

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **EDITH CADBURY NURSERY SCHOOL**

Weoley Castle, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103150

Headteacher: Miss Jo Barr

Reporting inspector: Mrs S Saunders-Singer  
23050

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> February 2000

Inspection number: 186310

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:             | Voluntary Aided                               |
| Age range of pupils:         | 3 to 4  |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed   |
| School address:              | Somerford Road<br>Weoley Castle<br>Birmingham |
| Postcode:                    | B29 5LB                                       |
| Telephone number:            | (0121) 475 3098                               |
| Fax number:                  | (0121) 475 3098                               |
| Appropriate authority:       | The Management Committee (Board of Trustees)  |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mrs Sally Bateman                             |
| Date of previous inspection: | 27 <sup>th</sup> November 1995                |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members          |                      | Area of learning responsibilities   | Aspect responsibilities   |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| Mrs S Saunders-Singer | Registered inspector | Language and literacy<br>Creative, personal and Social<br>Equal opportunities   | Results and achievements<br>Quality of teaching and learning<br>Leadership and management<br>Staffing<br>Efficiency<br>School improvement   |
| Mr M Hammond          | Lay inspector        |   | Attendance<br>Welfare, health and safety<br>Parent partnership<br>Accommodation   |
| Ms S Handford         | Team inspector       | Mathematics<br>Knowledge and understanding of the world<br>Physical development<br>Special educational needs<br>English as an additional language | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development<br>Quality and range of curricular and other activities<br>Spiritual, social, moral and cultural education<br>Assessment<br>Learning resources |

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PPI Group Limited  
7 Hill Street  
Bristol  
BS1 5RW

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Inspection Quality Division  
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Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Voluntary Aided Nursery School is co-ordinated centrally by Birmingham City local education authority with a board of managers (trustees) and receives a delegated budget from the local authority. Funds for special educational needs are held centrally. The school serves the local area which is part of Weoley ward. The local housing is largely in older style council estates in a stable, well-established area. There is a small number of children from minority ethnic backgrounds; there is a small number who have English as an additional language, but there are no children who receive support for English as an additional language. There are 65 children on roll between the ages of 3 and 4. All attend the school full time in two class bases of 32 or 33 children taught by 2 teachers (including the headteacher appointed in September 1999), three nursery nurses and two support staff. Ten children are on the school's register of special needs, but none has a statement of special educational need. Fifteen percent of the school population are eligible for free school meals. This is broadly in line with national averages. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is broadly in line with that expected, although there is lower attainment on entry in some aspects of language and literacy and personal and social development.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The children achieve good standards from an average starting point and children in the Nursery make good progress. Children's attitudes to learning and to school are very good; they are eager to learn in response to the teaching, which is good, overall. Subject knowledge is good, overall, but there is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in the physical development area of experience. Behaviour is excellent in the caring and orderly community. Individual needs are well met throughout the school including pupils with special educational needs. Equality of access and opportunity is excellent. Information for parents and carers about children's progress is detailed and effective; considerable efforts are made to engage the parents in the work of the school and the quality of the partnership is excellent. Attendance is good; there are well-established procedures to follow up non-attendance. The school is managed very well, overall; it is evaluative, self critical and effectively governed. Monitoring of teaching is successful in raising standards and awareness and effective planning ensure appropriate challenge for all children. Resources are efficiently deployed; the teaching staff, nursery nurses and support staff are very well deployed and their contribution is significant. Although unit costs are high, good value for money has been maintained.

#### **What the school does well**

- The effective teaching, for example in language and literacy, information technology and particularly in personal and social development, has an effective impact on the children's learning and they are making good progress.
- The excellent relationships throughout the school support the effective environment for learning.
- The high quality of the care, welfare and support for all children, including those with special educational needs, is very good.
- The provision for the children's personal and social development, including the excellent behaviour is particularly effective.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides very good learning opportunities.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good; there is a clear focus for development of the curriculum, staff expertise and of the site and resources.
- The school has an excellent ethos.

### What could be improved

- Teaching in the physical education area of learning to improve development of the children's gross motor skills and ensure good practice in the use of equipment and space.
- Further refinement of the good curriculum planning development to include the useful short term planning sheets (recently introduced) and "tracking" of children's activity choices over time to give a clear profile of experience.
- The quality and range of the outdoor environment to enhance children's opportunities for physical development and areas for secure, reflective and quiet play.

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

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection in 1996 has been very good, particularly in the current academic year. The school responds positively to the challenges it faces, is very well placed to continue improvements and meet the appropriate targets it has set. Improvements have been effective and raised standards in:

- the teaching in mathematics, information and communication technology and personal and social education; this last is now outstanding;
- curriculum planning to date has been successful in giving increased responsibility to individual members of staff. Good practice and expertise are shared effectively and the explicit criteria for monitoring and evaluation are effective in raising awareness and standards;
- the cultural aspects of children's personal development;
- the organisation of the Nursery to meet children's needs well, including those with special educational needs and to ensure equality of opportunity for all children;
- the stability and strength of leadership and management and the establishing of a strong, effective team;
- clear criteria for development, monitoring and evaluation included in the school's development plan;
- use of the good assessment procedures.

### STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about the achievements of pupils in relation to the national early learning goals by the time they leave the school.

| Performance in:                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Language and literacy           | B |
| Mathematics                     | B |
| Personal and social development | A |
| Other areas of the curriculum   | C |

| Key                |   |
|--------------------|---|
| well above average | A |
| above average      | B |
| average            | C |
| below average      | D |
| well below average | E |

Children attend the school between the ages of 3 and 4. They enter the school with levels of attainment broadly in line with those expected, although there is lower attainment on entry in some aspects of language and literacy and personal and, particularly, social development. The children make good progress, overall, including those with special educational needs and are working well towards reaching

the Desirable Learning Outcomes / Early Learning Goals by the time they reach statutory school age at 5. Standards are above levels expected in language and literacy, mathematics and, in particular, in personal and social development. They are in line with levels expected in all other areas of learning with the exception of information technology (within knowledge and understanding) which is above levels expected.

**PUPILS’ ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

| Aspect                                 | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school                | Children enter school happily. In class they are involved, eager to learn and sustain concentration very well. Children with special educational needs respond well to the very good support they receive. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Behaviour is excellent. Children understand the “golden rules”. They respond positively to the consistently high expectations of the staff.  |
| Personal development and relationships | Children take responsibility, they are tolerant of others, they listen carefully and personal development is excellent. Relationships are consistently outstanding.  |
| Attendance                             | Attendance is good children attend regularly and punctually.   |

Children’s attitudes to learning and their personal development are very good. Behaviour is excellent as are relationships throughout the Nursery.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING**

| Teaching of pupils:  |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Lessons seen overall | Teaching is good, overall, in over 80 per cent of all lessons seen and has a positive impact on children’s learning. Examples of very good teaching (over 35 per cent) were seen in the language and literacy, information and communication technology, music and art and personal and social elements of the curriculum. Staff enthusiasm and very good subject knowledge engage the children very well. Mathematics teaching is good, overall, but there is a lack of stimulating experiences for children to use their number learning, for example, through play. Lack of teacher expertise led to a very small amount (3 per cent) of unsatisfactory teaching in physical development. Specialist teaching and support for the children with special educational needs is good throughout. |

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

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment   |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | The curriculum is broad and balanced and strategies for the development of literacy and numeracy are very good. Provision for equality of opportunity for all children is excellent, as is the provision for personal and social development.   |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs   | Provision is very good. Children's needs are identified quickly and the support they receive is very well organised and reviewed.   |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language                                 | Children are well supported within the broad, caring and effective provision. The equality of access to the curriculum is excellent.  |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Provision is good, overall; for social development it is excellent and children are enabled to develop outstanding social skills. They know right from wrong through the very good moral development provided and are well informed about the diverse culture of society, although there is a limited range of resources to support this awareness through play. Spiritual development is satisfactory, but there are insufficient opportunities for the children to reflect. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils  | The school cares very well for the children. Procedures for monitoring attendance, progress, behaviour and welfare are very good. The nursery provides a calm and orderly environment where all are valued.   |

The partnership with parents and carers is judged to be outstanding and is appreciated by all involved.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The school is led very well. The headteacher provides clear direction and sensitive leadership. She has been successful in moving the pace of change forward. Team work and strong partnerships are a significant feature of the successful management.        |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | The management committee are knowledgeable about the school and support its endeavours very well. They have dealt with the recent changes in status effectively and have set realistic and challenging targets for the improvement of resources and buildings. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | The school analyses its performance very well and is effective in using the information to inform planning developments. Evaluations are regular and thorough.   |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | Resources are satisfactory, overall, and their strategic use is good. The school applies the principles of best value effectively. The school gives good value for money.  |

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most  | What parents would like to see improved   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are happy, are making good progress and parents are well informed.</li> <li>• The staff are approachable with problems which are then quickly dealt with.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The partnership with parents.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The resources outside, including the range of activities on offer.</li> <li>• Amounts of work for children at home.</li> </ul> |

The team endorses the positive comments about the school. The high quality of teaching has a significant impact on the good progress made by the children. The behaviour, expectations and development of children's attitudes to learning, to taking responsibility is all of very high quality. The school works closely with parents and all staff are approachable and eager to help children and parents. The amounts of "work" that children are encouraged to do at home is appropriate for the age and stage of the children, as is the range of activities outside the curriculum. Concerns about the play areas and outside resources are echoed by the team.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. From the examples of children's work over the year to date and the observations during the inspection, it is clear that children are making good progress, overall. They enter the Nursery with levels of attainment which are broadly in line with expectations at this age and stage, although there are some areas where levels of attainment on entry are lower than expected. These are in aspects of language and literacy, namely social and communicating language and in the children's limited breadth of vocabulary and of aspects of personal and social development. In the year in the Nursery, between the ages of three and four, approximately one third of the children make very good progress, are achieving in line with expectations and are well in line to reach the demands of the Desirable Learning Outcomes/Early Learning Goals by the time they reach statutory schooling. A further third of children are making satisfactory progress towards these goals. There is no significant difference in progress of boys and girls, overall. Children whose attainment is below the levels expected and those with special educational needs are making good progress, overall, in relation to their prior attainment and towards the targets of their individual education plans. Children are making particularly good progress in the personal and social area of development. The rise in results and achievements in mathematics, information technology and personal and social development is in response to the raising of standards of teaching in these areas since the last inspection report. The school uses the assessments they make on entry to the Nursery as a basis for the targets they set for individual children's and overall progress.

#### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

2. Children's attitudes to learning are very good. The excellent standards of behaviour have been maintained since the previous report and there are improvements in the good personal development seen then, which are now judged as excellent. Parents report that their children like school and are eager and keen to attend; that behaviour is good; and that the school encourages children to become mature and responsible. There are many written comments that acknowledge the positive outcome of the school's policy towards this aspect of their child's development.
3. Children respond well to the secure environment in which clear and consistent routines have been established by teachers and support assistants. From the moment they enter the school in the morning, they know what is expected of them and are confident in the daily organisation. There is an emphasis on children working within groups, supervised by one or more adult, which helps the establishment of excellent relationships between children and between children and adults. They relate well to all the adults involved with them and respond positively to class and group activities. They are always keen and interested to embark on activities and many children demonstrate in their questions and suggestions an enthusiasm to extend their understanding and show what they know. They have very positive attitudes towards their classmates. They play together happily in the home corner or hospital and set up imaginative games with play people and construction sets. Children with special educational needs have their individual needs identified early and are set realistic small targets for development. Parents are regularly informed of their child's progress and involved in the setting of targets. The children have good attitudes and respond well to support. Their classmates understand the needs of those who require more help; for example, one child was helped by another to find his name card at the lunch table. Children for whom English is an additional language are confident and well integrated and have positive attitudes to school. There are very good relationships with their parents and children learn to appreciate each other's language and cultural backgrounds, for example, when the mother of an Arabic speaker read stories to the children in Arabic.
4. Children's behaviour at all times is excellent. Staff have consistent and high expectations and provide children with positive and caring role models. There is a clear behaviour policy that

emphasises positive behaviour strategies and the raising of self-esteem. These aims are shared with parents and reinforced in the school commitment to provide “a happy, safe and secure learning environment in which all individuals develop and flourish”. The children quickly learn the four “golden rules” for behaviour which are introduced late in the autumn term. They demonstrate very clearly that they understand these rules and know why they are necessary. In a group discussion, when asked what made them happy, one child responded, “playing together”, another, “being kind”. In practice, the children work and play happily together. They share equipment and understand the need to take turns, in the classroom and in the playground. They help each other, for example, with putting on aprons. They are careful with equipment and treat toys and other play material with respect. They tidy up after themselves. The small number of children with special educational needs for emotional and behavioural reasons are supported sensitively and their classmates demonstrate a tolerant and sensible response to the few incidents of potentially disruptive behaviour.

5. The relationships between children and with adults are excellent. Their personal development is excellent. This is because of the high expectations set by the school and the very good knowledge and understanding which all staff have of the needs of young children. The curriculum ensures that children’s personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority and staff use every opportunity to reinforce this in their interaction with the children. Children respond positively to encouragement to become independent and learn to organise themselves when they arrive at school and manage their own personal hygiene. Close attention to demonstrating the skills needed to perform a task enables children to use their initiative, such as, getting clean water for their paint brushes and stirring the mixture to make bird cakes. They learn through group activities, choice of storybooks and discussions the importance of sharing and to listen to each other. All these attributes come together in their lunch groups, which provide a good opportunity for the development of responsibility and social interaction. The children enjoy these occasions. The majority ask and respond to questions, led by the teacher or support assistant. They demonstrate patience in waiting for their lunch, can say what they want to eat and how much and take turns to act as “Server”. Their table manners are excellent and they show a high level of maturity and independence.
6. Attendance at the school is good. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and can be seen to be good for the age of the children. Punctuality, both at the start of the day and in the lessons, is good and this contributes to attainment and progress. Registers are completed efficiently and very effective procedures are in place to monitor absences.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

7. Teaching is good, overall. It is good in half the lessons seen and very good in over a quarter more. Teaching in the personal and social, language and literacy, information technology (knowledge and understanding), art, and music (creative development) is good, often very good. Mathematics teaching is good, as is teaching in the other elements of knowledge and understanding. Standards of teaching in mathematics, personal and social development as well as information technology have been raised since the last inspection. Teaching in the physical area of development is good concerning fine motor control, but is unsatisfactory for gross motor skills. Teachers and their support staff are knowledgeable and well informed about the learning needs of the youngest children. The ethos in the Nursery is warm and welcoming and the needs of individual pupils, including those with special educational needs, are very well addressed. This has a positive impact on the good progress the children make.
8. Teaching of literacy and numeracy basic skills is skilful and effective and staff provide very good role models for language. Their interventions in children’s play are timely and model good conversational language and specific subject vocabulary. Examples were seen in support for role-play in the “hospital” using relevant language and discussing social issues like injections; in mathematics and in aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world, while making bird feeders, or in support for children using information and communication technology. Teaching of specific activities for mathematics is good. However, opportunities for extending the children’s

experiences are not sufficiently developed to encourage the use of the specific mathematical language which is modelled well in discrete teaching sessions. Teaching and encouragement of creative elements of the curriculum are very good and there is a stimulating range of musical, art and sensory activities which extend and enrich the children's experiences very well. Use of the computers is effective and has a positive impact on children's fine motor and keyboard skills. The teaching is very well informed. Explanations are clear and unambiguous and is very effective in improving the progress the children make. Teachers and nursery nurses engage the children with their own enthusiasm for learning and there are many examples across the curriculum in language and literacy, creative development, knowledge and understanding, where this joy in learning is apparent and mutually enjoyed. However, in the use of the indoor apparatus for physical development, there is a lack of subject knowledge which is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient attention to health and safety and the lack of adult intervention in encouraging and ensuring developing skills in this area of development. The school acknowledges this as a priority for development.

9. The staff are effective in planning the broad and balanced curriculum and provide very good opportunities for child and adult initiated activities, purposeful play, whole class and small group work across the expectations of the learning goals in each session and over time. Children's personal, social and emotional development is very well promoted in all aspects of the curriculum and is additionally provided for in group and class discussions and through story time. The organisation of story time has been effectively improved since the last inspection. The sessions are now purposeful and all staff provide appropriately sized groups of children with interesting and enjoyable opportunities to listen to stories, to choose library books and to engage with the staff in appreciation of the good range of texts in the library. Teachers and support staff encourage the children to be reflective and expressive through effective "circle times" and through the care and concern for others. However, there are limited opportunities for children to reflect through further short but sustained quiet times together, for example, looking at a beautiful object or focusing on a candle flame. The curriculum in the Nursery has been updated effectively with new curriculum developments and is well presented to ensure continuity and progression in learning.
10. Teachers and nursery nurses plan together and the curriculum planning improvements to date have been effective in producing long and medium term planning strategies which support the children's learning well. Individual members of staff take responsibility for the focused activities being offered to different groups of children throughout each week. This response to a key issue of the last report has been successful in using individual's expertise and experience and in ensuring understanding of the aims and objectives in each element of the curriculum. This development has been usefully supported by the recently introduced short term planning sheets which ensure focus on the aims and learning objectives of each session. The staff involved in children's learning know them well and the teachers and nursery nurses work as a team to share their observations and evaluation of how well children are developing their skills and whether they are working at the level of their ability. Staff observe how well each child in the school learns in their focus group and this informs their future planning for that group or individual. Staff are skilful and generous in their sharing of oral feedback to the children to encourage and build self esteem. This is very effective in meeting the needs of the individual children, including those with special educational needs. However, while this planning ensures provision through the focus teaching sessions, the "tracking" of individual children's activities during sessions in child initiated activities is informal. Useful information about pace of change, concentration and the children's selection of activities daily and over time is, therefore, missed as a further strand of assessment of children's development. This is a further strand in the development of the school's comprehensive planning systems to be addressed.
11. The classroom management in both class bases is effective and staff encourage the children to take responsibility for organising their work and play. For example, in art, children mix paints, wash brushes and store their work. In music, they select and replace their instruments. Children select activities for play and often help tidy away. Teachers create meaningful opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively and pupils are beginning to collaborate in shared working, for example, in using and applying their knowledge in information and communication technology. Children are

encouraged to play co-operatively, often concentrating for long periods of time at their chosen or directed activities. Very skilful questioning enables pupils to revise, consider and extend their learning and careful use of praise reinforces their effort. In the very good and good teaching, the pace of work is brisk and the pupils are effectively challenged to think and extend their knowledge. For example, in the session using the rainbow fish story sack as a stimulus, children experienced the story, a related game, number related work and then extension to an outside trail to find hidden rainbow fish.

12. Teachers, nursery nurses and supportstaff work very effectively together; the relationships are excellent and provide a secure and commendable model for the children. The consistent valuing of all individuals' contributions is a feature of the school and is significant in supporting the positive atmosphere for learning evident through the school. Children with special educational needs at all stages have very good individual education plans which set small, achievable targets for progress and all the adults involved in their education are aware of these. A special educational needs support assistant supports and observes the progress of children with special educational needs effectively and helps those with emotional and behavioural difficulties moderate their behaviour. Resources are used most effectively and the use of teaching and support assistant time is very efficient.

## Learning

13. The quality of pupils' learning is closely linked to the quality of the teaching they receive.
14. It is good, overall. Because the teaching is of a high standard, children gain knowledge and understanding very quickly. For example, in a series of group sessions on how to use a particular program, the children learned a great deal about information and communication in a very short space of time through the very well informed and presented teaching, followed up by experience of using the program. The children are often captivated by the richness of the provision they enjoy and sustain interest and concentration for long periods of time. Examples were seen in the development of a drama session where children were able to sequence a well-known story, The Three Little Pigs, through involvement as characters or audience; in the questions asked and answered during a series of sessions, with groups making bird feed cakes; during a very good music session where children used untuned instruments most effectively to accompany the good range of songs sung from memory.
15. They work with a will and put a very great deal of effort into producing their best. This includes the children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. This effort and positive attitudes are making a significant impact on the progress they are making.
16. Children are effectively supported by the strong school ethos and the evident inclusion of all individuals in the life of the school. The consistently high expectations by all members of staff have a very influential effect on the children's behaviour; their excellent behaviour enables them to assimilate the good personal and social models and to learn effectively.

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

17. In the previous report, the curriculum was found to be broad and balanced and meeting statutory requirements. This is still the case. The curriculum continues to be effective and the school has modified and adapted the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children under five to take account of the recommendations of the recently introduced Early Learning Goals.
18. The school has made good progress in the implementation of the key issues for action contained in the previous report which relate to the curriculum, focusing on developing greater consistency in teaching; review of the organisational pattern; and the length of time allocated to each part of the daily programme to secure a better match of provision to children's needs. The six areas of

learning constitute the basis for balanced long term planning. The focus through which they are taught is effectively planned to link with the themes to be covered each term. Medium term planning covers work for half a term, usefully itemising details of the learning objectives in the six areas and the activities through which the objectives will be achieved. The organisation of planning and involvement of teachers and nursery nurses in the weekly review of the curriculum and planning is most effective and now ensures that there is greater consistency in teaching and that each child receives equal provision reflecting their individual needs. This is well supported by the newly developed short term planning sheets. There is a good balance, over time, of adult-initiated, child initiated activities, purposeful play and group times within the Nursery organisation. The successful organisation, planning and delivery of the curriculum contributes significantly to the school's very good learning ethos and to the good progress made by the children.

19. The development of language and literacy skills is reinforced well through all activities, with an appropriately strong emphasis on the development of language and vocabulary. Numeracy skills are well developed through play and lessons for the development of mathematical knowledge, as well as a weekly mathematics funday which is successful in the targeted raising of standards in this area. There is good and appropriate emphasis on the development of information and communication technology skills. At other times, children are provided with a good range of learning and play experiences that continue to deepen their knowledge and understanding, through the good provision and mainly high quality interaction provided by adults. However, the full range of opportunities for physical development is limited, especially for the development of gross motor skills. Outdoor play opportunities remain unsatisfactory due to the restrictions on play equipment and a safe, outdoor play space.
20. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities to support the half-termly themes. Children develop their knowledge of animals and their needs through visiting Ash End House Farm and observing and touching animals brought to the school. They use the school grounds to observe and identify animals and birds, to explore the changes in nature and plant bulbs. There is a summer visit to the nearby Lickey Hills. They develop sound understanding of their own and other cultures through learning about the festivals of Christmas, Diwali, Eid and the Chinese New Year.
21. The school's provision to meet the special educational needs of all its pupils is very good. The observation and monitoring of individual pupils' progress and links with health and social services ensure the early identification of need. There are very good links with the parents of these children. A member of the school management committee takes responsibility for this aspect. There are very good procedures to ensure the settling in of children for whom English is an additional language and parents are pleased with the school's efforts to involve them in their induction. The majority of these children are competent in their use of English and all have full access to the curriculum.
22. In order to ensure that each child has equality of access to the six areas of the curriculum, the medium term planning provides for groups of children to rotate between focused activities during the week. This ensures that every child has the same experiences and that staff expertise in the different areas is utilised to maximise the children's' learning opportunities. The two classes provide for different experiences; one classroom focus is on language and literacy and creative development. The other focuses on mathematical knowledge and knowledge and understanding of the world. Personal, social and emotional development and the physical development of fine motor skills are promoted in both these rooms. Children spend an equal amount of time in each room and support staff ensure that the activities children are engaged in when not in the focus teaching groups, are promoting their learning effectively. There is very good provision for creative development and language and literacy through art and role-play opportunities. However, the opportunities for extending children's use of number and mathematical learning would benefit from the provision of more stimulating activities.
23. The school has suitable links with the local community. The notice board in the parent's room is used to communicate details of curriculum planning, events and activities and there are plans to

establish a parent network. Well-established links with business, industry and educational institutions (IMPACT) provide the school with useful goods and materials to which the school staff lend their own expertise in developing materials for teachers in the area. There are regular meetings to identify and develop the ways in which these organisations can contribute to the school. The children from the school go on to a number of primary schools and there are plans to establish closer links with these schools to ensure a smooth transition between the phases.

24. High standards have been maintained in social and moral education. Standards in children's spiritual development remain satisfactory. Cultural education is now good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Children's personal, social and emotional development is very effectively taught and promoted within the curriculum. This, too, is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
25. Children's spiritual development has been maintained and is satisfactory. Staff provide time for children to reflect and learn about the values and beliefs of others through the use of story and the celebration of different religious festivals. All children say grace before their lunch and show appropriate respect. When asked what makes them happy, they show an understanding of the special people in their lives and talk about their families and their friends. In a circle time activity they were invited to pass a smile round the group. Photographic evidence of them holding chicks and stroking animals illustrates the delight and wonder gained from this experience. However, opportunities to pause and reflect regularly are not sufficiently developed beyond prayer and some "circle" times and this limits children's reflective experiences.
26. The school has maintained the high standards in moral development and children's moral development is very good. Children's behaviour is excellent and staff have consistently high expectations of them. The basis for this is the time given during the first term to the teaching of the "golden rules" which encourage the children to be gentle, be kind, be honest and play together. The rules pervade the very good whole school ethos and are supported by the attitudes of the staff and their excellent relationships with each other and the children. They are conveyed to parents in the nursery newsletter and illustrated in the collaboratively produced frieze, displayed in the parent's room. Moral issues are reinforced during class discussions and the choice of books; for example *The Bad-Tempered Ladybird* provides the opportunity to focus on sharing. A good range of books displayed in the library provide insights on moral issues such as bullying and fairness at a level appropriate to the age of the children.
27. The school has maintained and improved the high standards of social development and children's social development is excellent. Teachers ensure in their organisation that children are provided with very good opportunities to play and work together in different groupings. Staff have high expectations and provide good quality conversations and questioning which are most effective in supporting and developing the children's social skills. They provide a safe and secure environment in which children know and understand the daily routines so that their independence is being developed very well. The children are enabled to take increasing responsibility in getting out and putting away equipment and in organising themselves. They work well together and show respect for other children and adults. They play effectively in the role play areas and show a good understanding of the different roles adults play in their lives.
28. The school has improved the opportunities provided for cultural development and this aspect is now good. The children participate in a range of celebrations which include those of the different religions and Mother's Day and Father's Day. They visit a local farm and in the summer enjoy a trip to the nearby Lickey Hills. Staff introduce them to a good range of traditional rhymes and songs and to traditional stories from their own and other cultures. They learn about people in their environment through role-play in the "doctor's surgery" and the "shop" and are visited by the police and Postman Pat. However, the good teaching and raising of awareness are not fully reflected in the range of resources and the dolls and equipment in the home corner are limited. Children are beginning to look carefully at the work of western artists such as Klee, Mondrian and Jackson Pollock, encouraged effectively by the skilful teaching. There is a good provision of musical instruments that represent different cultural traditions, although artists from non-western traditions

are under-represented. There is a satisfactory selection of posters and photographs which represent positive images of people and children from different cultures and people in non-stereotyped roles, although there are fewer showing positive images of disability. The range of visits and visitors is wide and imaginative and further development of a range of visits and visitors to represent the local community and reflect the cultural diversity of Birmingham is appropriately planned by the school. There has been a recent increase in the number of books that contain stories and information from other countries and cultural traditions. However, the school acknowledges the need to increase this stock further.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS AND STUDENTS?**

29. The school continues to provide a happy, relaxed and supportive environment and the friendliness and courtesy of the children and staff are real strengths of the school.
30. The teachers and support staff have a very caring attitude towards the children. They know them and their families well and this helps them monitor their progress and personal development. Relationships between teachers, support staff and children are excellent and children are seen caring and supporting each other. The care with which they take turns serving each other at lunch time is but one example. The majority of children are confident and articulate and more than willing to talk about themselves and their feelings and ask for help when it is needed.
31. The school is committed to a positive discipline and behaviour policy which includes the use of circle time. This is very effectively implemented and, as a result, the school functions as an orderly and caring community. Children are well disciplined and the excellent behaviour is both a characteristic and expectation of the school. Supervision of the children during lunch time and other breaks is very good. However, some areas of the playground are difficult to supervise. The school has a child protection policy and staff are aware of their responsibilities in this area. Satisfactory arrangements are in place to deal with sick children. Health education is very effective. Children are encouraged to eat a well balanced diet at lunch time and to wash regularly.
32. Parents feel encouraged to contact the school should a problem arise. Children with special educational needs are well supported and parents are kept fully involved.
33. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting children's attendance.
34. An effective health and safety policy is monitored by the governors and the site is regularly inspected. The main items of concern with health and safety are the uneven and damaged playground surface and the high step problem into the verandahs. These items are already part of the school development plan.
35. There are a number of assessment procedures that provide a very effective system for monitoring children's learning and personal, social and emotional development. The learning objectives for each of the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children under five (Early Learning Goals) form the basis for the assessment. They inform planning and define the knowledge, skills and attitudes which the school wants children to achieve by the time they leave the school.
36. An end of week review which involves teachers and nursery nurses highlights the knowledge and skills covered during the week, based on daily evaluation. This is effective, as the information is used to plan for the following half term, so that, while themes remain in place, adjustments can be made to the learning objectives and activities through which these will be taught. The second half of the summer term is used to ensure that any gaps are covered. Through this regular evaluation and fine-tuning of the curriculum, the school retains its ethos of matching the curriculum to the children's needs and this is having significant impact on the quality of provision the children receive.
37. In order to ensure that children's individual needs are met, there is a regular programme of observation of the progress of four children per week, which is repeated each term. While it is the

responsibility of the teachers and the nursery nurses to teach the curriculum and evaluate the learning of the children, all adults involved in their education undertake a monitoring role. Any observations which highlight concerns or significant developments are recorded on a daily basis and form part of the weekly review. This is very good and effective practice as it allows for the consideration of timing and groupings. Children's development is recorded rigorously and good records are passed to their next school. Work that shows significant gains and provides a record of their development is retained and a folder of work is passed to parents at the end of their child's nursery career, giving a clear and useful profile of the children's learning and progress.

38. This close observation of children's progress provides an effective body of information that indicates children who are having difficulties and may have a special educational need. Additionally, parents, and the assigned health visitor provide information. Close monitoring is made of these children by the teachers, nursery nurses and the special educational needs support assistant. The school special educational needs policy provides good guidance to staff on procedures and the stages of special educational needs. Class teachers and the special needs support assistant are fully involved in the preparation of Individual Education Plans. The special educational needs co-ordinator who is also the headteacher ensures that the targets in the Individual Education Plans are being met and that children are able to access the curriculum whatever their needs. Progress in meeting the targets is regularly recorded. The views of parents are sought and they are involved in the targets set for all children at each stage of the register of special educational needs.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

39. The view of parents and carers of the school is that it is an excellent school which cares deeply for their children. The quality of the partnership between themselves and the school is also excellent and is a real strength of the school.
40. The school considers the partnership between it and parents to be of the utmost importance and consistent efforts are made to involve parents in all aspects of school life and in supporting their children at home. The provision of a parents' room is much appreciated and well used. A number of parents act as volunteers in the school including as lunchtime supervisors and during each Friday mathematics based fun day. Parents are also involved in the successful fund-raising for the school.
41. The level of information given to parents, including a settling-in booklet, attractive prospectus and regular newsletters is very good. Parents are kept informed of their children's progress through parents' evenings and well written reports. Many parents commented on how the school strives to help each individual child to accomplish as much as they are able. Parents are encouraged to meet with teachers should they have any queries or should problems arise.
42. At the meeting with parents and when interviewed, they all spoke highly of the quality of relationships between themselves and the staff and expressed appreciation of the accessibility of staff and their openness and approachability.
43. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and home is good. Reading books are made available for parents to use with their children at home. A number of parents said how much they appreciated the 'golden rules' on behaviour used in the school which they felt able to follow at home. Regular procedures are in place for taking parents' views into consideration and keeping them informed about the curriculum.
44. Support for children with special educational needs is very good with parents being kept fully involved. They are also kept well informed of their child's progress.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

45. The school is led and managed very well, overall. The headteacher has been in post since

September 1999 and has been notably successful in communicating her very clear education direction and philosophy. With the management committee she has set appropriate priorities and targets for the school, she has been successful in managing the pace of change sensitively. She has established a strong team ethic with the experienced and well-established school staff including class teacher, nursery nurses and support staff, in which every one is valued. The team's shared commitment to improvement, to the promotion of high standards of teaching and learning and the caring school ethos is very evident and is having significant impact on the progress the children make, as is the high level of discussion promoted by the Head teacher, regarding planning, assessment and evaluation of practice and outcomes. The school is now well placed to continue its development. The school gives good value for money.

46. The school has very clear and well-expressed aims and values which underpin all documents and practice. Many of the documents are newly produced, but reflect the very good practice in the school and establish the process of evaluation and further development. At the heart of the school's philosophy is the development and nurturing of the children's personal and social development and this is evident through the excellent relationships between all groups in the school, including those with parents and with the school's management committee. The outcomes are clearly evident in the children's positive and eager attitudes to learning, their willingness, consistently encouraged, to listen, be involved and tolerate each other and in the parents' delight in and affection for the school. Provision for children with special educational needs is very well managed and the school has an excellent and inclusive policy towards equal opportunities.
47. The management's response to the key issues of the last inspection has been positive. There has been significant improvement in the current academic year in response to the excellent targets for improvement. Monitoring of teaching is now very well addressed and directed through appraisal and school development commitment to training. This is effectively underpinned by the improvements in the daily organisation of the Nursery during this year. The regular movement between class bases and the taking on responsibility for units of work, enable staff to develop their professional skills, share expertise and good practice with colleagues, respond to the learning needs of the children and evaluate the success of their teaching as a team. Improvements in subject knowledge in, for example, information technology is having a direct effect on the standards the children are achieving and in raising awareness of all staff by working alongside less confident colleagues. There are areas for development, for example the raising of staff's knowledge in the effective use of available equipment to ensure the progressive development of children's gross motor skills, which are acknowledged by the school in the school development plan in the forthcoming training focus. Staffing levels are satisfactory and staff are deployed very effectively. Induction procedures for new staff and students are detailed and useful.
48. The appointed members of the management committee (Board of Trustees) are committed and knowledgeable about the unique role and responsibilities under which they operate. They have been dynamic in their negotiations with the local authority regarding the implications of the change of status in 1999 from a direct grant school with charity status to being coordinated by the local education authority. Statutory requirements of their present status are fulfilled. The management committee have also been eager to embrace the principles of good governance and to this end have extended their brief to include all aspects including the principles of best value of comparison, challenge and consultation in their very good management and use of the resources at their disposal. Financial management and planning for the future development of the school are very well documented and are audited by the Charity Commissioners annually. Spending is well matched to the priorities of the school development plan, which is costed effectively and includes the raising and spending of funds for the improvements to the building and grounds planned for summer 2000. Spending is also very effective in supporting the aims of raising standards of teaching, curriculum development and the progress children make.
49. A number of members of the committee are effective in the day to day life of the school. One committee member has taken responsibility for reporting special educational needs issues to the committee and the school manages special educational needs and the equality of access to the curriculum very well. All aspects of the Code of Practice have been addressed. The committee are

well informed and are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses and realistic about the targets for improvement; many have been involved for considerable lengths of time, but are up to date with their understanding of curriculum developments, for example the emphasis on literacy and numeracy learning and the introduction of the early learning goals and in their expectations of standards and progress. They are supportive of the new headteacher's enthusiasm and management style and monitor the school and its provision effectively.

50. The school has a sufficient range of learning resources to support the effective delivery of the curriculum for under fives, except for physical education. There are good resources for information and communication technology and there are plans to submit a bid to the National Grid for Learning to enable both classrooms to be connected to the Internet. The bid includes provision of a digital camera and special "whiteboard" for children to use with the computer. A scanner has been ordered through the link with the business partnership. The office and staffroom are already linked to the Internet and this will provide for staff training. There is a good range of software and concept keyboards are available for which staff make overlays to link with language and literacy development. There are currently no programmable toys to enhance mathematical development through practical application of early mathematical skills.
51. The inadequacy of provision for outdoor play and physical development identified in the previous report remains a weakness. However, plans have been approved to landscape and create an outdoor play environment. Funding is now available to build a climbing structure which will be accessible all year round, although there is not, as yet, sufficient funding for the whole project.
52. The accommodation is secure and generally adequate for the numbers and ages of the children even though storage space is somewhat limited. It is satisfactorily maintained, overall. The indoor areas are very clean and tidy and staff have ensured that the school is bright with colourful, accomplished and attractive displays celebrating the children's achievements and enhancing the stimulating learning environment.
53. New developments are planned and these include the upgrading and relocation of the bathroom facilities and the creation of an additional classroom. Provision for children with physical disabilities is also included, as is necessary outside maintenance work to the external woodwork and windows and the upgrading of the grounds and the playground area. Funds have been identified for these improvements and plans approved.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to improve further the school should now consider the following areas and implement the plans already in place in the school development plan:
- a. Raise the children's achievement in aspects of physical development by improving teacher's expertise and their awareness of health and safety issues relating to the use of space and equipment (paragraphs 8, 19, 47, 66);
  - b. Refine the existing planning strategies to include:
    - i) the continued use of short term planning sheets to ensure focus on learning aims and objectives (paragraphs 10, 18);
    - ii) recording observations of children's experiences (who did it and when) to enhance the recording of children's patterns of chosen activities and to give a clear profile of experience (paragraphs 10, 62);
  - c. Meet the planned developments for the improvement of the school buildings and grounds to enhance children's opportunities for reflective and quiet play in a secure outdoor play space and raise attainment, particularly in the physical development area of learning (paragraphs 34, 51, 53).

### Minor improvements:

- improve the opportunities for the children to use, apply and extend their number and mathematical knowledge (paragraphs 8, 22, 50, 58);
- improve the book and role play resources to reflect the school's improved celebration of cultural diversity (paragraph 28);
- improve opportunities for reflection (paragraphs 9, 25); and
- implement the planned development of closer links with feeder schools to ensure smooth transition between phases (paragraph 23).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 29 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 14 |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0         | 34        | 55   | 6            | 3              | 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) | 65      |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals        | 10      |

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 | 7       |

#### English as an additional language

|   | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 6            |

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

|  | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 0            |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 0            |

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

|             | % |
|-------------|---|
| School data |   |

#### Unauthorised absence

|             | % |
|-------------|---|
| School data |   |

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) | 2    |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 32.5 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 6   |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 161 |

|                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 9.3 |
|--------------------------------|-----|

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Financial information**

|                |      |
|----------------|------|
| Financial year | 1999 |
|----------------|------|

|  | £     |
|--|-------|
| Total income                               | 5,704 |
| Total expenditure                          | 5,704 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 88    |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 0     |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 0     |

*Non-delegated budget*

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 65 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 63 |

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 84             | 16            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 78             | 22            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 79             | 21            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 22             | 17            | 5                | 2                 | 8          |
| The teaching is good.  | 83             | 17            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 65             | 29            | 5                | 0                 | 2          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 86             | 14            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 56             | 35            | 2                | 0                 | 2          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 75             | 22            | 2                | 0                 | 2          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 86             | 14            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 78             | 17            | 2                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 54             | 25            | 5                | 0                 | 5          |

### **Summary of parents' and carers' responses**

The parents and carers respond positively to the school, its aims and ethos; their affection for the school is evident from the replies to the parents' questionnaire and at the parents' meeting. The team endorses the parents' positive comments and also their concerns regarding the resources outside. The amounts of "work" the children do at home is appropriate to their ages and stage of learning.

## **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**

55. Baseline assessment shows a full range of attainment, including higher attaining children. They enter the school with levels of attainment broadly in line with those expected, although there is lower attainment on entry in some aspects of language and literacy and personal and particularly social development. The children make good progress, overall, including those with special educational needs and are working well towards reaching the Desirable Learning Outcomes/ Early Learning Goals by the time they reach statutory school age at 5. Standards are above levels expected in language and literacy, mathematics and in particular in personal and social development. They are in line with levels expected in all other areas of learning with the exception of information technology (within knowledge and understanding) which is above levels expected. Standards have improved in mathematics, personal and social education and information technology since the last inspection.

#### **Personal and social and emotional development**

56. There is excellent provision for the children's personal and social and emotional development because it is given very high priority. The teachers and support staff work very well together as a team to ensure that the two nursery classes provide a safe and secure environment. The children have very positive attitudes to work and persevere at tasks for long periods. They relate well to adults and to each other and work together happily in groups and with their friends. Routines are reinforced so that children are sure of when the different daily activities will take place. They understand that it is necessary to take turns and share equipment. For example, following a group lesson on using a new computer program, they understand that they must wait until it is their turn to practise. They are attentive in class and group sessions, such as listening to a story, or during the introduction to a new activity and are confident to ask questions and express their ideas. They demonstrate a high level of independence in managing their personal hygiene, organising themselves in, for example, the morning routine of putting away their book-bags and in their conduct during lunch. They understand the school's "golden rules" and show in discussion that they know why it is necessary to be kind and play together.
57. Teaching in this area is very good. The teachers and support staff have consistently high expectations of children's behaviour and are themselves positive role models. They provide a very good balance between supported activities and provision which enables children to develop autonomy and independence. Very good and appropriate moments are taken for children to review the work they have done, or to enter into a discussion on moral or spiritual issues, by, for example, asking, "what have you enjoyed doing this morning?" The lunchtime routine is a particularly effective time for the development of independence and positive social interaction. Children with special educational needs for emotional and behavioural reasons are encouraged, through the setting of small achievable targets, to make progress.

#### **Language and literacy**

58. In language and literacy, the majority of children make good progress through their time in the nursery and of these children most are well in line to meet the targets of the desirable learning objectives/early learning goals on entry to statutory schooling. The school responds to their individual needs well. Children listen attentively to songs and rhymes, to adults in teaching situations and to each other when working or playing together. The children are confident to talk about their experiences and share their interest in their learning, in small groups and to the whole group. Examples are the developing vocabulary "smooth, shiny, prickly, bumpy" when describing articles through the magnifying glasses or in sharing sessions at the end of literacy sessions or "circle" times, in music and in art. Children express their thoughts and feelings clearly, for example in a discussion about the ethos of sharing through the rainbow fish story or what makes them happy or sad. Role-play opportunities are used well, for example through the hospital reception area and

the writing areas in the role play areas and class bases although opportunities to extend mathematical language are not fully exploited. Books are well loved and are used carefully in both nursery bases. Children listen very attentively to stories and rhymes and appreciate illustrations for example in the story "The non-bike race". Children have favourite characters and can name them, relating some of their characteristics, for example, the "Rainbow fish". They listen carefully and understand their tasks. They retell stories increasingly accurately in fair sequence and are helped towards this, for example, through a drama of the Three Little Pigs. Children are well aware that pictures and words have meaning and many children are making good progress, recognising rhymes, knowing their own names, recognising familiar letters in text and predicting story endings. These children are at the very beginning of amassing a bank of known sounds and letters of the alphabet and are beginning to write confidently. The majority of children are making good progress throughout the language and literacy elements of the curriculum. Teaching in the language and literacy element of the curriculum is never less than good and often very good. This is reflected in the secure knowledge and good planning of the literacy curriculum. Teachers and nursery nurses are confident and provide consistently good role models for all the children, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, in developing language and love of books. Questioning is skilful and extends children's thinking and opportunities for response, developing their conversation and social language very well. The range of activities and opportunities provided by the staff enable the children to communicate, listen and begin to enjoy words as communication both in writing and orally. Children enjoy activities and learning in this area and their responses are positive and sustained.

### **Mathematical development**

59. There is effective development of children's mathematical understanding through the provision of a wide range of mathematical and related activities. At the age of four, children are in line to reach the Early Learning Goals before entry to statutory schooling. The majority of children can sort, order and match objects and recognise and recreate patterns of objects. Water and sand play experiences develop their understanding of size, weight and capacity. They are beginning to name and recognise shapes. The majority of children can count to five and more able children can count to ten and beyond. Planned experiences develop numeracy skills. For example, a computer programme, in which they have to place the correct number of animals in a field provides the opportunity to reinforce counting skills; and a playground game in which children collect different numbers of fish provides the introduction to simple addition. Children are keen to participate in mathematical and number activities. They like to show what they know and are eager to share their knowledge with adults and other children. All children enjoy and join in number rhymes and songs.
60. The quality of teaching is good. New ideas and activities are clearly introduced ~~so~~ that children understand the learning objectives of the task. There is very good attention to the introduction of new vocabulary and concepts and teachers and support assistants take every opportunity to develop children's mathematical understanding in their interaction with children. For example, when making bird cakes, children were invited to estimate how many more spoonfuls of seed were needed. There is good attention to the different levels of ability, so that tasks and expectations meet the needs of all children and enable those with special educational needs to develop in line with their ability. However, stimulating experiences for children to use their new mathematical knowledge are not fully developed.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

61. There is satisfactory development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world and good progress in the use of information and communication technology. Overall, children are in line to reach the levels expected on entry to statutory schooling. They observe and experiment with toys and classroom equipment to find out how they work and experiment with construction material to produce imaginative and creative models. They explore the outside environment and study the changes in the weather and the effect on nature of the changes in the seasons. They observe changes in materials through cooking experiences. In making bird cakes, in which seeds are added

to melted fat, they predict what will happen and how many spoonfuls are needed to absorb all the fat. A sense of history is developed through sharing family experiences and sequencing the events in their lives. The direct experience of meeting and observing young animals through visiting a farm, and having animals in the classrooms teaches them about what animals need to live. They learn about the wider world through comparing these animals with those in the book *Handa's Surprise*. Children show a very real interest and curiosity. Photographic evidence shows that they respect and care for the animals they observe. They sustain their interest in using construction material, and persevere to achieve effective products. Regular opportunities to use computers and the provision of a range of stimulating programmes ensure the good development of the skills of mouse control and use of cursor and recognition of icons. They are enthusiastic users of the computer and treat the equipment with care. They share and take turns well.

62. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, although the teaching in the information technology element is very good. There is provision of a good range of interesting activities. Teachers and support assistants use effective questioning to direct children's attention and to encourage them to think about the activity and outcomes. Opportunities for children to explore the outdoor environment through first hand experiences, such as digging in the soil, investigating small creatures, conducting outdoor experiments are somewhat limited through the lack of garden or wild life area. While there are a number of good opportunities for children to investigate and experiment, this is not matched by the regular practice of children recording their activities and observations. There are no programmable toys to support learning.

### **Creative development**

63. Attainment in creative development is in line with expected levels at this age. The children make good progress in the use of colour and texture in their paintings and pictures. They represent elements of a story effectively in paint and are enthusiastically engaged in collaborative and individual work. They observe artists' work closely and make careful and often effective attempts to represent their work in artists' style, for example, through the skilful teaching and encouragement of work of Klee, Mondrian and Pollock. They make increasingly successful and functional models, using the construction kits.
64. In music, children sing with confidence and enjoyment from their growing repertoire of remembered songs. They play untuned instruments with care and attention to pulse and are remarkably self-disciplined in their response to the nursery nurse's conducting. Teaching of the art and music elements is never less than good and is often very good. Teachers and support staff are knowledgeable and confident and communicate their own enthusiasm for art and music with the children. They use praise most effectively and demonstrate skills very well. Examples are well controlled and tuneful singing and in well shared observations and techniques in art. Their high expectations of behaviour enable the children to organise themselves and are having significant impact on their learning in the creative area of development. Children's work is detailed and carefully executed; they are beginning to learn good practices and techniques, for example, of paint mixing. Children respond very well to these elements of their learning.

### **Physical development**

65. There are good opportunities for children to develop the skills needed to handle tools and equipment. The development of skills and confidence in, for example, skills of throwing and catching, and large equipment for climbing and balancing is less well promoted, so that children are unlikely to meet the early learning goals. Although they are confident to climb and balance, skills are not progressively developed through teaching. There are many opportunities for children to develop fine motor skills and they handle pencils, crayons, paint brushes, scissors and other tools and materials safely. They show good co-ordination and control in building with construction material. They follow instructions for dance and movement activities and know that they need to stay in a space so that they will not bump each other. They play outside with bats and balls and use a range of wheeled vehicles safely in a limited outdoor space.

66. While the quality of teaching for the development of fine motor skills is good, the small amount of teaching seen for gross motor skills is unsatisfactory. Indoor space restrictions make it difficult to set up safe but challenging activities in which children can move with imagination and control. The playground is unsuitable; the asphalted area is small and there is no provision for large equipment. Where physical gross motor control activities are provided on the timetable, there is insufficient adult intervention to develop skills and unsatisfactory attention to safety. In the one lesson observed in the classroom where a climbing frame and other equipment was used, the children did not undress or change their shoes. There was no warm-up activity, nor were children encouraged to think about the effects of exercise. Children were not encouraged or challenged to meet the objectives of the lesson which were to move in different ways over the apparatus. At times, the equipment was overcrowded and, overall, this was not a safe environment for children to develop physically. The school acknowledges this as an area for development and training is identified as a priority in the school development plan.