiences, which reflect the rich multi-ethnic and multi-lingual background of the school community. Children's appreciation of their own and others' cultures is promoted through music, dance, dressing up clothes and high quality visual displays. Particular emphasis is placed on raising children's awareness of the diversity of language, both spoken and written. Story sessions in both Gujarati and Japanese take place regularly and there are many displays of the alphabet and numbers in different scripts as well as "Welcome" signs in many different languages. Parts of the brochure, which is given to new parents, have been translated into Japanese and Gujarati, the two most widely spoken languages after English. A large world map illustrating where in the world children's families originated is a very graphic display of the school's celebration of diversity.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. Staff know the children very well. They devote a lot of time to assessment and there are detailed records on each child. The information is collected both through structured focused observations and ongoing assessments recorded on 'sticky notes'. These form an excellent record of children's personal and social development and provide some information about children's intellectual achievements. However, the large amount of observations and their varied nature means that they are very difficult to use to plan the next steps. Currently

there is not enough information about individual children's abilities to inform planning. Even where information is recorded about children's attainments, this is not reflected in subsequent written planning. The school has recognised this and a new system, soon to be implemented, based on the stepping stones of the Foundation Curriculum should improve this. Information about children with special educational needs is well used to inform their individual education plans and to offer staff advice about strategies for their development.

33. Medium term planning is satisfactory and is based on themes. Two or more themes run concurrently in each class, so a child who spends time in all areas of the school may participate in activities relating to six or more themes simultaneously. However, short term planning has limitations, being based on observations of children's interests rather than assessment of children's skills and abilities. Links between medium term and short term plans are not clear. Statements of intended learning outcomes are sometimes too broad. Daily planning focuses on the nature of activities and the resources to be set out rather than what teachers want children to learn and the skills they should be helped to acquire. Plans are not differentiated to meet the needs of the wide range of age and abilities amongst the children. Although evaluations are conscientiously carried out and recorded, they are not reflected in subsequent plans.

34. The nursery provides a safe and caring environment for the children and this is of paramount importance in promoting the children's learning. At the last inspection there was no school policy for child protection. This is now in place; there is a designated person responsible and all staff have received guidance in dealing with child protection issues. Arrangements for health and safety are in place and first aid routines are correctly followed.

35. All staff give high levels of support. This is based on the fact that each child is known as an individual; their likes, dislikes and personalities are well known by staff. Parents at the meeting commented specifically on this as being one of the great strengths of the school and their views are corroborated by the inspection team. The process starts before the children start school when a home visit is made to each family. This forms a good springboard for settling the children into nursery. Great emphasis is placed on ensuring that children feel happy and secure at nursery and parents are encouraged to stay at first to settle their child in. The school pays great attention to supporting children with any special educational need. Those children receiving wrap around care, staying for lunch and tea, receive very good support; this time is well structured to give a different range of experiences to those they receive during their session in the class. The nursery nurse is extremely sensitive to their particular needs.

36. Also key in the provision of support are the very good relationships between all staff and the children. Adults show respect for the children and provide a calm atmosphere in which children learn and develop confidence. Staff are sensitive to each child's need at any time. For example, one girl who recently started in the nursery became upset; the nursery nurse sensitively sought out the girl's teacher with whom she was building a relationship to provide support. The high levels of personal support given are backed up by very good procedures for monitoring personal development. Detailed records are kept of how each child is developing and any concerns are readily shared with parents.

37. The school has worked hard to develop excellent procedures for promoting good behaviour. There is a behaviour policy with good guidelines for managing behaviour. These procedures are consistently applied by all staff and this is very important for the children: to receive the same messages at all times whatever part of the nursery they are in. Staff manage behaviour well in a calm and positive way. The result is that children quickly learn the expectations and respond well, promoting good learning.

38. The school is aware of the need to remind parents about the importance of good attendance and regularly reminds parents in newsletters and parent evenings. The headteacher follows up absences by telephoning and visiting homes when necessary.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and stated that they felt privileged to be able to send their child to Moss Hall Nursery. Parents at the meeting said that they felt that the school was very effective in promoting their child's self esteem, independence and confidence. This resulted they felt from the very good support and care that each individual child receives. They said that they felt happy with the values the school promotes and the standards achieved. Parents at the meeting and those responding to the questionnaire said that they felt able to approach the school to discuss any concerns and indeed many parents were observed having a quick chat with staff at the start and end of sessions to keep each other informed about events at home or a child's work that day.

40. Parents are very involved in the life of the school and with their own child's learning. Many parents have helped at school, for example with making story bags, working in the garden and accompanying children on trips. Parents speaking different languages come into nursery to tell stories, for example a number of Japanese parents have taken story time. This help is much appreciated by the school and is encouraged both to help the school and to build up the very good sense of partnership in a child's education.

41. The school provides parents with good information about the work of the school and about their child's progress. The school brochure is easy to read and is translated into Japanese and Gujerati. There are regular newsletters informing parents about forthcoming dates and activities and open evenings are held for groups of parents to keep them informed about the school's philosophy and teaching. Some of these, for example, the literacy evening are shared with the infant school. Much useful information is posted up in the entrance to the school, such as reading with your child. This is very useful for those parents collecting their child but is restricting for working parents. Parents who have children with special educational needs are involved in their progress well through formal reviews and informal meetings.

42. At the end of their time at nursery the school provides a very high quality report on the child's progress and achievements. These are informative and personal to the child. Although all parents are encouraged to ask if they have any concerns or require any information at present there is no written information for parents on their child's progress before they leave the nursery. Much of the feedback to parents is informal, taking place when children are picked up or dropped off and whilst this is very useful, it is not available for working parents. The school is aware of the need to improve this and is currently reviewing other ways of reporting to parents.

43. Overall the strong partnership between school and home is an important factor in the success of the school, the standards achieved by children and the high levels of personal development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher uses her excellent knowledge of early years to place the learning of children at the heart of every decision in the school. The decision to give only the oldest children access to computers and to regulate this carefully is made after much thoughtful consideration of what is best for the children.

She has chosen to focus the very short time most children are in the nursery on social and active learning in practical situations.

45. There is a real attention to detail. Almost everything that takes place in the nursery is for a reason and children's learning always comes first. The parents are given good information about what topics their children are to be involved in and why. Parents have a very clear idea about the educational thinking behind the play and activities their children are involved in. They value the knowledge they develop when the headteacher holds informative curriculum meetings. The headteacher greets children and parents at the beginning of every session giving parents and carers the opportunity to raise issues or exchange information. Children respond eagerly to the headteacher's greeting which begins their day well.

46. Other responsibilities in the nursery are successfully managed. The deputy headteacher, who was absent during the inspection, is also the special needs co-ordinator. He fulfils his responsibilities well and parents commented how pleased they were that their children had a male role model in school. Special needs procedures are followed well and records are up to date and efficiently and effectively organised.

47. The previous inspection report identified the need for governors to be involved in financial decisions and to have an oversight of the curriculum. There is now a governing body committee structure which includes a finance committee and a curriculum committee. These ensure that governors can play a full part in the nursery's financial management and that they receive good information about the work of the school. Governors' responsibilities are taken seriously and as it is a comparatively small governing body all individual governors are on at least one committee. Everyone is committed to maintaining the strengths of the school and everything it provides for the children. Staff and governors contribute to a school development plan although as the school does not have a delegated budget the room for variation is very limited. However, the governors work hard to get the very best possible for the money they do have responsibility for. For example, they have had difficulty finding a school caretaker and the caretaking and maintenance budget have been combined to try to recruit someone to do simple maintenance jobs as well as caretaking. The school applies the principles of best value conscientiously always trying to get the best for pupils.

48. The nursery is very well organised and everything is ordered in such a way to help children learn. For example, small equipment to be used outside is organised on trolleys according to type, size and purpose. In getting something out or putting it away children become aware of pattern, order and scale. Resources are used very well to enrich children's work. They are used to interest children and help them understand. Over time the nursery has chosen to buy very good quality resources, these have been extremely well looked after so there is now a considerable stock of equipment and apparatus for the children to use. The accommodation is excellent and the school makes very good use of every room and all the different areas outside to give pupils a full education.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. The school should now:

- (1) Strengthen the link between assessment and planning so adults can be sure every child makes the best possible progress by;
 - simplifying the records of what children can do, so that progress for each child in the different areas of learning, can be easily identified and tracked;
 - using this information to plan experiences for particular children so that each child makes the maximum progress they can in every area of learning.
(paragraphs 21, 25, 32, 33 and 68)

- (2) Improve the information given to parents about their children's progress so that they can be even more involved in their children's learning by:
- developing a manageable programme of parents' meetings and written information so parents know how their child is doing during their time at the school. (paragraph 42)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	2

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	23	66	11	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	145
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	13

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	70

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	n/a	School data	n/a

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	191

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	233,076
Total expenditure	250626
Expenditure per pupil	3410
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	0

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	136
Number of questionnaires returned	46

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	83	17	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	30	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	30	0	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	74	22	0	0	4
The teaching is good.	74	22	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	39	9	2	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	24	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	37	0	0	11
The school works closely with parents.	59	33	4	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	72	28	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	35	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	67	33	0	0	0

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Personal, social and emotional development

50. Children's personal and social development is excellent and one of the many strengths of the school. Children enter the nursery with only average levels of maturity and independence for their age, but then make very good progress, so that by the time they leave Moss Hall Nursery School when they are five, some of them have already reached the early learning goals in personal and social development expected at the end of the foundation stage.

51. Children arrive at the beginning of sessions motivated to learn and pleased to see each other. They and their carers receive a warm welcome, both at the front door and at their classroom entrance. Nearly all children are keen and confident, but any that are a little fearful or reluctant to part from their carer are given very skilful support by staff. Children enthusiastically choose from the activities on offer and are quickly involved. Most take part in a wide range of activities, moving independently between them. Children play confidently by themselves and in large and small groups, co-operating, taking turns and sharing equipment. Some very strong friendships have been formed within the nursery. Disputes are rare and often children resolve them themselves through negotiation. When adults do intervene, they encourage children to consider others' feelings; for example, "Saying things like that makes him very unhappy. Can we say it in a different way?". Although excited by their first experience with a programmable toy, children were able to wait patiently for a considerable time for their turn to use it. Children show respect towards other children and adults in the way they listen carefully and respond positively to stories, requests and instructions. Structured circle times help them learn to listen respectfully to each other's thoughts and opinions.

52. Children are clearly aware of what is right and wrong and the vast majority act appropriately and readily remind others what is expected. Staff take the time to frequently repeat the reasons for routines and procedures, and go out of their way to give children responsibility by, for example, asking a child to put something away, rather than doing it more quickly themselves. As a result of patient and consistent teaching from adults, children are very good at caring for equipment, with even the newest children remembering to put the lids back on felt pens, and children consistently taking their shoes off before getting into the toy beds. At the end of sessions children contribute a great deal towards the putting away of equipment and tidying the nursery.

53. Throughout the nursery there is a calm, relaxed atmosphere. Children concentrate well, particularly in self-chosen activities, and many persevere at their tasks for long periods of time. Children are very good at taking the initiative and selecting the resources that they need to carry out their ideas. Adults encourage them to be adventurous in their play.

54. The quality of teaching is very good overall and reflects the very high priority that the school gives to children's personal, social and emotional development. Staff know children very well and manage challenging behaviour through a range of effective strategies which avoid confrontation. For instance, when it was time to put books away before a story a song was sung, "Put your books away now." By the time it had been repeated twice all children had put their books away except one. Using the boy's name the teacher sang the song again singing "... is putting his book away now." With such positive encouragement the boy quickly put his book away and gained a sense of success. Praise is used effectively to

promote children's confidence in what they can achieve. All adults set a good example by working well as a team, treating each other with great respect and valuing all children's contributions.

Communication, language and literacy

55. Children's communication, language and literacy development is very good as most are well along the stepping-stones by the time they leave the nursery. The majority will reach the learning goals by the end of the foundation stage. The oldest children are fluent communicators; they involve visitors in their conversations and readily talk about their work and explain their ideas. Even those children who are new to the nursery quickly become confident and able to ask simple questions and start to talk to others. They understand and use the conventions of polite speech such as please and thank you. One girl said to her friend "Excuse me C..., E.... is telling me something so I must listen."

56. Those children who first learn to speak English when they start at the nursery make very good progress and move well through the stepping-stones of communication, language and literacy. This is because the induction they get makes them feel secure and that their home language is valued. Often children will speak to each other in different languages, for example, a new arrival at the nursery spoke in Japanese to his companion as they played for a considerable time in the home corner, whilst she replied in English. Adults are very good at encouraging the children to be aware that people speak a variety of languages and to value this. During a book sharing session a child selected the Hungry Caterpillar for the adult to read to him. She used the fact it was written in Somali and English to include a new child to the school who was himself from Somalia. On another occasion a Japanese girl wrote some Japanese characters and showed it to an adult who entered into what became an extended piece of work over two days. The girl explained the characters spelt her full name and then the adult helped her find them on the Japanese alphabet displayed on the wall. She demonstrated she could write several other words and the names of her members of her family and taught the adult how to write some Japanese.

57. The vast majority of children, including those who are comparatively new to the school and those learning to speak English, love listening to stories and taking part reciting rhymes and singing songs. The oldest children are able to spend considerable amounts of time listening to stories and talking about events and characters in the story. Children also make up their own elaborate stories; for example, two girls spent most of the morning inventing lives and events for the small wooden models of houses, people and animals set out on a table. Adults in the nursery have regular sessions with the children reading and telling stories and they involve and interest the children very well. They are also skilful at getting the children to be aware of sounds and rhymes. Children develop an interest in, and good knowledge of, the names and sounds of letters by the time they finish in the nursery.

58. Children are encouraged to use language to help them to think. During carpet sessions they are given opportunities to talk about things that have happened. They are skilfully encouraged by adults to talk about what they are doing and to explain what is happening and to suggest what the outcome might be. For example, children dropping yellow and blue food dyes from pipettes into small containers of water talked about how the water turned colour. Many were able to talk about what happened if blue and yellow were both put into the same container. A few children suggested that different greens could be made if more blue was added. Adult intervention ensured the children got the most out of the activity by getting them to use and extend their vocabulary and understanding. Children also invent stories and situations together. Role play areas are also frequently used by children to develop imaginative stories. Three girls playing Cinderella use language to negotiate who was to play the prince, the least popular role, and went happily on to extend the story using

what they had learnt about traditional tales, saying “the Queen had a baby and it was Sleeping Beauty”. A group of girls dressed up in leotards, put on a tape of dance music and pretended to be adults at a party. Three four-year-old girls played percussion instruments and sang their own spontaneously composed song with distinct words. Two of the older boys retold the Pat Hutchin’s story they had heard earlier using the story and the story cut out figures provided. They remembered the chronology of the story, the repetition of phrases and put in birdcalls at the correct points.

59. The nursery environment is rich in writing; there are labels on a large range of things including children’s work, posters, and alphabets in English, Gujarati and Japanese. Children see handwritten and computer generated labels around the nursery and they notice and recognise individual words. They first recognise their name as when they arrive in their class each session they find their name label and hang it up to register their arrival. Then they quickly see their name identifying a piece of their work on the wall. Books are given a prominent position in every room and both storybooks and non-fiction are focused on. All rooms offer excellent writing areas, where interesting and well laid out resources to write attract children to them. In this area in one room, one of the oldest girls decided to write a book, she wrote her name clearly on the cover as the author and filled all the pages with a story. She could clearly form many letters correctly and showed the beginning of an understanding of phonics. Other children chose to write letters and address envelopes for them using a mixture of recognisable words and marks for words. In role-play areas children often use writing to record “telephone orders” they receive or to write down something they wish to remember.

60. Children are encouraged to use their particular interests to write their own stories. One boy made a model robot and then wrote a book about it which he then rushed around reading to every adult in the nursery. He clearly had begun to understand sentence structure and how books are laid out. The oldest and most able can write long stories with recognisable words and an elaborate and interesting story line such as the story about a spider and his family. Most children develop good handwriting skills because they are given many opportunities to make controlled marks on paper, such as drawing and pattern making. Adults are also very good at helping children hold pencils and crayons properly so they develop good hand grips; this will place them in good stead for future writing.

Mathematical Development

61. Children’s mathematical development is satisfactory. Children enter the nursery with very varied mathematical ability and overall make satisfactory progress; they are on target to meet the early learning goals expected nationally at the end of the foundation stage. Some of the most able are not sufficiently challenged. The child-initiated nature of teaching and learning in the school means that some opportunities to maximise children’s mathematical development are missed. Staff are very alert to possibilities and when they spot a chance to develop mathematical understanding they do so skilfully, but only the few children who happen to be participating in that activity, at that moment, benefit.

62. Children are developing some mathematical language. They are starting to use terms such as ‘longer than’ when measuring with their Chinese New Year Snake, and ‘taller than’ when recording their own heights on a wall chart. They develop a basic understanding of capacity, weight, length and space through practical activities and explorations. For example, when weighing out ingredients for cooking children were encouraged to use the terms ‘heavy’ and ‘light’ and in water play described containers as ‘full’ and ‘empty’. Children are starting to name basic shapes and one was able to say that the musical instrument is called a triangle “because it is a triangle shape”. One boy showed good understanding of

comparative size through two drawings in a book he had created: though similar, the drawings were on a different scale. He pointed out that, "he's smaller because he is a child."

63. Children are developing a good understanding of number. There are number displays throughout the school, including some in Japanese. Most count, name and recognise numbers reliably to five and many to ten, and a few can sequence them in the right order. One child was able to count all the sections of the container she was mixing colours in and announce correctly that there were 25. Children begin to understand one to one correspondence through putting equipment away onto silhouetted shapes. Some containers are stored in order from large to small, which encourages children to observe differences in size. Through playing games and singing songs with given numbers of objects and taking away and adding on, children are developing an awareness of addition and subtraction. One of the more able children was able to take two away from five and say there were three left without having to count.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good and they will reach the early learning goals at the end of the foundation stage. Some aspects of this area of learning are very strong and children will reach these goals a year ahead of the expected time. Children have a very good understanding of other cultures and they respect and take an interest in different religions, languages and customs. This aspect of the curriculum is a real strength of the nursery and one much endorsed by parents who appreciate the very good multicultural experience children are given. Throughout the year children are introduced to a variety of cultures, their customs and ceremonies. Other languages have a high status and profile threaded through all aspects of the curriculum. The richness of nationalities in the nursery itself is a well used and valued resource. The quality of teaching in this aspect is very good.

65. Children develop a very good sense of place; where they and others are in the world. One girl thoughtfully described a globe as an 'earth ball' and children show great interest in the world map that records where everyone in the nursery originated. Whilst children have frequent opportunities to use tape recorders, calculators, toy mobile phones, typewriter and cameras, they have very limited access to computers. This is deliberate school policy created to ensure children develop their social and speaking skills rather than have more experience of sitting in front of a screen. Parents spoken to endorsed this policy. There are plans to give the children small group sessions at the computer close to the end of their time in the nursery to prepare them for the work they will do in infant school.

66. The children develop good construction skills: from early on in the nursery they use construction kits and begin to use hammers and saws on wood. Adults insist that children use these tools properly so that they learn good habits and construct safely. By the time they leave they are able to decide what they want to make and then to select the materials and tools necessary. A girl fixed a piece of paper into a tube with paper clips and attached a long tail made out of treasury tags joined together with tape. Nothing was wasted, exactly the right size small pieces of tape were used, the tags were joined to the paper tube through a punched hole. This was her kite. Some skills are difficult for children to discover for themselves and on occasions this frustrates them; planned adult intervention to teach a simple technique could improve learning, for example, showing how to cut slits into the bottom of a tube, and bending the pieces back in such a way that it can be securely fixed to a flat surface.

67. Children are beginning to develop a good sense of time. They happily recount what they did at home yesterday, as well as events that took place longer ago, such as holidays.

Many can talk about when they were as babies and are starting to understand the difference between now and the past. In one room there is an excellent display of writing materials past and present which has been used well by the adults to teach the children who have learnt a great deal from it. One girl found a feather in the garden and suggested she was going to write with it just as people had a long time ago.

68. Exploring and investigation, the early stages of science, are an important aspect of provision in the nursery and consequentially children do well in this area of learning. Many of the children who will leave for infant school at the end of the year have made good progress in the stepping stones and are already tackling some of the aspects of the learning goals. For example, children readily ask questions about why things happen and how things work. They use the typewriter and notice what happens when they press on a key and work out how the letters get onto on the paper. Opportunities to put coloured dye into water and watch what happens when two colours are mixed give the children much question for thought. Teaching of these activities is good but not all children take part in these activities and as assessment and planning links are not yet secure some children may miss their chance at developing this knowledge.

69. Children notice patterns and comment on them and are very aware of change. Children grow plants in the garden from seeds. They watch how butterfly eggs become caterpillars, then chrysalis and eventually butterflies and see this in books as well as observation. They are fascinated by the guinea pigs and very interested in the why, when and how they are having babies.

Physical development

70. Children's physical development is good and they make steady progress along the stepping stones so that the vast majority are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the foundation stage. Children move around the large building assuredly, exploring stairways and dens, climbing up and down high, wide stairs both inside and outside. The outside stairs present a very challenging obstacle, which would daunt some adults, but most children take it completely in their stride.

71. Outside, children use large play equipment confidently and with increasing skill and control. They extend their physical skills and co-ordination and control through balancing and climbing on a range of fixed and adjustable climbing equipment both outside, and, on wet days, inside. The climbing equipment meets the needs of children of all physical abilities. Much of it is low level, which encourages apprehensive children to explore. In contrast, the high scramble net, with large spaces between the netting, provides a challenge for even the most bold and able, who climb to the top with delight and stay for some time, viewing the school from a different angle with interest. Children show good awareness of space and others by balancing well on scooters, steering them with skill, travelling at speed yet being able to stop safely when required. Throwing skills are encouraged both through basketball hoops and a throwing game with a basket on the ground, again providing for children with different levels of ability.

72. Dance is encouraged through the provision of a music and dance corner. Stimulated by an audio cassette player, a variety of music tapes, posters showing dancers and bands from different cultures and an imaginative collection of dressing up clothes, one child switched a tape on and others spontaneously started to dance. Despite the somewhat limited space and their energetic style, six children danced rhythmically for about three minutes without knocking into each other or restricting each other's movement in any way, showing good sense of space.

73. Manipulative skills are well developed. Children handle construction kits, pens, pencils, woodwork tools, and use materials such as dough and clay with increasing precision and fine hand and finger control. Fully equipped woodwork benches are available in all three classrooms. Children independently select pieces of wood and know that they need to fix them in a vice before sawing. Most need help with this.

74. The quality of teaching is good. Staff teach children to handle and use tools properly and adjust pencil grips to ensure that bad habits do not go uncorrected. Adult confidence in children's physical abilities encourages them to be adventurous. The school's emphasis on developing children's independence is seen in this area too. For example, just as with small equipment inside classrooms, children are encouraged to help themselves to, and put away, outdoor equipment like trolleys and scooters independently. Wedge-shaped bricks are positioned to act as a ramp, but even so the task provides a challenge and subsequently, if successful, a sense of achievement, as was seen when one boy triumphantly exclaimed, "I did it, look!" after extricating a trolley from a shed.

Creative development

75. Creative development is very good. Children have many interesting and inspiring opportunities to be creative and make very good progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals for this area during their time in the nursery. They are likely to reach these goals before the end of the foundation stage.

76. Music is a real strength, particularly in one of the classes where all children have timetabled, high quality music sessions. However, all classes have good quality opportunities to sing and use instruments. Children love the opportunity to play instruments and to sing. They sing tunefully in all classes and have a good repertoire of songs they remember. They play ring games and action songs with delight. Children are interested in the sound of musical instruments; for example, in one room there is an excellent display of instruments including a very large African drum. Children love to experiment with the sound this makes; as it is so large, the sound is deep and can be very loud. One boy placed a small model kangaroo on the top of this drum and watched how it moved across the skin as it vibrated when he hit it. He was fascinated by this and then realised it made a different sound with and without the toy. He was joined by his teacher who skilfully intervened and asked him questions about what was happening so that his interest was sustained and he learnt as much as possible from the activity. Children often play instruments to accompany their own made up songs. They choose, put into a tape recorder and play a wide variety of music and dance to it, often as part of a more elaborate make-believe game.

77. Throughout the school children paint and draw with increasing skill as they get older. There is always paint and various sizes and colours of paper available by easels for painting. Many opportunities are set up to increase children's experience, such as a mono-printing activity painting half a butterfly, then folding the paper over to print out all of it. Looking at, talking about, and drawing a beautiful display of fruit gave children an excellent opportunity to choose colours for a purpose and to represent what they could see.

78. Children have excellent opportunities to develop their knowledge of pattern and texture. The nursery provides children with beautiful materials, attractively stored and easy to reach, to interest and excite them. In one class, for example, there were sequins and brightly coloured feathers for the children to sew with. Several children used these carefully with threads and mesh material to make lovely collages. Models made with recycled materials and paper collages are made from carefully selected materials showing that the children pay attention to colour and texture. Teaching is good, adults set up activities to encourage the awareness of texture, shape and colour; the attention to this detail extends even to some of

the sand trays where glitter of various shapes was mixed into the sand for children to use. Children using this sand were thrilled by what they found and thought they had discovered treasure, which in turn led them to invent stories.

79. There are many opportunities every day for the children to use their imagination and this is very effectively encouraged by all the adults in the nursery, mainly through materials and situations they provide but also from their interventions. Dressing up and role-play is often elaborate and sustained. This involves other children early in their time in the nursery. A small group of children, newly arrived at the nursery, including some learning to speak English, played together in the home corner, sharing equipment and tasks to get a meal cooked and the table laid. They negotiated what was to be done, to everyone's satisfaction, in a mixture of English and Japanese and were clearly playing out the story together not just side by side. Dressing up clothes, taped music and other props are of such interest and good quality that both boys and girls use them to act out stories they have heard, to combine parts or to invent their own.

80. Children readily express their ideas and are very responsive to sensations and experience. The oldest children are well through the stepping-stones towards the learning goals of being able to respond to and communicate ideas. Topics give children many opportunities to smell, taste and feel and explore their senses. They react openly to stories expressing humour, fear and happiness. The oldest children are quick to talk about what they have made or have done and will happily demonstrate how a model works or perform a song or dance.