

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **NORTH ISLINGTON NURSERY SCHOOL**

Islington, London N4 3RB

LEA area: Islington

Unique reference number: 100386

Headteacher: Mr I Senior

Reporting inspector: R E G Cross  
15917

Dates of inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> March 2001

Inspection number: 187945

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

© Crown copyright 2001

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:             | Community                            |
| Age range of pupils:         | 0 – 4 years                          |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                                |
| School address:              | 110-112<br>Tollington Park<br>London |
| Postcode:                    | N4 3RB                               |
| Telephone number:            | 020 7272 5045                        |
| Fax number:                  | 020 7272 8517                        |
| Appropriate authority:       | Local Education Authority            |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Ms E Laurencin                       |
| Date of previous inspection: | 16 <sup>th</sup> April 1996          |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |              |                      |
|--------------|--------------|----------------------|
| 15917        | Robert Cross | Registered inspector |
| 9588         | Anthony West | Lay inspector        |
| 13160        | Janet Worden | Team inspector       |

The inspection contractor was:

PkR Educational Consultants  
6 Sherman Road  
Bromley  
Kent  
BR1 3JH  
020 8289 1924  
020 8289 1919

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 Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

|   | Page      |
|---|-----------|
| <b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>                  | <b>6</b>  |
| 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              |           |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>                             |           |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>                      | <b>10</b> |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>                         | <b>16</b> |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>  | <b>18</b> |
| <br>  |           |
| <b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>             | <b>19</b> |

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

North Islington Nursery school admits boys and girls aged from three months old to four years of age. The school is part of an Education Action Zone. There are 87 children, 24 of whom attend on a part-time basis, on roll, which is bigger than most other schools of its type. One third of the places at the school are designated for children "In Need" and it provides extended day and extended year provision for the same proportion of its children. The school has fourteen children on its register of special educational needs which is around the national average. Children with speech and communication difficulties are the largest group within the school's pupils with special educational needs. North Islington is designated as a school which may be allocated six children with multiple and complex learning difficulties. The school has three more boys than girls on roll. Almost half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly of black, African and Caribbean heritage, which is high compared with most schools. Nineteen of the pupils aged three or over speak English as an additional language. Three of these pupils are in the early stages of learning to speak the language. The number of pupils with English as an additional language is higher than in most schools. Around 50 per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals which is well above the national average. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of ability but, overall, their attainment is below average. Since its last inspection, the school has amalgamated with a social services Under Three's Centre. Since the amalgamation, there has been a considerable degree of mobility amongst the pupils due largely to the school increasing its roll to its capacity.

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

This is a very good and very effective school. Children make very good progress and reach well above average standards by the time that they leave the school. This is due to the very good quality of the teaching and the excellence of the leadership of the headteacher. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- The excellent leadership of the headteacher, who is very well supported by his senior management team, staff and governors, provides a clear vision for the future of the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and promotes a similar rate of progress in the children's development.
- The standards reached by the children in personal, social and emotional development and physical development are well above those found in most schools.
- Curricular provision and arrangements for the assessment of the children's learning are very good and contribute fully to progress and equality of opportunity for all children.
- The school's provision for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and promotes very good behaviour and attitudes to work and excellent relationships and a very high degree of racial harmony.
- The school takes very good care of the children and provides a very secure and safe environment which fully supports their learning.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in mathematics are average which is lower than standards in other areas of learning.
- The role of co-ordinators and school development planning.
- Provision for pupils with English as an additional language.

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

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

The school was last inspected in 1996 and, since then, it has made a good improvement. Three of the key issues for action, from that inspection have been very well addressed and the fourth, has been addressed satisfactorily. The school has managed the process of amalgamation well and has coped successfully with difficulties created by problems in appointing staff. The quality of teaching remains very good and the children continue to progress as well as they did at the time of the school's last

inspection. The leadership provided by the headteacher is still excellent and gives the school a clear and effective educational direction. There is a very strong team spirit in the school and a very clear commitment to further improvement. These factors give the school a very good capacity to improve in the future.

## STANDARDS

By the time that they leave the school, children reach very high standards in their personal, social and emotional development and in their physical development. Children are able to share and to co-operate with one another. They help each other putting on aprons and share clearing up time well. They set about different tasks, often in pairs, for example washing up plastic pots at the sink, or sometimes alone when wiping down the tables. During outdoor play, they share tricycles and sometimes one will ride as a passenger on the back. The children show very high levels of co-ordination when riding tricycles and similar levels of control when, for example, using scissors or gluing things together. The children reach well above average standards in their creative development and above average standards in communication, language and literacy and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Within knowledge and understanding of the world, the historical aspect of the children's development and information and communication technology skills, largely because of shortages of resources, are relatively weak. The children reach average standards in their mathematical development. Older children, in the Foundation Stage are developing their mathematical knowledge appropriately although some opportunities to extend their understanding are missed. The evidence indicates that mathematical development does not always have a sufficient focus with children aged less than three years.

Children in all classes and of all levels of need, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in this school and achieve very well. The progress made by children for whom English as an additional language is satisfactory but it is slow in the early stages of their acquisition of the language as no special provision is made for them.

## CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school                | Very good. The children show great interest in their work and sustain concentration for long periods. This helps them to progress.  |
| Behaviour                              | Very good. In classrooms, at play, at lunch-times and while moving around the school, the children behave very well. This enables them to work productively for most of the time.   |
| Personal development and relationships | Excellent. Children work together well. For example, during tidying up time one child asked another if he would "like me to help you". The children are friendly and helpful to visitors with whom they communicate well. There is a very high degree of racial harmony. These factors enhance the quality of their learning. |
| Attendance                             | Satisfactory and has a sound effect on the children's development although there is some lack of punctuality because parents do not bring their children to the school on time. The headteacher is very committed to improving attendance and punctuality.  |

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

|                       |            |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Teaching of pupils:   |            |
| Sessions 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.*

The quality of teaching and learning is excellent in personal, social and emotional development and in physical development. It is very good in creative development, good in communication, language and

literacy and in knowledge and understanding of the world and satisfactory in mathematical development. During the inspection, 53 per cent of the teaching was very good or better, and all of the teaching and learning seen was at least satisfactory. The school meets the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs, very well. However, there is no specialised teaching for children for whom English is an additional language and this slows down the initial progress that they make in learning to speak the language. There are many strengths in the teaching. For example, planning is very thorough, the expectations which the staff have of the children are very high, their management of the children is excellent and lessons are very well organised and stimulating. The only significant weaknesses are gaps in the knowledge of, for example, science which some of the adults have. The school is very well aware of this and has plans to address the issue and to make sure that the children's learning is not adversely affected by it. Particular strengths in the quality of the children's learning are the independence and ability to organise themselves that they show, the levels of concentration and application that they sustain, and the effort that they put into their work. The initial rate of progress made by pupils for whom English is an additional language is the only relative weakness in the children's learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum  | Very good. Planning is very good and results in stimulating curricular provision which fully engages children's interests and develops their learning. This ensures that all children receive equality of opportunity.   |
| Provision for children with special educational needs  | Very good. The children with special educational needs have very good, well focused individual education plans which have very clear targets which are reviewed frequently. The children receive good support. Parents are kept fully informed of their children's development. These factors help children with special educational needs to make very good progress.   |
| Provision for children with English as an additional language                                  | Satisfactory. The school identifies children for whom English is an additional language very carefully and is well aware of their needs. They are suitably catered for through the school's well structured language development programme, for example in specific group work. They do not, however, receive any specialist support for their individual needs. Interpreters are available for children and parents who need this service.  |
| Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good. Social development is excellent, moral development is very good and spiritual and cultural development are good. Staff provide excellent role models for the children who are successfully encouraged to share and use equipment independently. Good manners are highly valued.   |
| How well the school cares for its children   | Very good. The school looks after its children very well and provides a safe and secure learning environment. Staff know the children very well and have good information on their welfare and health needs. The school carefully monitors attendance and punctuality. The school's health and safety policy is not up-to-date although it is in the process of being revised. The school's arrangements for the assessment of children in all areas of learning are of very good quality and fully promote the children's progress throughout the school. |

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Excellent. The leadership of this school has a very strong and effective commitment to the best interests of the children and the community. A very clear sense of direction is given and the school is very well organised. A very purposeful team spirit which benefits the children has been established. The management roles of some staff are underdeveloped.   |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | Very good. The governors are very committed to the school's best interests. Since its last inspection, they have made considerable and effective efforts to develop their role. They now have a very clear grasp of its strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher and the Chair of Governors work very closely together.  |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | Very good. The headteacher, staff and the governors are committed to making this school even better. Its strengths and weaknesses are very carefully and objectively evaluated and high standards are applied to this evaluation. This was demonstrated in the pre-inspection self-review form completed by the school. This showed that areas, for example relationships with parents which the inspection rated as good, were identified as areas for even further improvement. |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | Resources are very well used to support the children's learning. Every effort is made to obtain good value for money. Expenditure is carefully monitored by the school. Weaknesses in the school development plan restrict the school's ability to make judgements about how well money has been spent.   |

## 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>• The progress that their children make.</li> <li>• The way in which the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The way the children behave.</li> <li>• The fact that they are comfortable about approaching the school.</li> <li>• The quality of the teaching.</li> <li>• The way in which the school is led and managed.</li> <li>• The fact that their children like school.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information that they are given about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• The closeness with which the school works with them.</li> </ul> |

The findings of the inspection support the positive views of the parents. In addition, they find that parents are given good information about how their children are getting on and that the school does work closely with parents and that it is making every effort to work even more closely and successfully with them.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**The leadership of the headteacher, who is very well supported by his senior management team, staff and by the governors, provides a clear vision for the future of the school.**

1. The leadership provided by the headteacher is excellent and he is very well supported by his recently appointed deputy and senior management team. The effectiveness of this leadership is shown, for example, by the good improvement which the school has made since its last inspection. Of the four key issues for action resulting from that inspection, three have been very well addressed. Assessment procedures are now of high quality, the role of the governors is very well developed and there are ample books. Some relative weaknesses remain in curricular provision for the children's knowledge and understanding of the world but, even in relation to this key issue, improvement has been satisfactory. This improvement has been achieved in spite of difficulties associated with the process of amalgamation and by problems in appointing staff. Compared with the findings of the school's last inspection, the quality of teaching remains very good, the children's progress is equally as good as it was at the time of the school's last inspection and the school's leadership is still excellent.
2. The governors are very committed to the school's best interests and are very well informed about the school. Since the school's last inspection, they have successfully developed their role, for example, by undertaking training, establishing an appropriate committee structure, and visiting the school at work. The headteacher and the Chair of Governors work very closely and effectively together.
3. The leadership and management of this school have a very strong commitment to the best interests of the children and the community. The headteacher, staff and the governors are dedicated to making this school even better. Its strengths and weaknesses are very carefully and objectively evaluated and high standards are applied to this evaluation. There is no defensiveness in this school and areas for improvement, for example, the role of co-ordinators and provision for English as an additional language, are identified and addressed. The objective and professional nature of the school was also demonstrated in the way in which the pre-inspection self-review form was completed. This showed that areas, for example, relationships with parents which the inspection rated as good, and attendance which the inspection judged to be satisfactory, were identified as needing even further improvement. A very clear sense of direction is given and the school is very well organised. The deputy headteacher has already, for example, introduced significant improvements into the organisation of the curriculum and assessment procedures. Expenditure is monitored carefully by the school and resources are used very well to support the children's learning. Every effort is made to obtain good value for money. A very purposeful team spirit which benefits the children has been established. These factors give the school a very good capacity to improve in the future.

**The quality of teaching and learning is very good and promotes a similar rate of progress in the children's development.**

4. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good. It is excellent in personal, social and emotional development and in physical development. It is very good in creative development, good in communication, language and literacy and in knowledge and understanding of the world and satisfactory in mathematical development. During the inspection, one excellent lesson was seen, seven very good lessons were observed, six lessons were good, and one was satisfactory. Teaching and learning of this quality promote very good progress for the children.
5. There are many strengths in the teaching and very few weaknesses. Planning is very thorough, the expectations which the staff have of the children are very high, their management of the children is excellent and lessons are very well organised and stimulating. Particular strengths in the quality of the children's learning are the independence and ability to organise themselves that they show, the levels of concentration and application that they sustain and the effort that they put into their work. The school meets the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs, very well.
6. The strengths of the teaching and learning in this school were exemplified in a lesson observed in Ocean room. A wide range of suitable activities was organised for the children who were very independent and gainfully occupied. A safe and secure learning environment encouraged the children to make maximum progress. For example, six children concentrated for an extended period at the sand tray where they used magnetic "fishing rods" to find treasure, such as metallic necklaces. This extended their early understanding of magnetism and improved their abilities to work together. Three other children, with the support of an adult, made "cakes" with play dough. They were able to roll, flatten, and cut shapes using pastry cutters. Their ideas were extended through good prompts and questions and they developed their ideas: "Look at my birthday cake. I'm going to put a cherry on the top!" The cakes were then placed in an oven and, later, the children showed good imagination about putting candles on their cakes to show how old they were. The children, returning from outdoor play, were able to remove their coats independently and received help where this was necessary, for example, with zips. All of the children recognised the routine of clearing up and all of them helped with different tasks. Supervision was friendly but effective. When clearing up was finished, the children showed that they knew the class routine very well by going to the book corner to choose a book to read. They clearly knew that books are read from front to back. As they waited for story time, two children were intrigued by organising names on a Velcro chart: "How many children are there in blue group today?"
7. Similarly, a group of children with special educational needs involving speech and language difficulties made very good progress in a lesson seen during the inspection. Their language skills were very well developed as the support assistant caught their interest by using models and pictures such as those of a cow, a boy and an apple. The names of the artefacts were clearly pronounced for the children who repeated them carefully. The children were then given questions to answer and instructions to follow: "Can you find the cow and put it on the egg?" Their personal, social and emotional development was also enhanced by involving them in the structure of the lesson so that they knew what to expect next: "We'll sing our little song in a moment". The song continued to enhance the children's vocabulary and their knowledge and understanding of the world as they were asked to point to the various parts of their body as they sang about them. At the end of the lesson, praise was well used: "You have all done so

well”, and great emphasis was given to saying goodbye to each other properly and to pronouncing everyone’s name correctly.

**The standards reached by the children in personal, social and emotional development and physical development are well above those found in most schools.**

8. Very high standards are attained in the children’s personal, social and emotional development which is similar to the judgement in the last inspection report. The very good, carefully planned opportunities, provided for all children, and the particularly high profile that is given to their personal, social and emotional development is a major factor in the rate of progress that they make. This helps them towards achieving these high standards. Babies, toddlers and children aged over three years of age are warmly greeted as they arrive for school. It is evident that they feel secure and well cared for within the school environment by their happy, smiling faces and the way they leave their parents and carers without trepidation. Every opportunity to extend children’s social skills is taken. For example, children are encouraged to say goodbye as their parents leave and mealtimes are very orderly occasions. At lunch-time children sit next to one another at attractively laid tables and show high levels of social skill. They eat well and show good manners and behaviour, which makes it a very pleasant social experience, and afterwards they help the assistant to clear away the dishes.
9. All staff work closely with the children and each is well known as an individual. For example, a one-year-old who did not like getting messy when hand-printing was given a truck to run through the paint. Children have a strong exploratory approach to the range of experiences on offer and they enjoy finding things out. In the Sunshine room, they explored the “hidey-house” and crawled through the coloured drapes with much “peek-a-booing” with a member of staff. Attractively displayed bottles filled with coloured pulses invited interest so that the children picked them up independently to discover the noises made by shaking or tipping them up and down. Children’s key workers responded well to their interests and played beside them to extend their concentration. Much praise was also given; for example, a little boy who plucked up courage to crawl through a tunnel for the first time was keen to try it again after being told he was a “Good boy, clever boy! Well done!” Children’s level of security was clearly demonstrated by the way that they initiated interactions with an inspector. In one instance, a doll was offered up for a cuddle and in another, in Rainbow room, a book was shared and items of interest were pointed out.
10. As children mature, their levels of independence increase. They attend to personal hygiene unaided and go to the cloakroom to wash their hands or ask, “All sticky, wash hands?” When they have used a tissue for their nose, most know to place it in the bin. The wide range of challenging but appropriate activities on offer helps children to sustain and increase their levels of concentration. Great excitement was shown with some activities, for example children working at the water tray showed amazement as water poured out in all directions from different bottles. Staff provide good role models as they interact with children. When children experience a particular difficulty the staff ask if they would like some help. At a later point, a child was heard to ask the same question of his friend as they cleared up at the end of the morning. By the time children are four years old, the good relationships that staff have promoted throughout, are developing very effectively. Children are able to share and to co-operate with one another. During outdoor play, the children share tricycles and sometimes one will ride as a passenger on the back. They help each other putting on aprons and share clearing up time well. The children set about different tasks, often in pairs, for example washing up plastic pots at the sink, or sometimes alone when wiping down the tables.

11. Similarly, very high standards are found in the children's physical development. Provision for the children's physical development is very well organised by the teachers. Pupils are given a wide range of activities, some of which they undertake independently and others where they are supported. For example, pupils ride tricycles independently with high levels of control and share this experience with a passenger who is able to stand on a trolley at the rear of the tricycle. When using large agility apparatus, they were well supported by an adult when they slid down a pole. The adult watched them carefully, encouraged them to undertake more difficult movements and praised them when they attempted to do so. Similarly in class, pupils show good co-ordination when painting. They mix colours well, use brushes of different sizes suitably and paint purposefully using either hand. The pupils also show good control of finer movements when they use the mouse control during information and communication technology activities and when they thread beads onto a string.

**Curricular provision and arrangements for the assessment of the children's learning are very good and contribute fully to progress and equality of opportunity for all children.**

12. Since the school amalgamated with a centre for children aged under three, the curricular provision has required modification. This has been successfully achieved through a whole-school approach to planning, which reflects the Local Education Authority's guidance for the very young children and the national framework for children who are aged three to five years old. The planning ensures that there is a seamless transition from the Early Years curriculum for babies and toddlers to the Foundation Stage in the Nursery class. Very good curricular opportunities, which cover all areas of development, are provided. Each area of learning is broken down into the appropriate elements and is linked to relevant activities for each age group. Long-term plans provide an overview of the whole year in half-termly segments whereas the medium-term planning breaks this down further into the areas of learning for each age group. This attention to detail ensures a consistent approach and provides children with a wide range of highly stimulating, worthwhile practical experiences, both in and out of the classroom. This ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, have equal access and opportunity to the planned curriculum.
13. A particularly high profile is given to the children's personal, social and emotional development and physical development which is reflected in the high standards which the school achieves in these areas of learning. A weekly planning sheet gives a clear overview of the tasks and, in the Nursery class for example, describes discussions, investigations, science exploration, stories, songs, displays, the focus for literacy, the visitors and the visits which will take place. This information is clear and accessible to all staff. Other planning sheets give details of the "on-going" learning intentions for each area of learning, the daily provision of activities in five different "zones" and the staff that are responsible for teaching and supporting learning in each of the zones for a six-week period. Provision for children's individual needs is very effectively promoted through the school's arrangements for assessment. Their key worker keeps regular, high quality notes for each area of learning for the children for whom they have responsibility. This ensures that progress can be tracked over time and, where there are significant strengths or weaknesses, planning can be adapted to suit their needs. This is also clearly evident in the provision for children with special educational needs, which is also very good. Individual education plans are focused on significant weaknesses. Clear and concise guidance is provided for teachers and key workers on how to develop children's understanding to achieve progress towards their specific

targets. Appointments are made with parents on a regular basis to review progress and set new targets.

**The school's provision for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and promotes very good behaviour and attitudes to work and excellent relationships.**

14. The quality of the school's provision for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promotes a very high degree of racial harmony and very good attitudes to school. From the earliest ages, children are encouraged to work and socialise in a variety of different contexts. They are independent and are able to explore materials as individuals yet enjoy games with one another and with the staff. At mealtimes, children behave very well and successfully feed themselves. The school's provision for the children's social development is excellent. The atmosphere in school is calm and respectful with the staff setting excellent role models for the young ones and, as a result, the provision for the children's moral development is very good. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is good. Children benefit from links with local churches and a determination that children should be excited when learning about the world as they did in a lesson on materials. The school provides good cultural development for the children with visits and extra-curricular activities and has plans to improve this aspect further with organised trips to concerts and ballet workshops.
15. Due to the effectiveness of the school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, children are keen to learn, eager to join in with group activities and yet recognise contributions by individuals. Their behaviour is also very good and they show respect for the feelings of others. The children respect members of staff and are well mannered. They socialise and work well together, in a variety of situations and move about the school in a very orderly manner. Personal development and relationships are excellent. The school is developing further its range of extra-curricular activities for children to take part in. Children are successfully encouraged to be self-reliant at an early age. They are encouraged to feed themselves, put on protective aprons themselves and to work independently using a variety of media including information and communication technology. These factors greatly assist their learning.

**The school takes very good care of the children and provides a very secure and safe environment which fully supports their learning.**

16. Children are very well looked after and they are not exposed to risk. The staff know the children very well and encourage them all successfully to join in the range of activities. The school's arrangements to supervise the children are good. Security in the school is good and is being improved even more. The school's health and safety policy is being rewritten but arrangements in place are already good. Procedures for child protection are good. The school's arrangements for the provision of first aid and the care of pupils are very good. Its liaison with local health professionals is also very good. The very young children are particularly well cared for. The school's arrangements to promote good behaviour are very effective. The behaviour policy is being rewritten although the children are all very well behaved. The staff handle any behavioural problems very well on an individual basis. Lunch-time is a very successful social occasion. The school's monitoring of attendance and punctuality is good and attendance is satisfactory. However, the headteacher is determined to improve attendance and punctuality still further. These factors make the school a happy one in which children work and learn well.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Standards in mathematics are average which is lower than standards in other areas of learning.**

17. Although standards are average, children do not make as much progress in this area of learning as they do in other aspects of the curriculum. Evidence indicates that mathematical development does not always have a sufficient focus with children aged less than three years. Within the area of learning for exploration and discovery, rhymes, games and songs involving number are appropriately employed. The rhyme, "two little dicky-birds sitting on a wall" is used well as an introduction to very early work with number. Teachers provide suitable activities and resources to develop children's knowledge of shape and number but a few members of staff are not sufficiently knowledgeable to draw out the mathematics from the activities or use opportunities as they occur to develop and extend mathematical development. For example, an opportunity to count and compare the number of water spouts coming from bottles filled with water was missed with a group of children who were showing high levels of interest in a very good activity. Resources, such as books and the "shape" table (for outdoor play), provide suitable experiences to develop knowledge of shape. A few children make good progress and can match the shapes well and can correctly name a square and a triangle. Other children know the terms but cannot yet link it with the correct shape.
18. Older children, in the Foundation Stage are developing their knowledge appropriately. For example, one child with special educational needs is beginning to show an understanding of counting and "counts" dots as he records random numbers. A four-year-old can count to four and another, older child, is beginning to record numbers unaided by an adult. However, some opportunities are missed. A child working with play dough made a birthday cake and said, "Put three candles on top 'cos you're three." This was not extended by an adult to making a cake with four candles or used to help a lower achieving child by suggesting they might make a cake with only two candles. When children make good progress, such as a challenging task to match shape and colour, a teacher effectively supports them. In another lesson, where children showed excellent levels of concentration, the teacher and support staff worked well as a team. When focusing on number, children are able to sort ladybirds for colour and the number of spots and also thread beads according to the number thrown on a die. Effective planning ensures that mathematical development is linked to other areas of learning, for example when sorting magnetic and non-magnetic materials practically, children placed them in a Venn diagram.

### **The role of co-ordinators and school development planning.**

19. Although all areas of curricular provision are nationally delegated to members of staff, the school accepts that this delegation is not effective. This is largely due to difficulties associated with recruiting staff and the issue is identified by the school as one which it intends to address. At present, co-ordinators are not clear about what this management role entails and do not have suitable individual job descriptions with clear targets to achieve. There are training needs for co-ordinators, for example in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Some of the school's policy documents have not been updated since its amalgamation. The school recognises that this is a task for co-ordinators to address.

20. The school development plan has many strengths; for example, its review of the previous year is good practice, governors are involved in its monitoring, and the priorities identified are appropriate. However, it is a bulky document and is not easy to understand. This restricts its effectiveness as a management tool. In addition, it only covers one year and developments are not clearly listed in an order of priority. There is insufficient detail in the action plans to provide staff with clear time scales for development. In addition, those responsible for particular areas of development have not been sufficiently involved in the process. Financial planning is not linked sufficiently securely or in sufficient detail to the plan. In addition, the criteria for judging the success of the work undertaken are often related to the completion of the task rather than judging how well the work has been done. This makes it difficult to judge how well money has been spent in order to raise standards.

**The school's provision for pupils with English as an additional language.**

21. Although the school identifies children for whom English is an additional language very carefully and is well aware of their need, no one is actually designated as managing this provision although the headteacher has a clear view of the provision made. Children for whom English is an additional language are suitably catered for through the school's well-structured language development programme including specific group work. Interpreters are available for children and parents who need this service. They do not, however, receive any specialised support for their individual needs in learning English, which slows down the rate at which they become fluent and confident in the subject.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

**\*Improve standards in mathematics which are lower than standards in other areas of learning by:**

- ensuring that mathematical development is always given a sufficient focus with children aged less than three years;
- being sure that all staff are sufficiently knowledgeable to draw out the mathematical development from the activities by providing additional training where this is necessary;
- making sure that use is made of all opportunities to extend mathematical development. (Paragraphs 17 and 18)

**\*Improve the role of co-ordinators and school development planning, through:**

- ensuring that co-ordinators, roles are clearly defined, effectively delegated and carried out and that training in the requirements of this management role is provided;
- bringing the school's policy documents up to date;
- making the school development plan:
  - easier to understand;
  - prioritising the planned developments more clearly;
  - planning for a longer period;
  - linking finances more securely to the plan;
  - improving the criteria to judge the success of the developments undertaken.(Paragraphs 19 and 20)

**Improve the management of the school's provision for pupils with English as an additional language by:**

- designating clearly and effectively a manager for the provision of this aspect of the school's work;
  - providing specialised support for individual needs in learning English particularly in the early stages of their acquisition of the language.
- (Paragraph 21)

\*Both of these areas are already recognised as needing improvement in the school development plan.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of sessions observed  | 15 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 10 |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 7         | 46        | 43   | 7            | 0              | 0    | 0         |

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

### Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll   | Nursery |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)      | 87      |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 36      |

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 | 14      |

| English as an additional language                       | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 19           |

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

\* Accurate figures are not available because the school has not been running at full capacity in the period and this has given a wide fluctuation.

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

|             | %    |
|-------------|------|
| School data | 3.32 |

### Unauthorised absence

|             | %   |
|-------------|-----|
| School data | 2.8 |

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

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and support staff

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 4  |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 22 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 14  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 491 |

|                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 5.5 |
|--------------------------------|-----|

FTE means full-time equivalent.

## Financial information

|                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 1999/2001 |
|----------------|-----------|

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Total income                               | 602709 |
| Total expenditure                          | 591293 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 6569   |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 0      |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 0      |

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 95 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 22 |

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

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 54             | 41            | 0                | 0                 | 5          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 50             | 45            | 0                | 0                 | 5          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 45             | 50            | 0                | 0                 | 5          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 42             | 33            | 8                | 8                 | 8          |
| The teaching is good.  | 50             | 32            | 5                | 0                 | 13         |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 46             | 27            | 27               | 0                 | 0          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 72             | 23            | 5                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 48             | 26            | 5                | 0                 | 21         |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 41             | 45            | 14               | 0                 | 0          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 55             | 36            | 0                | 0                 | 9          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 50             | 40            | 5                | 0                 | 5          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 33             | 50            | 6                | 0                 | 11         |

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Six parents made additional comments on their questionnaires. The only recurring comment was praise for the school and its staff.