

INSPECTION REPORT

BREARLEY NURSERY SCHOOL

Newtown, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103121

Headteacher: Mrs S Bennett

Reporting inspector: Mrs K Forsyth
12626

Dates of inspection: 27th to 29th March 2000

Inspection number: 187780

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	LEA Maintained School
Age range of pupils:	3 to 4 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Brearley Street Newtown Birmingham
Postcode:	B19 3XJ
Telephone number:	0121 359 2309
Fax number:	0121 359 7296
Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Date of previous inspection:	15 th January 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Kathryn Forsyth	Registered inspector	English as an Additional Language Mathematics Knowledge and understanding of the world Creative development	What sort of school is it? The schools' results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Janet Garland	Lay inspector	Equal Opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Glynis Wood	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs Personal and Social Development Language and Literacy Physical Development	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Schools' Inspection Agency
Education Development Unit
St Martin's College
Rydal Road
Ambleside
Cumbria
LA22 9BB

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House

33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 8
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	9 - 11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	11 - 12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	12 - 13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	14
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	14 - 15
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	16
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	17 - 19
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	20 - 26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Brearley Nursery School is located in the Newtown area of Birmingham, approximately one mile from the city centre. There has been extensive renovation and enhancement of the area. The school is currently part of the Aston and Nechells Education Action Zone. The housing is mainly of 1960s tower blocks and maisonettes with recent additions of some shared ownership housing. The majority of children come from the immediate area. However, an increasing number come from some distance. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average.

The school serves a multi-cultural population. The majority of pupils are of black-Caribbean heritage with a significant number of mixed heritage and white European children. Other groups include Indian, Pakistani, Vietnamese and African children. There are 104 children in the nursery, 53 boys and 51 girls. All children attend on a full-time basis. The percentage of children identified as having special educational needs is above the national average.

There have been a number of changes since the time of the last inspection. These include the appointment of a new headteacher and the school has taken responsibility for some aspects of its budget.

Assessments on entry show that many children enter the nursery with a low level of attainment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Brearley Nursery School is an outstanding school that provides high quality learning experiences for young children. Standards have improved since the time of the last inspection. Children achieve exceptionally well and attain standards above the expectations for children of their age. Teaching is very good. Staff have a very good understanding of the needs of children and provide exciting and purposeful activities which take account of children's interests. Partnerships with parents are a strength of the school. There is a strong culture of mutual respect between school and home. Children and their families are valued unconditionally. The school is exceptionally well led and managed for the benefit of the children. All staff share a common purpose and put children and their achievements first.

What the school does well

- Children achieve exceptionally well in personal and social skills, mathematics, language and literacy, information technology and art.
- There is a high proportion of very good and excellent teaching.
- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership.
- Assessments of children's achievements are very well used to inform teaching.
- The school's procedures for checking how well it is doing are excellent and have improved standards and teaching.
- The school has a very strong partnership with parents.
- The curriculum is exciting, purposeful and takes account of the needs and interests of young children
- Staff know the children very well and appreciate the individuality of children.
- Children love school.

What could be improved

- More opportunities for music to be used to enhance children's creative development.

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

The school has many strengths. There are no areas of major weakness, but there is one minor point for consideration to improve provision further.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in January 1996. The school has improved standards and continued to improve the quality of teaching and learning for all children. It has developed and extended the successful partnership with parents and plans are in place to extend this partnership throughout the local community. The school has introduced a 'well-being' project that has been

successful in improving social development for all children. Development work continues on the provision for outdoor play. The school grounds have been improved to provide a high quality outdoor classroom. The nursery received a National Primary Award in 1998 for the quality of its outdoor environment. The school has been successful and continues its work with parents to ensure that children attend school from 9am until 3pm each day. The school development plan has been improved and appropriate priorities are clearly identified and costed.

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	B
other areas of the curriculum	B

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

Most children start nursery with very limited skills. The school provides high quality education that ensures children achieve exceptionally well. Most children are likely to attain above the expected goals for children of their age, in all areas of learning, by the time they leave the school. Children with special educational needs are identified at an early stage and receive very good support within school to ensure they make very good progress in their learning. For those children who speak English as an additional language, thorough assessments are carried out and these inform the type of support required. These children make very good progress in their learning and use of the English language.

Personal and social development is a strength of the school and children achieve well. Most children are confident and establish effective relationships with other children and adults. Many are able to concentrate and persevere even though they may find some activities challenging. In one class, children made their own sandwiches for a bear hunt. Many struggled in using knives to butter and cut the bread, but with careful support from the staff and perseverance they all managed to do it for themselves.

The development of language and communication are central to the work of the school. Children enjoy books and many choose to share books and look at books whenever the opportunity arises. Many children recognise their name and know the initial letter and sound of their name. Children see writing as purposeful and most are confident in using symbols, familiar words and letters to communicate meaning.

In mathematics, the teachers and nursery nurses provide very well matched work to the needs of individual children and this encourages high achievement. Through practical activities, children understand and record numbers. Children frequently use numbers in their play and in conversations with other children.

The standards children achieve in information technology and art are high. They are confident in using computers, tape recorders and a range of materials and tools in their work. In art, children are quick to master the techniques and use them in their own work.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children's attitudes are excellent. Children come to school happily, look forward to their day and concentrate on tasks as soon as they arrive.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. There is a spirit of co-operation and friendly play throughout the school.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Children work together with minimal supervision and they behave in a mature way. Children are allowed time to grapple with difficult tasks, such as serving spaghetti at lunchtime, and persevere until they are successful. Relationships between staff and children and between children are exemplary.

Attendance	Very good. Parents are conscientious about bringing their children to school and providing an explanation if they are absent.
------------	---

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Lessons seen overall	Very 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.

There is a significant amount of excellent teaching. One lesson in every five is excellent and seven out of every ten lessons are good or better. One lesson in every ten is satisfactory. No lesson is less than satisfactory. The nursery nurses make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching in the school.

All staff with a teaching commitment have a very good understanding of how young children learn, and this knowledge is used well when planning activities. The teachers and nursery nurses keep very detailed records and photographic evidence of the children's work and experiences at different stages of completion. This is used effectively by teachers to re-visit experiences with children in order to clarify, deepen and strengthen understanding. Staff plan for activities that are based on what children find interesting, stimulating, puzzling or challenging. This ensures that activities are meaningful and children are highly motivated to take part in activities provided. The good quality displays convey to children that their efforts, intentions and ideas are taken seriously. This has a significant impact on the children's attitudes to school and their work. Children are confident and keen to ask questions and are always keen to do their best.

Teachers and nursery nurses listen very carefully to children. They take time with children and, through good planning and skilful intervention, encourage children to take part and learn effectively. Activities are always well structured and classrooms are well organised to support children in being independent. Staff promote a secure and positive ethos in classrooms which ensures children's achievements flourish.

The teaching of language, literacy and mathematics is very good. Activities set in these areas of learning are always purposeful and often exciting. The environment is steeped in language, literacy and mathematics and children are frequently seen using and exploring books, writing and number.

The teaching of personal and social development is very good. A particular strength is the use of the assessment information on children's well-being to support a structured approach to achieve the successful social and emotional development of vulnerable children.

The teaching of art is excellent as children are taught skills and techniques well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is well structured and takes accounts of children's needs and interests. Activities are purposeful and rich in first hand experiences. Appropriate emphasis is given to personal and social development, language, literacy and mathematics. School visits are very well used to support learning. There are few opportunities for children to express themselves through music.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Staff know the children very well and plan effectively for each child's individual learning requirements. The school responds quickly to any area of particular difficulty. The school has very good links with external agencies that support children with special needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Some staff at the school speak a number of different languages and opportunities are provided for children to develop and use their home language in their play and learning. Learning opportunities are well planned to help children develop their English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. This area of learning is given high priority. Staff plan activities and provide an environment which ensures the children are valued and held in high esteem.
How well the school cares for	The school provides a safe, stimulating and caring environment where

its pupils	each child is unconditionally valued. The monitoring of academic progress and personal development is excellent. Detailed records of children are used effectively to support further learning and development.
------------	---

The school has built a very strong partnership with parents. There is great pride in the school locally.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is exceptionally well led and managed for the benefit of the children. The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher give very strong educational direction for the school. Teamwork is a strong and highly effective feature of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	There is no governing body.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has excellent systems for evaluating how well it is doing. All staff are constantly reflecting critically on what they can do to improve teaching and provision in the school.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes the best use of all its available resources to promote high quality experiences for the children. The school's spending relates directly to priorities for improvement and benefit for the children.

The school is well staffed by teachers, nursery nurses and learning support assistants who have appropriate qualifications and training for working with young children. The staff at the school have made very good use of high quality professional training.

The accommodation is very good and is used effectively to promote learning. The school environment, both inside and outdoors, is given high priority. It provides the structure for learning within which children explore, investigate, and make decisions for themselves. Learning resources are very good.

The local education authority is responsible for most aspects of the school's budget. The school budgets well for areas of spending for which it has responsibility. Spending decisions relate directly to priorities for improvement and benefit for children.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School is very welcoming Teaching is very good Children like coming to school Children's profiles that give a clear picture of the good progress children make in school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no areas about which parents are unhappy

The inspection team agrees with the comments made by parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Most children start nursery with very limited skills. The school provides high quality education that ensures children achieve exceptionally well. Most children are likely to attain above the expected goals for children of their age in all areas of learning by the time they leave the school. Children with special educational needs are identified at an early stage and receive very good support within school to ensure they make very good progress in their learning. For those children who speak English as an additional language, thorough assessments are carried out and these inform the type of support required. These children make very good progress in their learning and use of the English language.
2. Personal and social development is a strength of the nursery. Most children quickly gain in confidence and establish effective relationships with adults and other children. They demonstrate independence in selecting activities in their classroom, in dressing for physical education and personal hygiene. The children's ability to persevere and complete tasks to the best of their ability is a notable feature of the work seen in class. The school's monitoring of children's well-being is a significant factor in supporting the development of individual children in this aspect of learning.
3. The development of children's language and communication skills are central to the work of the nursery and children achieve exceptionally well. Children enjoy books and many choose to share books and look at books whenever the opportunity arises. Many children recognise their name and know the initial letter and sound of their name. Children see writing as purposeful and most are confident in using symbols, familiar words and letters to communicate meaning.
4. Children achieve well in mathematics and many are likely to attain standards that are above average. Mathematics is often used by children as an integral part of activities inside and outside the classroom. Most children recognise and use numbers to 10 and many are familiar with larger numbers from their everyday lives. Many children use mathematical language, such as circle, square, triangle, behind, in front of, bigger than and more to describe shape, position, size and quantity. Some children are confident in naming three-dimensional shapes such as cuboid, cube and sphere. Children are keen and excited in finding out the names of such shapes. The school has identified a group of children who have the potential for high attainment in mathematics. This group receive appropriately challenging work and make very good progress.
5. In knowledge and understanding of the world, children achieve well and many are likely to attain standards that are above those expected for children of this age. Most children talk confidently about where they live, their environment and their families. The school has very strong links with parents and carers of the children and these are well used to support this area of learning. The nursery provides many opportunities for children to experience visits into the environment. These visits ensure that children explore and become familiar with living things, objects and events in the natural and man-made world. Children are confident users of both the tape recorder and computer. Most children can operate a mouse on the computer and understand the meanings of the words cursor, keyboard and monitor. Children have access to tape

recorders in all teaching areas and many choose to listen to pre-recorded stories. Most children can operate the play, rewind and fast forward buttons.

6. The standard of work in the area of physical development is above average. All children are likely to attain the desirable learning outcomes in this area of learning by the time they reach compulsory schooling at five years of age. Children move confidently and imaginatively, they follow basic safety rules and generally avoid collisions when moving around. They are well co-ordinated and use space effectively. The variety of climbing apparatus enables children to work at their own level, the trim trail providing necessary challenge for the more able.
7. Children are very good at handling small tools such as scissors, pens, pencils, paintbrushes and cutters. They use malleable materials such as clay, and know how to use 'slip'. They use the cutters as required and are encouraged to observe carefully and think about shapes used. There are many opportunities for using construction resources. They are able to join, build, balance and adapt, as they need. Children challenge each other and compare heights of towers and, using problem solving skills, work out how additional pieces of equipment can be added without the construction collapsing. There are many other opportunities for children to develop hand-eye co-ordination skills through jigsaws, matching games, fastening and unfastening coats and using knives, forks and spoons at lunch times.
8. Children's achievements in art are of a very high standard and this is due to the excellent teaching in this area of learning. In art work, children produce high quality work in colour mixing and in clay modelling. They are confident in using a range of materials and tools in their work. In clay work, children are taught scoring techniques and ways of moulding the clay in order to make it thinner. Children are quick to master the techniques and use them in their own work. Teachers are very effective in questioning children to encourage them to look closely at their work and to make improvements if they feel it is appropriate. The opportunities for imaginative play are very good and children respond well by using their imagination and working well together in pairs or in small groups.
9. Stories are an important part of the school day. Stories are always well read and used effectively to encourage children to listen, observe and use their imagination. Stories such as 'We're going on a bearhunt' are used in many different ways to stimulate children's imagination. In one class, children organised their own bearhunt. This experience was magical for the children. They organised what they needed to take, made their own sandwiches and planned their route. The children's response to the activity was excellent: all the children were excited, involved and communicated their ideas and feelings in lots of different creative ways.
10. There were limited dance and musical activities observed during the inspection. All classrooms had a selection of musical instruments and taped music available. A few children selected these activities, although most children did not stay at these activities for any sustained period of time. One group of children listened to the music of Peter and the Wolf with their teacher and nursery nurse. Most children copied the movements of the adults, but the activity was not extended for children to express their ideas or communicate their feelings.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes to school are excellent. Even the youngest pupils come to school

happily, looking forward to their day and concentrate on their tasks as soon as they arrive.

12. The behaviour shown in classes, in independent work and in the playground is very good. Pupils respond very well to the school's careful approach to their likes and dislikes and a spirit of co-operation and friendly play is evident throughout the school.
13. Personal development is also excellent. Pupils work in pairs at the computer with minimal supervision. They are absorbed in interesting observations and problem solving and they show that they can behave in a mature way, looking after the equipment they use and tidying away afterwards. Pupils are allowed time to grapple with difficult tasks, such as serving themselves with spaghetti at lunchtime, and they persevere until they are successful. Their views are sought on all sorts of subjects and they are able to voice an opinion.
14. The relationships both between pupils and between staff and pupils are exemplary, and pupils from different backgrounds play and work together in harmony. Pupils are shown how their actions affect others and respond very well.
15. Attendance is very good, and parents are conscientious about bringing their children to school and providing an explanation if they are absent.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. There is a significant amount of excellent teaching. One lesson in every five is excellent and seven out of every ten lessons are good or better. One lesson in every ten is satisfactory. No lessons are less than satisfactory. The nursery nurses make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching in the school.
17. All staff with a teaching commitment have a very good understanding of how young children learn, and this knowledge is used well when planning activities. All staff have very high expectations for the children. The teachers and nursery nurses keep very detailed records and photographic evidence of the children's work and experiences at different stages of completion. This information provides very good quality documentation of the children's experience and efforts, which is displayed around the school. This is used effectively by teachers to re-visit experiences with children in order to clarify, deepen and strengthen understanding. It also encourages the staff to plan future work based on the evaluation of work as it progresses. Planning decisions are based on children's responses to previous work covered that the children have found interesting, stimulating, puzzling or challenging. This ensures that activities are meaningful and children are highly motivated to take part in activities provided. The good quality displays convey to children that their efforts, intentions and ideas are taken seriously. This has a significant impact on the children's attitudes to school and their work. Children are confident and keen to ask questions and are always keen to do their best.
18. Teachers and nursery nurses listen very carefully to children. They take time with children and, through good planning and skilful intervention, encourage children to take part and learn effectively. Skills such as cutting and folding, as well as specialised techniques such as using slip in clay work are taught well. Children who struggle initially in learning such skills are sensitively coached so that they are

eventually able to manage for themselves. Activities are always well structured and classrooms are well organised to support children in being independent. Staff promote a secure and positive ethos in classrooms which ensures children's achievements flourish.

19. The teaching of language and literacy and mathematics is very good. The environment is steeped in language, literacy and mathematics and children are frequently seen using and exploring books, writing and number. Activities set in these areas of learning are always purposeful and often exciting. Staff are very good role models and make best use of all day-to-day activities to promote language and number. Children listen carefully to the adults they work with and copy the language they use. Stories are very well used to stimulate children's imagination and develop aspects of learning. The work emerging from the story of the bear hunt was of a very high quality. The children were engrossed in the story and extremely excited about organising their own bear hunt.
20. The teaching of personal and social development is very good. A particular strength is the use of the assessment information on children's well-being to support a structured approach to achieving the successful social and emotional development of vulnerable children. The very positive approach to behaviour ensures that children are developing an effective understanding of the difference between right and wrong.
21. The teaching of art is excellent. Staff have very high but realistic expectations for the children. Children are taught a number of techniques such as colour mixing and various techniques associated with clay work. Teachers are very effective in questioning children to encourage them to look closely at their work and improve if they feel it is appropriate. In the clay activity seen, the teacher encouraged both the child modelling the clay and the child who was the model to evaluate the clay face and suggest improvements. This was very effective as both children agreed that the model face would be better if some small adjustments were made to the eyes.
22. Opportunities to observe music were limited. However, lesson observations and analysis of teachers' planning reveals that this aspect of learning is not always fully explored to promote the development of children's imagination.

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

23. The school is effective in covering the six areas of learning in the curriculum for children under five. Activities set are very good, interesting and motivating and promote high standards of attainment. The curriculum focuses appropriately on personal and social development, language and literacy and mathematics. Resources and accommodation, both internal and external, enrich the curriculum. The exciting literate environment stimulates children's learning. The school is highly successful in creating a positive atmosphere in which children feel secure, valued and appropriately challenged.
24. The provision for personal and social education is very good and is a strength of the nursery. The nursery gives this very high priority across the curriculum. The philosophy and ethos of the nursery is carried out in practice, valuing children, teachers, support staff, parents and carers and the wider community. Children are encouraged to be independent learners. Classroom organisation, which includes

accessible and well-labelled resource storage, further encourages independence and initiative. The equal opportunities policy is very well implemented. Behaviour is very good. Children are developing an understanding of the difference between right and wrong and staff take time to explain the reasons why some behaviour is unacceptable and the impact it has on others. Children listen carefully and respond well to this.

25. There were limited musical activities observed during the inspection. Analysis of planning shows that this area of learning does have such a high profile as others. Musical activities are not always sufficiently extended in order for children to express their ideas or communicated their feelings.
26. Extra-curricular provision is very good. It includes local visits into the community and beyond, developing education and business partnerships to ensure that both parties benefit. For example, the education staff at the castle and zoo will come into school to talk to the children, and nursery staff will take the children's work to the castle and zoo centre and will create displays for the benefit of other users. The nursery also takes children on an annual residential visit to a farm. This visit is for five days and is managed by the nursery staff. Mid-week the nursery organises a mini-bus to take parents and carers to the farm for an evening visit. Whilst the children are asleep, the parents look around the farm, thus enabling them to make full use of their children's experiences in discussion on their return.
27. The links with the community are strong and continue to develop. The 'Stay and Play' provision for those children under 4 years of age is held once a week in the community room, and is managed by a nursery nurse. Activities are provided for children and parents. This is well received by parents and carers and clearly enjoyed by the children, many of whom have brothers and sisters or cousins in the nursery.
28. A toy and book lending library is co-ordinated by the acting deputy headteacher. This is well supported by two parents who run the service. Another parent has set up a database for the recording of toy and book loans. All children who attend the nursery have access to this service, and although it is expected that parents or carers will attend with their child to choose a toy or book, should they be unable to attend a member of staff will accompany the child. The lending library is also available to those outside the nursery.
29. The nursery staff run workshops for parents, for example, 'Making Playdough'. Parents found this not only enjoyable but also very practical, and felt positive and supported in knowing how they can use it to support their child's learning.
30. The nursery has Internet access and its own 'home page'. At present, this is in limited use, but it is planned to be used to contact children in other nurseries, as well as using it to further support children's learning and skill development.
31. The links with other schools and colleges, including initial teacher training colleges, are strong and are seen by all parties as mutually beneficial. The nursery hosts a number of students and is also involved in projects with college tutors. The school has very good links with colleges through involvement in the 'well-being' project and Effective Early Learning Project. This involvement has supported professional development of staff and supported improvements to teaching.
32. Children's emotional, moral, social and cultural development are well promoted. Staff value children's contributions in discussions and in recorded work. They listen to

them with genuine interest. Children are developing an understanding of right and wrong and are sensitive to the needs of others. The nursery values family cultures and faiths and includes this in the curriculum. Spiritual development is good. The school ensures that time is allocated for children to reflect on special moments and celebrate a variety of religious festivals.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school provides a safe, stimulating and caring environment for pupils and has academic achievement at the forefront of its philosophy. The monitoring of academic progress and personal development is excellent, with detailed records kept on each child. Child protection procedures are well known and managed and health and safety precautions are very good.
34. Educational and personal support is likewise excellent, with teachers knowing the children well, and all staff, including lunchtime supervisors and the indispensable caretaker, subscribing to the school's excellent ethos.
35. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good, and parents are well aware of the school's expectations.
36. The rules of behaviour are well known and well practised by the teachers and nursery nurses, who guide pupils in an unobtrusive way, creating a happy atmosphere.
37. Procedures for assessment and planning are excellent, and the curriculum is responsive to the interests of the pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The school has built a very strong partnership with parents. During the inspection several parents came unbidden to voice their approval and appreciation of the way the school teaches and cares for their children, and the way they are kept informed of progress. This was also reflected in both the parents' questionnaires and the meetings held for parents. There is great pride in the school locally, reflected in a remarkable lack of vandalism in this inner city area.
39. Parents were one hundred per cent in favour of the school's welcoming approach, the fact that their children like school and that the teaching is good.
40. Parents particularly like the personal profile, which is presented to them as a record of children's achievements and development. The widespread use of photographs throughout the school enhances these profiles and gives parents a visual reference to all the activities their children are involved with as they are displayed throughout the school.
41. Parents react well to the various initiatives by school, such as Stay and Play, and there is a portage group, which has made a promising beginning in sharing skills with parents so that they can help their children.
42. Parents respond well to the school's ideas for helping at home and like the curricular initiatives which are being started, such as the school's own website which contains

useful tips, such as recipes for home-made playdough.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher give very strong educational direction to the school. Both are very effective leaders and lead by example to promote high standards in all aspects of school life. Teachers and nursery nurses work exceptionally well together to promote the school's aims and values, and to provide high quality experiences for the children. All staff have very high, but realistic expectations for the children. This belief that the children can achieve high standards is seen in all aspects of school. In lessons, if a child struggles, teachers and nursery nurses gently coax and coach children so that they are able to achieve. For the more confident and competent children, activities are set up to be very challenging and children are encouraged to solve problems for themselves. The strong teamwork encourages staff to talk together and evaluate what is effective teaching and learning in their school. Staff are constantly striving to improve on the existing high standards.
44. All staff, including nursery nurses, have a responsibility for an area of learning or aspect of learning. All staff are clear about their responsibility and the expectations of their role. Staff work well to support each other in planning and in the delivery of the curriculum. Everyone has a good understanding of the strengths within their area of responsibility and what needs to be done in order to improve standards further. All staff are highly motivated and many are very effective in influencing staff. Very good use has been made of high quality professional training. The school's involvement in the Effective Early Learning Project has made a significant impact on the way in which teachers plan and deliver the curriculum.
45. The procedures for monitoring and evaluation are excellent. The headteacher leads this aspect of work but all staff are involved in carrying out their own monitoring of the provision within their own classroom areas. Teachers and nursery nurses monitor the effectiveness of their classroom management and organisation on a regular basis. This information is evaluated and shared with the whole staff and adjustments made as appropriate. As the staff have a clear understanding as to what constitutes effective teaching and learning, the monitoring and subsequent evaluation carried out by the headteacher is well understood and valued by staff. Areas for improvement are planned for thoroughly and effective action is implemented swiftly. This work has improved the quality of teaching.
46. There is no governing body. The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher receive good quality support and advice from various departments within the Local Education Authority. The school adviser is a regular visitor to the school and she has a very good understanding of the school.
47. The school makes very good use of its resources. Learning resources are good for all areas of learning. The accommodation lacks a hall area. The staff have given careful consideration to the use of space, and all areas of the school are used to the best effect in order to ensure that the curriculum is taught effectively. The school grounds have recently been developed and provide an outstanding resource for learning.
48. The school is part of the Aston and Nechells Education Action Zone and has benefited from additional funding to support staff development and the toy and book lending library. The school has also received support from an early years co-ordinator. The school is used as a model for good nursery practice within the zone

and receives many visitors from other schools.

49. The headteacher has been very successful in improving the school development plan since the last inspection. Appropriate priorities are identified, and planned action costed. Although the school does not have a fully delegated budget the principles of best value are applied to areas of spending.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. Brearley Nursery School is a very successful school and achieves high standards. There are no major areas of weakness, but the school should consider the following minor weakness:
 1. In order to further improve provision for creative development the school needs to:
 - provide more opportunities for children to express and communicate their ideas and feelings through music and movement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

51. Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

52. Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
17	25	46	12	0	0	0

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

53. 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)	104
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	47

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	28

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

54. Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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

55. Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	196

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.6
--------------------------------	-----

FTE means full-time equivalent.

** The school does not have a fully delegated budget. The figures above cover only those areas for which the school has responsibility.*

56. Financial information*

Financial year	1998-99
	£
Total income	30,647
Total expenditure	28,077
Expenditure per pupil	270
Balance brought forward from previous year	12,619
Balance carried forward to next year	15,189

57. Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	104
Number of questionnaires returned	30

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	87	13	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	30	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	27	0	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	39	17	9	4
The teaching is good.	77	23	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	70	23	7	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	13	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	20	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	70	27	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	73	23	3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	30	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	61	32	0	0	7

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 and Social Development

58. The standards achieved in personal and social development are good. All children are likely to attain the desirable learning outcomes by the time they reach compulsory schooling at the age of 5 years, and some progress beyond. The progress of children with special educational needs is very good. The children are well supported and resources used are appropriate to their specific requirements. Children for whom English is an additional language are also appropriately supported. The policy of the nursery to put children who share the same home language together in the same class and, wherever possible, to match their language to an adult with the same language, further supports these children, particularly in this area of learning.
59. Social development is given a high priority and is a strength of the nursery. Children are confident and independent. They change for physical education and dress for outdoor play, mostly unaided, through the sensitive encouragement of staff. They carefully help serve their lunch and pour drinks at snack time. The children have self respect and demonstrate respect to both staff and their peers. They are sensitive to the needs of others, including those children who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Should a child be upset, others will show concern and care, offering friendship, a hug or a tissue as required. Staff plan festivals and cultural traditions of many world faiths into the curriculum and ask visitors of that faith to come in and talk to the children or share a particular aspect of their culture with them.
60. The quality and range of provision for personal and social development is very good and children respond exceptionally well to the provision. The quality activities provided support children's development in working independently, in small groups and sometimes in larger groups. Many games and activities demand turn-taking, which children manage very well for their age; they demonstrate patience in waiting for a turn in a game or to use a certain resource, for example waiting for a turn to play skittles during outdoor play. Staff sensitively encourage children to persevere and finish tasks; they do this with a high degree of success. Children treat living things, property and their environment with great care; they hang their coats on their pegs, put away resources correctly, and take a pride in their stimulating indoor and outdoor accommodation.
61. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good. The desirable outcomes are comprehensively planned for over time. The philosophy and ethos of the nursery is put into practice by all members of staff who act as very good role models for the children. They work extremely well together and show respect for each other. Deployment is generally effective as are teaching methods and grouping of children for activities, some of which are child-initiated and some lead by the staff. The very positive approach to behaviour ensures that children are developing a very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The behaviour policy is implemented consistently throughout the school, and children are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. The 'well being' programme, now embedded in practice, supports assessment of children in this area of learning. Children, and their work, are assessed regularly through direct observation and work scrutiny, in addition

to the well-being assessments. Staff use these records to identify individual targets for future learning.

62. At the previous inspection, this area of learning was reported to be very good. Staff have maintained and improved in aspects of this area of learning.
63. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered appropriately. The social and moral aspects are a great strength of the nursery.

Language and Literacy

64. The standard of work in language and literacy is above average and children achieve exceptionally well. All children are likely to attain the desirable learning outcomes in this area of learning by the time they reach compulsory schooling at 5 years of age. Assessments of children's abilities on entry to nursery show that generally most children have very limited skills in literacy. However, when children leave the school many have achieved standards that are average or above average for their age. Children with special educational needs are well supported and their attainment and progress is good. Language and literacy is given a high priority in the educational programme.
65. Children listen attentively and with interest to stories, instructions, information and during discussion times. Children talk with confidence to each other and to adults about their experiences, and staff use these experiences to develop children's ideas and interests. For example, a teacher working with individual children looked at an earlier visit to a castle and zoo. Photographs acted as prompts and each child was encouraged to talk about their experiences and interpretations. Sensitive teaching extended children's thinking enabling them to make interesting contributions to a class 'big book' about the castle and zoo. All staff use correct and appropriate vocabulary and encourage children to do the same. Children use 'dungeon', 'moat', and in other areas of learning use 'cuboid' correctly. Staff and children use correct terminology when using the computer to support learning, for example program, menu, mouse, space bar and cursor.
66. The provision for role-play is very good. Children make good use of role-play areas such as 'the office' and 'the home'; they have ready access to dressing up clothes and resources, and effectively make up stories. Children enjoy books and are able to handle them appropriately, turning pages from front to back and demonstrating that print carries meaning. They use pictorial cues and 'read' favourite stories to each other using very expressive voices and asking appropriate questions of their audience. They show delight, apprehension, joy and sympathy as they listen carefully to stories read to them.
67. The nursery has focused on both speaking and listening and also on enhancing the provision for children to develop early writing skills. This aspect of language and literacy is now very good. Children's writing is highly regarded by staff. It is valued at every opportunity and included in displays and books. Children take a pride in their writing and are eager to show visitors their work. They use symbols and letters in their writing. Most children recognise letters of the alphabet by shape, name and sound. They recognise their names and those of their peers. Staff use many opportunities in the daily routines of the nursery to give the children practice in recognising their names. Although children recognise individual letters, opportunities to develop syllable sounds and rhymes are less well planned for.

68. The quality of teaching is very good and in some cases excellent. Staff know the requirements of this area of learning well. The activities planned to support children's learning in language and literacy are comprehensive and address the desirable outcomes in a stimulating and interesting way. The environment created in the nursery is very stimulating and enhances the activity provision in many ways. The print-rich surroundings, in particular, encourage children to develop their literacy and language skills. Staff observe, assess and keep appropriate records of children's attainment and progress in all aspects of this area of learning and use the information to inform their teaching.

Mathematics

69. Children achieve well in mathematics and many are likely to attain standards that are above average. Mathematics is often used by children as an integral part of activities inside and outside the classroom. Children are frequently seen counting and using number to solve problems when sharing or playing. Most children recognise and use numbers to 10 and many are familiar with larger numbers from their everyday lives. This confidence with number comes from the high quality provision provided in all classes and the very good teaching. Teachers and nursery nurses take every opportunity to promote number in their conversations with children and in the activities they organise in the school environment. Through these practical activities children understand and record numbers, and many show awareness of number operations such as addition and subtraction.
70. Many children use mathematical language, such as circle, square, triangle, behind, in front of, bigger than and more to describe shape, position, size and quantity. Some children are confident in naming three-dimensional shapes such as cuboid, cube and sphere. Children are keen and excited in finding out the names of such shapes. When working with children, the adults take every opportunity to use number or appropriate mathematical vocabulary. In one activity children were asked to choose which way they would like to cut their sandwiches, which they were making for the bear hunt. Children were shown sandwiches cut into halves or quarters in shapes such as rectangles and triangles. Most children were able to explain which shape they would use and how many sandwiches they would have when they cut up their bread.
71. Children of all abilities make very good progress in their mathematical development. Teachers keep accurate and useful assessment records of children's progress. These records have helped staff identify a number of children who are very able in mathematics. This group of children come together once a week to work with a teacher and the headteacher. This group of children is offered a range of mathematical challenges. One child within the group has English as an additional language and the teachers are very effective in supporting language development within the mathematical activity. In one challenge set, the children were asked to build a tall structure using rolled up newspaper. This activity followed on from other activities, which were involved in finding out about different shapes. Through careful questioning, and encouraging children to look carefully at each other's work, the teachers were successful in getting children to think about what they had found out in previous sessions. Children soon remembered and realised that triangles are very rigid and would be a useful shape to use in their structures.
72. The children's high achievement is a result of the very good teaching in mathematics

and the high quality provision in classrooms. Activities are exciting and meaningful to young children, and children have lots of opportunities to practise their mathematical skills. Teachers and nursery nurses have a very good understanding of how young children learn mathematics.

73. Resources are good and staff work well together to support one another. The school has devised a number of excellent mathematical trails in the school environment and in the local community. Classroom routines and organisation promote mathematics. For example, the writing areas set out in classrooms are also geared towards encouraging pupils to write numerals.
74. Children's response to mathematics is excellent. Children are always keen to take part in mathematical activities and many are very excited about the activities set up by the staff.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. Children achieve well, and many are likely, by the age of five, to attain standards that are above those expected for young children. Most children talk confidently about where they live, their environment and their families. The school has very strong links with parents and carers of the children, and these are well used to support this area of learning. Children are encouraged to bring in photographs of themselves and their families. These are displayed in class or made into booklets that the children are able to browse through whenever they wish. Photographs of older brothers and sisters, when they were in the nursery, are used effectively in one class to encourage children to talk about their families and the activities they are currently doing in the nursery.
76. The nursery provides many opportunities for children to experience visits into the environment. These visits ensure that children explore and become familiar with living things, objects and events in the natural and man-made world. Children understand that plants need water and light to grow and that some trees change according to the season. Children talk with great enthusiasm about the plants growing in the classrooms and about their visit to Sutton Park and their residential visit to the farm. Very good use is made of photographs and other evidence of the visits. Children frequently look back at the photographs to discuss their experiences and some children choose to write their own commentary under the photographs.
77. In one activity, some children were able to create a circuit using a battery, crocodile clips, a bulb and wire. One child is able to introduce a switch into the circuit. Children are confident in using the correct terminology for the equipment, and most understand that they need to have power from the battery to light the bulb.
78. Computers and tape recorders are used frequently by many children in every classroom. Children are confident users of both the tape recorder and computer. Most children can operate a mouse on the computer and understand the meanings of the words cursor, keyboard and monitor. There are a number of programs that are used effectively to support children's recognition of letters and understanding of number. Children have access to tape recorders in all teaching areas and many choose to listen to pre-recorded stories. Most children can operate the play, rewind and fast forward buttons.
79. Throughout the school there are good examples of work where children have

explored and selected materials and used various skills such as cutting, joining and building to make models.

80. The teaching of this area of learning is very good. Work is always very well planned and is based upon children's interests. Activities are steeped in first hand experiences, and the visits and experiences are often revisited through photographs and displays. This helps clarify children's understanding. Assessments of pupils' progress in this area of learning are very good and present a clear picture of what children can and cannot do. This good quality information is well used when re-visiting and reflecting on previous work, and is very successful in consolidating and developing children's learning. Teachers and nursery nurses are highly effective in supporting children in this area of learning. For those activities that some children find difficult, such as cutting materials and operating a computer mouse, children are coached very sensitively as to how to handle equipment correctly and complete the task independently.
81. Children respond well to this area of learning. Children are keen and enthusiastic and talk at length about their visits. Children are familiar with the practice of re-visiting experience by looking at photographs and displays. These are used well by the children when discussing visits and aspects of work. Children take great pride in their achievements.
82. The school has a good range of resources to support this area of learning. Excellent use is made of the local environment to support learning.

Physical Development

83. The standard of work in the area of physical development is above average. All children are likely to attain the desirable learning outcomes, and many achieve above expectations by the time that they reach compulsory schooling at five years of age. Children with special educational needs are well supported and their attainment and progress is very good. Most children are highly motivated and display great enthusiasm whether indoors or out. Both the indoor and the outdoor accommodation and resourcing support this area of learning very well and are available on a daily basis.
84. Children move confidently and imaginatively, they follow basic safety rules and generally avoid collisions when moving around. They are well co-ordinated and use space effectively. They pedal bikes, push and pull trolleys, ride scooters and ride seesaws properly. The large range of small equipment is available to all children, who, with the guidance of staff, learn skills, for example, they kick and bounce balls, roll balls at skittles, use hoops in different ways. Children have many opportunities to balance using the trim trail, playground edges, logs, stepping stones and by creating their own balancing course with the large construction resources. The variety of climbing apparatus enables children to work at their own level. The trim trail provides necessary challenge for the more able.
85. Children are very good at handling small tools such as scissors, pens, pencils, paintbrushes and cutters. Staff teach them to hold the tools correctly and reinforce the safety aspects as appropriate. They use malleable materials such as clay, and know how to use 'slip', they use the cutters as required and are encouraged to observe carefully and think about shapes used. There are many opportunities for using construction resources. They are able to join, build, balance and adapt, as they

need. Children challenge each other, they compare heights of towers and, using problem solving skills, work out how additional pieces of equipment can be added without the construction collapsing. There are many other opportunities for children to develop hand-eye co-ordination skills through jigsaws, matching games, fastening and unfastening coats and using knives, forks and spoons at lunch times.

86. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations and encourage all children to work to their capacity. All aspects of this area of learning are well planned for and all children have equality of access and opportunity to the provision. The desirable outcomes are covered imaginatively, frequently following children's interests. The nursery has a well-equipped 'soft play' area, which is timetabled and used by all children, including the 'Stay and Play' group of pre-nursery children. Careful planning and attention to detail have resulted in an excellent outdoor area which incorporates hard surface play areas, grassed areas, large construction area, a play house, raised garden beds, tracks for wheeled toys, climbing frames, slides, a trim trail, a 'secret' garden, a gazebo and a sensory garden. All facilities are used excellently. Staff use tapes and published schemes effectively for movement and gymnastics sessions. The close teamwork and deployment of the staff ensures that the co-ordinator is able to support other staff wherever support or guidance is required.
87. The previous inspection required the nursery to review the planning and arrangements for outdoor play to improve children's standards of achievement. This requirement has been met in full and is now an excellent environment in which children are able to develop their physical skills to their potential.

Creative Development

88. Overall, children achieve well in this area of learning and achieve standards above those expected for children of this age. As a result of excellent teaching in art, children achieve a very high standard. In art work children are able to mix colours to achieve the desired effect, select textures and produce high quality models. They are confident in using a range of materials and tools in their work. In clay work, children are taught scoring techniques and ways of moulding the clay in order to make it thinner. Children are quick to master the techniques and use them in their own work. Teachers are very effective in questioning children to encourage them to look closely at their work and improve if they feel it is appropriate. In the clay activity seen, the teacher encouraged both the child modelling the clay and the child who was the model to evaluate the clay face and suggest improvements. This was very effective as both children agreed that the model face would be better if some small adjustments were made to eyes.
89. The opportunities for imaginative play are very good and children respond well by using their imagination and working well together in pairs or in small groups. Teachers and nursery nurses recognise the importance of play in learning, and careful consideration is given to the provision and the involvement of adults in the play areas.
90. Stories are an important part of the school day. Stories are always well read and used effectively to encourage children to listen, observe and use their imagination. Stories such as 'We're going on a bearhunt' are used in many different ways to stimulate children's imagination. In one class, children organised their own bear hunt. This experience was magical for the children. They organised what they needed to take, made their own sandwiches and planned their route. The children's response to the

activity was excellent, all the children were excited, involved and communicated their ideas and feelings in lots of different creative ways.

91. There were limited dance and musical activities observed during the inspection. All classrooms had a selection of musical instruments and taped music available. A few children selected these activities although most children did not stay at these activities for any sustained period of time. One group of children listened to the music of Peter and the Wolf with their teacher and nursery nurse. Most children copied the movements of the adults but the activity was not extended for children to express their ideas or communicate their feelings.
92. The quality of teaching is very good overall. The teachers recognise the importance of creating an environment for learning, and displays around the school celebrate children's achievements in this area of learning and stimulate children's imagination and interests. Skills for creative development are recognised and well taught. Children are encouraged to evaluate their work and that of others and make improvements if appropriate. Music and dance do not have such a high profile as art, imaginative play and story. There are only limited opportunities for children to express ideas and communicate their feelings through music and dance.
93. The children's response to creative activities is excellent. Most children take great pride in their art work and want to do their best. In the clay work seen, one child chose to practise with some spare clay before changing their model. Another child insisted on finishing their model even though the session had ended. This was handled very sensitively by the teacher who explained how the clay could be kept soft and moist overnight so that the child would be able to take time and finish it properly the next day. This approach to valuing children and their efforts encourages children to persevere and do their very best.