

INSPECTION REPORT

Crosfield Nursery School
South Norwood

LEA area: Croydon

Unique Reference Number: 101702

Headteacher: Mrs Ann Watts

Reporting inspector: Mrs Brenda Spencer
20415

Dates of inspection: 22-24 November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706592

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

© Crown Copyright 1999

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 Education (Schools) Act 1992 and the Education Act 1993, 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
Type of control:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	3-4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Elborough Road South Norwood London SE25 5BD
Telephone number:	0181-654 7566
Appropriate authority:	Croydon Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Marsh
Date of previous inspection:	29 April 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Brenda Spencer, Rgl	Language and literacy, Mathematics; Physical development.	Leadership and management; Teaching; Attainment and Progress; Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Effectiveness of the provision of the Section 11/Single Regeneration Budget staff and its impact on the achievement of pupils (English as an additional language).
Sarah McDermott, Lay Inspector		Equal opportunities; Attendance; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Partnership with parents and the community; Staffing, accommodation and learning resources; Efficiency.
Lynne Palmer	Personal and social development; Knowledge and understanding of the world; Creative development	Special educational needs; Curriculum and assessment; Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The inspection contractor was:

Capital Inspections
Chaucer Building
Canterbury Road
Morden
Surrey
SM4 6PX

0181-685 1729

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

The Registrar
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

- What the school does well
- Where the school has weaknesses
- How the school has improved since the last inspection
- Standards
- Quality of teaching
- Other aspects of the school
- The parents' views of the school

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

- Characteristics of the school 1-5
- Key indicators 6

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

- Attainment and progress 7-14
- Attitudes, behaviour and personal development 15-16
- Attendance 17-19

Quality of education provided

- Teaching 20-26
- The curriculum and assessment 27-34
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 35-39
- Support, guidance and pupils' welfare 40-45
- Partnership with parents and the community 46-49

The management and efficiency of the school

- Leadership and management 50-55
- Staffing, accommodation and learning resources 56-59
- The efficiency of the school 60-64

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

- Areas of learning for children under five 65-96

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

- Summary of inspection evidence 97-98
- Data and indicators 99

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The children achieve high standards of independence and self-confidence and have very positive attitudes to school.
- The school provides a broad, rich and interesting curriculum.
- The excellent leadership of the headteacher is resulting in rapid school improvement.
- Teaching is very good and results in children making good progress.
- Provision for children with special educational needs and English as an additional language is very good.
- Provision for moral, social and cultural development is excellent and very good for spiritual development.
- Partnership with parents and the community is excellent.
- Planning for school development is very good and governors are involved well.
- Support and guidance for children, including assessment procedures, are very good.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Accommodation is limited and does not provide sufficient challenge for aspects of physical development outside and does not include a private office.
- II. Planning and teaching to promote the development of children's control, co-ordination and awareness of space outside need more emphasis.

The school has many more strengths than weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of children at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has developed very well since 1996. Following the end of an extended period of continual change in leadership and management, the school has made substantial improvements in significant areas. In the last seven months the key issues identified in the last report have been addressed very well. At the time of the last inspection, children had too few opportunities to make choices and decisions in relation to their learning. Higher attainers did not progress at sufficient pace or achieve high enough standards. Teaching is much improved and now encourages independence in children's learning very well and consequently they are likely to achieve standards of personal and social development which are well above expectations by the time they are five. In contrast to the past, careful planning takes account of the different needs of children ensuring they all make good progress overall. The outcomes of planning are now monitored by the headteacher and by the whole staff in discussions at planning meetings.

Although leadership was strong, weaknesses were identified in overall good management in 1996. These included lack of satisfactory development and financial planning to chart future school improvements. A plan has been drawn up arising from wide ranging consultation. It is carefully costed and is a very effective tool in guiding and evaluating the effectiveness of decisions. Governors are better involved in this process and are more knowledgeable about the curriculum. The many strengths of the school; for example, partnership with parents and the support and guidance of children, have been maintained.

The school has a very good capacity to maintain high standards. The quality of the leadership is

excellent, governors, staff and parents have a shared commitment to making Crosfield a successful school and many management strategies have been put in place to enable the school's aims to be achieved.

· **Standards**

There are national expectations of the standards children can attain by five years of age called the Desirable Outcomes for Learning. The children are likely to meet these expectations in language and literacy overall, in knowledge and understanding of the world and in physical development. They are likely to exceed them for reading, mathematics and creative development. They are on track to achieve impressively high standards in personal and social development.

· **Quality of teaching**

· **Teaching in areas of learning**

Personal and social development	Very good
Language and literacy	Good
Mathematics	Good
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Good
Physical development	Satisfactory
Creative development	Good

The quality of teaching is very good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Almost a third of teaching was very good and over eight out of ten observations of teaching were good or better. This is an unusually high proportion of consistently good teaching. Within language and literacy the teaching of early reading skills is very good and the development of fine motor skills in physical development is good.

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

· **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good. Children respond well to the excellent role models provided by the staff.
Attendance	Satisfactory attendance and good punctuality contribute positively to attainment and progress.
Ethos*	Very good. Children have very positive attitudes to their learning, relationships are harmonious and the school seeks to achieve high standards.
Leadership and management	Excellent educational direction is provided by the headteacher. Governors are increasingly involved in development planning and are knowledgeable about the curriculum.
Curriculum	Rich, exciting curriculum enhanced by stimulating visitors to the nursery and a broad spectrum of experiences outside the school.
Children with special educational needs	Very good provision. Children's needs are identified swiftly, procedures for support are very good and there is effective liaison with outside agencies.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent overall. Provision is carefully planned and is threaded through the curriculum.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staff are skilled, resources are good and the accommodation is bright, attractive but limited in size.

Value for money

Very good.

**Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

· **The parents' views of the school**

What most parents like about the school

- III. The arrangements to admit new children which help them settle well and make a confident start to school
- IV. The way the school celebrates the ethnic mix of the children and makes each person feel valued
- V. The way the school involves parents in the life of the nursery
- VI. The good quality information available to parents on school routines and ways in which they can support their children's learning
- VII. How much their children enjoy their school life

What some parents are not happy about

Inspectors' judgements fully support the parents' positive views.

No negative comments were made by groups of parents on any issues either at the parents' meeting or in response to the questionnaire.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to continue the improvements made since the last inspection, staff and governors need to:

- VIII. Carry out the improvements identified in the building plan to improve the range of the curriculum outside and provide a private office (**see paragraphs 58, 59, 62 and 90**); and
- IX. Improve the focus in planning and teaching to increase challenge for children in the development of control, coordination and awareness of space outside (**see paragraphs 14, 23, 27, 55 and 89**);

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- X. Increase the use of questions which require extended answers to challenge children's thinking and use of language (**see paragraphs 25 and 73**)
- XI. Identify consistently the ways in which school developments will be monitored and incorporate this in planning (**see paragraph 53**);
- XII. Put in place formal procedures for appraisal (**see paragraphs 53 and 57**); and
- XIII. Other miscellaneous weaknesses (**see paragraphs 44, 58, 63, 84 and 95**).

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Crosfield Nursery serves a multiethnic community in the north of the London Borough of Croydon. The intake of the school is of a broad social and ethnic mix. Parents of children attending the nursery appreciate the way the school values this diversity.
2. There are 117 children on roll aged three to four years, 56 are boys and 61 are girls. The children attend for a half-day sessions, either in the morning or afternoon, each day of the week. Over 40 per cent of the children come from ethnic minorities, the majority being of Caribbean background. Fifteen per cent, some 17 children speak English as an additional language. The most common additional languages are Bengali and French; however, six different languages are spoken in the school. These sets of statistics are high compared to national average figures. Fourteen children are identified as having special educational needs. The attainment of children on entry is broadly average.
3. The majority of children are admitted to the school in the autumn term of the year in which they are four. The very good admission procedures include introductory visits to the school and visits by staff to the children's homes. The children begin school, accompanied by parents or carers, on a staggered basis to ensure each child is given individual attention and makes a happy start. All children receive one year of nursery education before transferring to local infant or primary schools.
4. The governing body has recently agreed the school development plan arising from a school review day involving staff, parents and governors. The school has many development targets. Its current priorities are to:
 - develop planning systems for the curriculum which are informed by assessment of

priorities for children's learning;

- increase opportunities for children to make choices and decisions and to develop as independent learners;
- improve the quality of the outdoor learning environment;
- address needs of higher attaining children; and to
- ensure the comprehensive development plan is used as an effective management tool.

1. The school aims to:

- provide a happy, friendly, secure environment where everyone is welcome;
- work in partnership with parents and carers and to involve them in all aspects of school life;
- develop positive relationships with adults and children thereby enabling learning to be a shared experience;
- offer a rich, stimulating, challenging balanced curriculum based on the government's early learning goals;
- enable children to experience fun and enjoyment as they learn through play;
- identify and make individual provision for the needs of all children in its care and monitor their progress in all areas of learning;
- respect and promote understanding and knowledge of the varied religions and cultures represented in the school community, so that children develop a sense of wonder together with a spirit of tolerance and understanding; and
- develop the staff's professional skills and knowledge so they are currently informed about all aspects of working with young children.

6. **Key indicators**

6. **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	32
	Satisfactory or better	100
	Less than satisfactory	0

6. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

6. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

6. Attainment and progress

1. The inspection took place three weeks after all the admissions for 1999/2000 had been formally completed. The process of admission was staggered over three weeks, so that at the time of the inspection children had been in school from between three to six weeks. The attainment of children on entry in personal and social and communication skills is broadly in line with expectation. In 1996, overall children's attainment was in line with standards expected for their ages in each area of learning. Most children, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language made good progress in their year at nursery. However, higher attaining children did not make such rapid progress. The provision has improved. There are national expectations of the standards children can attain by five years of age called the Desirable Outcomes for Learning. The children are likely to meet these expectations in language and literacy overall, in knowledge and understanding of the world and in physical development. They are likely to exceed them for reading, mathematics and creative development. They are on track to achieve impressively high standards in personal and social development. Children, including the higher attainers, make good progress overall. However, progress in personal and social development is very good and it is satisfactory in physical development.
2. Children have settled very well into the nursery in a very short space of time and are already very familiar with routines. Most children can make confident decisions about activities that they wish to do and the materials and equipment they need. They are very interested in their activities and generally settle and persevere. The children have very good opportunities to participate in activities which promote their personal and social skills. For example, they can self-register at the beginning of sessions by selecting their name cards and placing them on the 'I am here' board. Children work very well in groups, such as when they play board games and pass cards to each other, address each other politely and make good eye contact. They sustain interest and concentrate very well when working as individuals, completing tasks and placing their work in the appropriate place. All children participate well in tidying up. Those children with special educational needs and children with English as an additional language receive very good support and consequently develop very positive attitudes to school life.
3. By the age of five, most children are likely to achieve expectations for language and literacy in all areas except reading where standards are likely to be above expectations. In general, children's listening skills develop well. They enjoy story time and are able to listen carefully to songs where they have to make contributions at the right moment. However, they do find it difficult to listen to comments made by each other in a group. Most children respond to instructions appropriately. Twelve children with English as an additional language used only their heritage language to communicate prior to entry to nursery. Many now know and use simple words and phrases in English and understand more than they are able to articulate. Some children with special educational needs have very limited communication skills. Other children are extremely articulate, use interesting vocabulary and can give reasons for the things they experience in their activities. The children's familiarity with and enjoyment of books is striking. Many retell familiar tales accurately recalling repeated refrains or use pictures as prompts in their own story making. Children learn to recognise their name through self-registration and by copying labels to identify their work. Higher attaining children collect their name from alphabetically ordered pots and also have sight recognition of names of their friends. They are aware of at least the initial letter of their name, often know its name and the sound associated with it. They can identify the same letter when it appears in different writing. Most children regard themselves as writers and even if they do not yet use recognisable letters they make marks to which they ascribe meaning.

4. Children's mathematical experiences will enable most to achieve above the expected standards by the time they are five. Most develop counting skills well, for example, they count the number of children who have chosen to take part in dance. Higher attaining children recognise numerals 0 to 9 and use them in recording the bill in the burger bar. They are able to sort by colour and several inquired of inspectors why they had purple name labels because everyone belonged to blue, red or green groups. Many children talk knowledgeably of how different shapes are used in the environment and some children can identify the shapes by name. They are developing an awareness of the properties of three-dimensional shapes. Spheres roll well whereas cubes do not and some children orientated a cylinder so that it rolled and then so that it slid. Children are developing an awareness of time and one remarked of a character in a story 'Daddy will be there after a long time'. Celebration of birthdays helps children become aware of their ages and some know the months of their birthdays. While making sand castles children compare the size remarking 'My one's bigger than yours', they use words such as 'heavier than' and many respond to, even if they do not yet use language describing the position of objects.
5. Attainment by the age of five in knowledge and understanding of the world is likely to be in line with expectations. For information and communication technology and science, attainment is higher; for example, children know that magnets attract and pick up objects and magnifying glasses make things bigger. Many understand the journey of a letter; even children with English as an additional language contributed to telling a story containing reference to a post-office. Children are able to describe what they are doing. For example, in the outside building site activity, they could respond to questions and explain preferences. One child remarked, 'I like the truck because it's got stronger wheels'. In sand and water play, children use appropriate language, for example, 'full', 'empty', 'more', 'less' and 'overflow'. Children using the computer are able to play counting and matching games. They have good mouse control and can use it effectively to drag and match, for example, shoes to the appropriate person. Most children are aware of print from the computer or by looking at signs in the environment. Children's understanding of the wider world is developed well through the many well-planned visits to the local shops, health clinic, Godstone Farm and the Science Museum. Children have experience of the past and present through the celebration of birthdays and festivals. Some children have a wider experience and can talk about them, for example, being on an aeroplane for a long time when visiting Australia. They are becoming increasingly familiar and independent in using a range of techniques in designing and making activities, for example, cutting, sticking, taping and gluing.
6. Overall, children's attainment in physical development is likely to meet expectations by the age of five. However, they are likely to achieve higher standards in developing fine motor skills and confidence in the water. Many children have developed a secure tripod grip and make marks using felt tips, pencils and paintbrushes. The children are capable of precise movements, for example, balancing a tall construction of blocks and adding to it. They use glue sticks and apply liquid glue with a glue spreader. Whilst some children have mastered the correct use of scissors others are still practising this skill. They complete simple jigsaws and join other interlocking equipment successfully and use a range of movements for printing, for example, sliding and tapping. In dance, the children are learning a variety of movements, including marching, skipping, hopping, tip toeing and galloping. The relatively few children who used the climbing and balancing equipment, vehicles and balls during the inspection generally used this equipment competently. Those observed swimming were confident and most were fearless about putting their faces in the water, floating on their backs with and without a float and were developing good leg and arm strokes.
7. Children are likely to exceed expectations for creative development by the time they are five. They are confident in mixing colours independently for painting. They ask appropriate questions such as 'Do I need a tiny bit more?'. They control brushes for stirring paint and use sponge shapes to print using Paul Klee paintings as a model. The higher attaining children can

describe shades of colour, for example, light and dark blue. They quickly learn how to use tools such as the tape-cutting machine to help them in their collage work. Role-play is strongly developed. Children in the restaurant role-play area engage in imaginative play and interact well using the language of the restaurant, for example, 'We have beef burgers but we do not have any chips' and 'Coke is off, it's milk shake today'. Children with special educational needs participate but with less verbal interaction. Children play imaginatively together in other areas of the nursery. For example, two children were acting out going to hospital to have a baby. In dance, most children are mastering a range of movements and some use these to move imaginatively to music. Most children can participate in songs and rhymes responding appropriately to instructions in the songs. For example, the children with special needs in speech and communication could respond to a named song well. All children, including those with English, as an additional language join in playing musical instruments and most are able to shake and tap along with a clapping rhythm. They are able to select and tidy away the instruments very well in the attractive music area.

8. Children make good progress overall. In personal and social development progress is very good. The routines in the nursery are carefully thought out and the children receive the encouragement, opportunities to make choices and take risks and the direct teaching of skills that they need to enable them to become independent and confident in their abilities very quickly. They make very good progress in acquiring early reading skills because of the enjoyable story sessions which introduce important aspects of reading. The finely focused observations of children enable staff to set appropriate targets for each individual, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, so that they make good progress. Children make only satisfactory progress in developing some aspects of physical development because very many do not seek out these activities often enough and the activities themselves are not progressively challenging. However, in dance and swimming progress is very good.

14. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

9. At the time of the last inspection children had very positive attitudes to learning, were very well behaved and a high degree of racial harmony was evident. These strengths have been maintained. However, at that time the children had too few opportunities to select activities or make decisions about which resources and materials to use; consequently they had levels of self-reliance which were too low. This situation is reversed and the children are impressively independent and confident resulting from the high expectations of staff and their skill in promoting these characteristics.
10. The children's very positive attitudes to school life are evident in the happy way they arrive at school eager to embark on their activities. All children settle well and sustain interest in everything that they choose to do. It is notable that children do not wander aimlessly and they complete the tasks they have set themselves. Relationships and behaviour are very good. On occasions when children need reminding, for example, that resources need to be shared, they quickly respond. They bathe in approval of staff who consistently recognise good behaviour, for example, praising a child who wipes her feet before coming in from outside or who helps another. Staff provide excellent role models for children in terms of social behaviour, communication and intellectual curiosity. The school celebrates the rich ethnic mix of the school community and very good racial relationships are apparent. The children supported by the clear routines and the guidance of staff are already very independent in selecting activities and resources. Techniques are carefully taught such as using scissors, masking tape dispensers and pencils correctly, consequently the children quickly become self sufficient.

16. **Attendance**

11. The attendance rate of the children is satisfactory. Attendance at school is not a statutory

requirement for children under five, but parents value their children's place in the nursery and the majority bring their children regularly. Authorised absence is mostly due to illness and medical needs, although there are also a few holidays taken in term time. There is a small amount of unauthorised absence, mainly where parents have not let the school know the reason for their child being away. Children with special educational needs have satisfactory attendance. They are monitored and supported very well should they have any problems with attendance.

12. The punctuality of parents bringing their children at the beginning of the session is good. Many parents are waiting outside the door before the morning or afternoon school starts. The school has recently changed the time of the sessions to allow parents to bring their younger children to nursery on time before delivering their older siblings to the nearby primary school. This has had a successful impact on punctuality in the nursery and has improved since the last inspection.
13. Pupils arrive happily and confidently. Registration is methodical and well linked to personal and language development. Children find their own name badges and stick them on to a white-board to indicate they are present. The day gets off to a good start. The satisfactory attendance and good punctuality is having a positive effect on the children's attainment and progress.

19. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

19. **Teaching**

14. During the last inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in the majority of sessions and good or very good in over a third. Overall, the teaching made a significant contribution to the children's attainment and progress. Effective aspects included the good understanding the staff had of the curriculum for children under five, management of children's behaviour and provision for children with special educational needs and English as an additional language. However, there were too few opportunities for children to make choices and decisions in relation to their learning, expectations were too low for higher attaining children, especially in writing, and planning for the development of language and literacy did not receive explicit focus. In addition, large group work did not successfully meet the needs of children of different attainments and levels of maturity. The present inspection findings conclude that the strengths have been developed further and the previous weaknesses in teaching entirely overcome.
15. The quality of teaching is very good overall and has a very positive impact on the children's attainment and progress. The teaching was satisfactory or better in all sessions and in almost a third it was very good and in just over eight out of ten sessions it was at least good. The development of children's personal and social skills is consistently very good and is promoted in every aspect of the curriculum. Teaching is good for language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. It is satisfactory overall for physical development although it is good for developing fine muscle control and swimming skills.
16. The qualities of the best teaching are common across all the areas of learning. The staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children as well as the outcomes expected in their learning. Substantial importance is placed upon settling children well at the beginning of sessions. For example, alert to the arrival of a child who uses little English to communicate, a member of staff warmly welcomed her and immediately drew her into a role-play activity, helping her to interact effectively with the other children. Another child

became upset when she thought a balloon might burst and the teacher reassured her and put the balloon away. This sensitivity to the worries of individual children and the awareness of important skills children need to be successful learners mean they quickly become confident and eager to participate in their activities.

17. The team plans together well. This results in most respects in an appropriately broad curriculum covering all the areas of learning both indoors and outdoors with consistent approaches, for example, to behaviour management. However, planning specifically for the development of children's control, co-ordination and awareness of space outside needs more emphasis. Few children use the equipment available without encouragement and those that do need more support in extending their activities and in understanding how to use the equipment safely although children with special educational needs are supported well. Planning has given these matters attention in the weeks prior to the inspection but they lack the necessary continual focus. Planning successfully meets children's individual needs. The involvement of bilingual staff ensures that the children in their care have access to the whole curriculum. Improvement is evident since the last inspection in planning for the needs of higher attaining children. The consideration given to planning language development and activities at three levels is achieving a better match of task to attainment. The high quality of observations of individual children is also contributing very well to the relevance of the planned activities.
18. There are a number of very successful strategies used in teaching. A notable feature is the way staff use their voices. Children are made to feel enthusiastic, reassured, calm or become attentive by the careful selection of tone. Stories are told very effectively. Children are often entranced and they copy the different ways of using a voice, for example, in retelling 'The Three Bears'. Staff set very good examples of different attitudes and behaviours. Children learn how to be courteous to one another by the way staff preface requests with please and the attention they pay to saying thank you, for example, for the delicious beefburger eaten in the role-play area. Staff appear inquisitive in scientific activities, experimental in mixing paints and generally show interest in the activities in the nursery. Behaviour is managed very well. Good behaviour is praised and, where there are shortcomings, children are given strategies to improve; for example, a child is deflected into making a positive contribution such as holding the book or clearing away the resources. Strategies are also taught to deal with unacceptable behaviour; for example, a child who was bossed about by another was successfully helped to say 'No thanks I do not want to do that now'. Another child who wanted to play with a different coloured board in a game was supported in negotiating a change with another child. Staff do not do these things for the children but help them acquire the social skills which will enable them to handle difficult situations for themselves.
19. The best teaching engages children in questions which require extended answers or challenges thinking; for example, when working with children on the computer, questions such as 'What shall we do?' promotes children's inquisitive skills. Where children were encouraged to comment on the story and illustrations they practised speaking in phrases and sentences. Some questions required one word answers from children and this limited potential attainment and progress within the activity. Staff extend children's responses very well. For example, after enquiring how much was owed for the food the teacher had ordered, the child was asked to write it down on a bill. Children are encouraged to develop pride in their work and their writing skills through making labels for models or annotating their paintings with their names. Staff use resources and equipment very well, for example, by bringing stories alive using puppets. The learning environment is organised very well to maximise the children's opportunities to make choices in the equipment and materials they use. Groups of children are generally of an appropriate size. However, occasionally the number of children becomes too large in the role-play area to achieve good quality learning.
20. Very good support is given to children with English as an additional language or who have special educational needs. Staff offer good examples of correct communication; questions requiring extended answers are used frequently and the children are encouraged to be

independent. Skills are carefully taught, for example, how to use scissors, a tricycle or masking tape dispenser independently. Children are supported in interacting with others so that they will have high self-esteem and appropriate social skills.

26. The curriculum and assessment

21. The nursery provides a rich, exciting, broad and balanced curriculum which covers all aspects of the areas of learning recommended for children of this age. It generally fulfils the aims of the school in its provision of a stimulating, challenging and balanced curriculum. However, some aspects of physical development need to be more ambitious. It is relevant to the children's needs providing a firm foundation in learning and preparing them well for the next stage of education. Since the 1996 inspection, the nursery has significantly improved the quality of planning including identifying clear learning objectives and meeting the needs of the higher attaining child. The assessment procedures now inform future planning and more opportunities have been created for problem solving and independent learning.
22. A wide variety of enjoyable and exciting activities are provided. The organisation of the nursery allows for children to move freely between activities and gives opportunities for children to access a wide curriculum. A comprehensive and systematic procedure for tracking individual children informs further planning and ensures all children are participating in all activities.
23. Planning for continuity and progression is good. The comprehensive system that is evolving includes all staff in monitoring and planning on a rota basis for both inside and outside provision. The termly planning includes clear learning objectives relating to the theme Celebrations covering all the areas of learning. The targets for learning are aimed at a main level for the average child, a foundation level for reinforcement and extension levels for the more advanced. The staff intends to review the plans next term and take forward any areas not covered to the next term's planning. Over the year the intention is to build a comprehensive scheme of work to ensure continuity and progression. The weekly indoor and outdoor planning identifies focus activities with differentiated key questions and language, individual needs and suggested next steps. Further planning informs daily activities under the six areas of learning. The good planning has had a positive impact on the quality of the provision of the curriculum, in particular, on the promotion of personal development. The children are independently registering at the beginning of sessions and choosing activities. They respond positively to the planned key questions and their knowledge and understanding is extended very well. Group sessions are arranged in ability groupings several times a week to meet the needs of higher attaining children and those with special educational needs. The planning is monitored by all staff and the headteacher has an overview and monitors for gender issues and equal access for all children. Plans are clearly displayed for both staff and parents.
24. Many policies are under review and the revision timetable identifies each policy and where improvements can be made. For example, in the art and display policy the aim is to include interactive display as a source of learning. The behaviour policy which has been reviewed by all staff has had a very positive impact on behaviour management and guides a consistency in approach. The planning procedures compensate for the lack of current curricular guidelines for several of the areas.
25. The curriculum continues to make a very strong contribution to children's social, emotional, spiritual, cultural and intellectual development. It is very good overall. There are clear expectations for children's behaviour and the need to consider others. The visitors to the nursery such as musicians, children from other schools, the farm staff, governors and parents, provide children with very good social opportunities to interact with adults other than the nursery staff. Provision for physical development is satisfactory overall. There are many opportunities to develop fine motor skills in the indoor and outdoor activities. However,

children need more support in taking up all the potential opportunities for developing gross motor skills. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is promoted through interactive displays, for example, the plant collection and visits to the farm and local shops. Experiences in mathematics are very well integrated into activities in all areas of the curriculum. For example, the restaurant role-play area includes play involving money and the computer games involve counting and matching one to one. Literacy skills are taught well and reading and mark making feature in all areas of the curriculum. For example, children are encouraged to find their name card and copy their name onto their paintings. Speaking and listening skills are extended through carefully planned questioning and good quality interaction between adult and child.

26. Provision for children with special educational needs is very good. All staff are involved in developing the targets on the individual education plans and are very aware of the children's personalities and needs. The learning support assistants are clear about the targets and provide appropriate activities and interactions which are recorded and enable the children to progress well. The targets are clear, focused and achievable and build on previous achievement. The targets are met through the nursery activities and at times through special groups with a specific focus, for example, the speech and language groups. The special needs register is well maintained and records of meetings and parental contact are kept. Very good use is made of external support agencies. The special educational needs co-ordinator from the infant school attends the final review meetings and takes part in target setting so that the individual education plans continue into the new setting. Provision for children with English as an additional language is very good. The support staff work very well with the children and all staff have very good subject knowledge and are very aware of the children's needs.
27. Assessment procedures are very good. The collection of information on children's learning needs before starting in the nursery is part of an induction programme. Staff make home visits and children's needs are discussed with parents. Assessment procedures have recently been reviewed. All staff have received training on observation skills and the observations are now very focused and inform planning well. There is a whole school approach and individual children are identified for observation and assessment on a monthly basis. The observations are logged in the record of achievement and at the weekly team meetings staff discuss individual children's progress and identify any gaps. This information is reported at the monthly staff meetings. The assessments then inform future planning and individual target setting. Children are involved in the process. They select pieces of work they are pleased with and some independently place them in their own portfolios. The portfolios also include photographs to record children participating in a variety of activities. The children are proud of their work and can discuss the content very well. The headteacher is monitoring the records of achievement by selecting samples of children's work at below average, average and above average attainment. These are tracked throughout the year and this information is transferred to the receiving schools.
28. Children select books to take home and read with their parents. Each morning the children change their books. This is part of the registration procedures and routine. The curriculum prepares children very well for the next stage of learning.
34. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**
29. Since the last inspection, the nursery has continued to maintain the strengths in provision for the development of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children. There has been a great improvement in addressing a key issue identified in the previous inspection of increasing opportunities for children to become independent learners. The curriculum celebrates the richness of the children's heritage and the staff are committed to promoting independent learning and providing opportunities for children to be responsible for themselves and others.

30. Provision for children's spiritual development is very good. Children are given many opportunities to develop spiritual awareness. The aims of the school 'to develop a sense of wonder together with a spirit of tolerance and understanding' are fulfilled very well. There are attractive interactive displays for children to explore the natural world, for example, the growing table and the tubs of bulbs planted by the children. However, there are fewer opportunities available for the children to gain experience in spiritual awareness in the outside provision. The theme of 'Celebrations' gives children experiences in sharing a special time with others and they were enchanted by the musical box playing 'Happy Birthday' and lighting candles on the birthday cake. Spiritual awareness is promoted in all areas of the curriculum; for example, a floating balloon fascinated children when it was effectively used to extend children's understanding of a story. Children were in awe when experimenting with the magnets as they made patterns with the enclosed iron filings. A dance session successfully engaged the children in the joy of responding to the changing tempo of the music. There are books available to support parents in helping their children in times of grief and all staff and children share the joy of new births. For example, a newly born baby was brought to the nursery and was greeted by everyone. The richness of the curriculum promotes spiritual development very well.
31. Provision for children's moral development is excellent. At every opportunity staff promote a positive approach to children gaining a good understanding of right and wrong. They successfully use situations to explain how behaviour can affect others. For example, when a child was involved in a dispute about a bike she was calmly and firmly diverted to another activity then spoken to about the issue. Adults' expectations are consistently high and reinforced at every opportunity reflecting the clear guidance in the behaviour policy. The staff use the set of common words in the policy to provide a consistent approach to the children and this has a very positive impact on the children's behaviour. Simple class rules have been developed with the children and are displayed in each area. As a result, the children are very well behaved, polite and take care of their environment.
32. Provision for children's social development is excellent. This is now an area of strength in the school. The admission policy of admitting children over a period of weeks has a positive impact on the children's social development. As a result, despite the short time the youngest children have been in school they have settled into the nursery routines very well. Almost all of the activities observed were arranged and organised to promote some aspects of personal or social development. For example, all resources are easily accessible and retrievable and children are consistently encouraged to find things for themselves. They are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves. For example, children are supported in choosing pieces of work they are pleased with and placing them in their own portfolios. Consequently some children are already able to find these portfolios for themselves from a well-organised storage system. Children's progress in social development is monitored and discussed through the cycle of observations and assessment. Opportunities are provided for children to mix socially outside the nursery. They visit a farm, the local shops and the Science museum. The many visitors to the nursery, including musicians, the farm animals and other older children promote an understanding of the community. Children experience social interaction in play situations, for example, in the restaurant role-play area. Staff act as very good role models. For example, when a child brought the map she had drawn to school there was only one for everyone to use. The staff used this situation to show how to share. This is then reflected in the behaviour of the children; for example, one child at a creative activity explained to the staff member that she and her friend were sharing.
33. The promotion of cultural development is excellent. As a result the children have a very good awareness of different faiths and beliefs represented in the nursery. The multiethnic profile of the nursery staff and the work of the bilingual and cultural support staff support this area of development very well. The nursery values the children's heritage by celebrating many festivals, for example, Diwali, Eid, Christmas and birthdays. Role-play areas, for example, the

Ramu and Sita palace and the birthday house, all support the children's understanding and experience of the nursery's multicultural society. Cultural development is further promoted through the good quality displays and children's work; for example, Rangoli patterns. Posters and the translations of signs and instructions give respect to the linguistic diversity. The celebrations during music week and the carnival reflect the variety of cultures represented in the nursery. For example, the steel band, Irish dancers, the costumes and food all promote the very good racial harmony and respect in the nursery.

39. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

34. The school provides very well for the educational and personal support of all its children. The well-organised nursery has very effective communication between all the staff and with home, so ensuring that each child is given a very good level of individual support and attention. Staff track the academic progress of all the children very well. They keep a good bank of observations, which allows them to give appropriate support to each child, whether they are higher attaining, have special educational needs or are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The support for higher attaining children has improved since the last inspection. Support of children with special education needs is very strong. Individual educational plans for these children contain manageable and relevant targets which are regularly reviewed. The teachers and nursery nurses work very well with staff from outside agencies to promote the learning of these children. Families who speak little English feel very welcome in the nursery. The children have access to a very good level of support from the nursery staff including bilingual assistants and the Afro-Caribbean support worker.

35. The school provides very effective guidance for the personal development of each child. This area is a strength of the school and has much improved since the last inspection. The personal, social and emotional development of the children acts as solid foundation for learning about appropriate behaviour and growing independence. Children are settled in very effectively to school life. The headteacher regards home visits as very important and ensures that they are used to best advantage to settle both the child and the family into the important first few weeks of formal education. The children's entry to nursery is appropriately staggered over the first half of term. The issue at the last inspection of the need to increase the opportunities for children to make their own choices in relation to their learning has been well addressed. Children are encouraged to be independent and grow in responsibility. They are involved well in hanging up their own coats, registering their name at the beginning of the session and helping to tidy up before they go home. By the time the children transfer to primary school the vast majority are confident and at ease with nursery life and ready to move on. The staff ensure that they all have the chance to familiarise themselves with their new school by visiting the classroom or attending a Christmas event. Reception teachers are invited to a nursery lunch in the summer term to give the children a good opportunity to meet their new teacher.

36. The school has very effective procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. All staff, whether permanent or supply, are firm and consistent in their management of any inappropriate behaviour. They are calm and fair role models and have high expectations of good behaviour. The new behaviour policy acts as a very good guide to behaviour management. It is very clear and detailed and even gives suggested wording to be used by staff when dealing with different situations. When necessary individual behaviour monitoring programmes are written so that school and home can work together to improve behaviour and social awareness of particular children. Parents are fully involved in behaviour management. In the same way that the school communicates to home, parents also have a chance to let the school know when their child has behaved particularly well or done a very good piece of work. Staff, children and parents add to the record of achievement. Any rare incidents of domineering behaviour are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The management of behaviour has improved since the last inspection.

37. The school has good procedures for promoting and checking attendance. Although the completion of registers is not a statutory requirement for nursery schools, the school maintains well kept registers for the morning and afternoon groups of children attending. Each teacher keeps a close eye on the attendance of her group of children. Any unexplained absence is followed up with a telephone call or letter. The education welfare officer is available to give support and advice as necessary. Punctuality is also monitored well to ensure parents and children make the most of their allotted time in nursery.
38. The school has satisfactory procedures for child protection. The headteacher is the person designated to link with the appropriate agency. Although all staff are aware of what to do should they be suspicious of child abuse, neither the headteacher nor the staff have had sufficiently recent training on child protection.
39. Health and safety is successfully promoted. A recent risk assessment has been carried out by the borough and the site is monitored well by the staff representative. Any potential hazards are noted for attention in the health and safety file. Fire appliances are regularly checked and the children have been introduced successfully to the fire bell. There is a good number of staff with first aid qualifications and plenty of well maintained first aid boxes. The site is safe, secure and a place where the welfare of the children is paramount.
45. **Partnership with parents and the community**
40. The school has an excellent partnership with parents. The close rapport between school and home is of great benefit to the children's academic and personal development as they start school life. The good number of parents who attended the pre inspection meeting and returned questionnaires were extremely supportive of the school, even though they all had had less than eight weeks contact. The excellent relationships with parents have been maintained since the last inspection.
41. The school provides an excellent quality of information to parents. The new and well-written prospectus gives a wealth of useful and practical information to parents new to the school. The school has outstanding home visiting procedures to ensure that both parents and children are confident and happy when starting nursery school. Parents are welcomed into the school via an attractive corridor full of interesting information about the school and local events. Throughout the school visitors can see what the children are learning and how they are progressing via display, notice boards and topic plans for each area of early years' education. Parents have very good opportunities to meet their child's teacher. They can see them informally every day and are invited twice a year to learn formally how their child is gaining in knowledge and confidence. The end of year report to pass on to the primary school is written with a strong sense of its parental audience. It is clear and direct about what their children know, understand and can do. Parents are regularly invited to curriculum meetings. The school recently held a very well supported evening for parents to increase their understanding of early years education. A good range of books covering welfare and educational issues is available for parents to borrow. Families who do not have English as their first language are able to have documents and leaflets translated for them. Already the school has produced some documentation in Asian languages. Parents of children with special educational needs are included well in setting learning targets. Targets are drafted in a clear and manageable way.
42. The involvement of parents in the school and their children's work at home is very good. Although there is no parent teacher association, parents turn out in good numbers to help organise and to support school events such as the annual carnival. The recent annual governors' meeting was tied in with a video of the children and attracted over thirty parents.

The vast majority of parents are very keen to learn more about how they can help their child's education. Parents borrow books to share with their children at home with increasing regularity. Often parents bring in their children's good work from home to include in their children's 'special books' at school. Many parents accompany outings into the community or come into the school to share their expertise. Some mothers have brought babies to be bathed and others have given demonstrations of cooking from other cultures. During the inspection week several parents participated in the children's swimming lesson at South Norwood pool. Without their continued active support this part of the curriculum could not go ahead.

43. The school has excellent links with the local community. The nursery children are not isolated within the confines of the school, but are frequently taken out into the local area to enliven and extend their learning. Children are often taken for walks around the adjacent streets to benefit their mathematical and language understanding. They look for the everyday use of counting and writing, such as house numbers and street signs. Many outings are used to promote greater understanding of society and nature. Visits to the city farms have proved most popular. Children have visited a supermarket, a book shop and travelled on trains and buses to extend their personal development. A greater understanding of citizenship has been promoted by visits from 'people who help us', such as the police officer and the postal worker. An excellent range of musicians and dancers regularly visit the school to add to the children's creative development and to support the school's exciting annual carnival. The children love to look at the lively and informative photographic record of all their outings and visitors. The albums positively enhance the children's awareness of the community and their place in it.

49. **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

49. **Leadership and management**

44. Since the last inspection, there has been continual change in the leadership and management of the school. In 1996, the school was judged to be well managed with effective leadership being provided by the headteacher. Important weaknesses included the need for whole school development planning, action plans and budget plans in order to arrange effectively for future improvements. Policies and planning were not monitored sufficiently to ensure that intentions were fully met and financial planning was at an early stage. The governors needed to be both more knowledgeable about the curriculum and more involved in the planning process. Now the leadership of the school is stable, recent and impressive progress has been made in addressing all the issues described above. Indeed, development planning and the involvement of governors are now strengths of school management.

45. The excellent leadership of the headteacher, appointed in April 1999, is giving clear direction to the school. Immediate and effective action has been taken to:

- draw up an ambitious school development plan arising from a broad base of consultation;
- improve curriculum planning and assessment procedures;
- reorganise the learning environment and curriculum to give children better opportunities for personal and social development;
- increase the match of tasks to children's attainment;
- ensure governors are fully informed and working parties with terms of reference make a useful contribution to managing, monitoring and evaluating the school's work.

1. Staff and governors are full of praise for the very positive impact of these initiatives. Parents' very supportive view of the outcomes of their children's experiences in school also indicates the success of the leadership. The work of co-ordinators and the focus of their action plans have made a positive contribution to this school improvement.

2. Important foundations have been laid to achieve effective management of the school. Governors are closely involved both in planning and monitoring the school's effectiveness. The development plan identifies appropriate priorities, is carefully costed but does not identify sufficiently precisely the ways in which targets will be monitored. Terms of reference for working parties are appropriate and in particular the finance committee is making very good progress in ensuring the budget is carefully allocated and the outcomes of spending are fully evaluated. Governors talk knowledgeably about effects of changes in the deployment of staff, for example, on the quality of the curriculum outdoors. The very recently appointed chair of governors has made a very good start in ensuring governors provide a strategic view of school development and operate as critical friends in the management of the school. Plans are in place for governors to monitor the outcomes of co-ordinators' action plans and their involvement in in-service training means governors are now knowledgeable about the curriculum. The school complies with statutory requirements other than appraisal of teachers.
3. The support and monitoring of teaching and curriculum development is good. Procedures are planned to improve this still further. Staff at planning meetings discuss the effectiveness of the curriculum and learning environment. For example, the mathematics area was re-sited and reorganised to ensure children could use it more easily. The headteacher and local authority inspector observe teaching and plans are in place to enable co-ordinators to be involved in this monitoring process. Review dates are set for policies and in particular the evolving procedures for planning are under close scrutiny. This critical analysis has led to the curriculum being increasingly better tailored to the needs of individual children. The co-ordination of the work of the staff supporting children with English as an additional language and special needs is very good. In particular, children's progress is monitored well, appropriate targets are set and are regularly reviewed. Consequently the co-ordinators have a thorough understanding of the progress these children are making.
4. The school's aims, values and policies are reflected very well through its work. The ethos of the school is very good. Parents appreciate how important each individual is made to feel and how well children have been helped to settle in and become confident learners. The school is very strong in providing equal opportunities for all its children, whatever their gender, race, social or ethnic background. The school complies with all relevant legislation relating to equal opportunities. There is no equal opportunities policy but the school's aims and objectives state very clearly that everyone is welcome and all religions and cultures are respected. In practice, equality of opportunity is very effectively interwoven into every part of the school day. Higher attaining children are given good opportunities to use their talent and extend their learning. The children's achievements are analysed according to their ethnic background. The school gives very good support to those children with English as an additional language so that they can have the same access to the curriculum as other children. The use of the bilingual and Afro Caribbean support staff is very effective in ensuring equal opportunities for all the children. Several of the staff come from the same ethnic backgrounds as the children, and therefore provide relevant and effective role models. The school makes a positive effort to share in the cultural and religious celebrations of the wide range of children in the school. The school is very successful in achieving its aim of providing a challenging curriculum in all areas except aspects of physical development.

55. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

5. The match of number, qualifications and experience of the teachers to the teaching of children in the early years is very good. All teaching staff have a qualification in nursery or infant education and are very experienced. The nursery is very generously staffed with teachers. There are seven teachers employed, although two job-share and one only teaches one day a week to cover for curriculum release. The nursery nurses and other assistants are very experienced and support the teachers extremely well. They are fully involved in planning and

assessment and contribute very positively to the promotion of learning. All the staff work together very well as a team. The headteacher holds a master's degree in early years education, which is of great benefit to management and teaching in the school. The staff team is professional and committed to high quality education.

6. The professional development of the staff is satisfactory. There are good arrangements to support staff new to the school. A staff handbook is currently being developed. Any new member of staff is given good practical information and support by the established team to ensure that they are teaching effectively as soon as possible. However, there is no regular cycle of formal appraisal in line with national requirements and job descriptions need to be updated. The newly appointed headteacher took early steps to compensate for this by ensuring that she has had an individual meeting with each member of staff to discuss their professional aspirations and training needs. This professional development is satisfactorily linked to the priorities in the school development plan. Teachers and nursery nurses have had a good level of training on the impact of the literacy hour on nursery education. They have visited reception classes in primary schools and have received effective training from their local education advisors.
7. The accommodation is satisfactory for delivering the curriculum. The inside is bright and attractive with some very good display. There is limited room for 78 children each morning and afternoon. However, the open plan room is very well managed to provide sufficient space for all areas of the curriculum. Children can work individually or in groups at a range of activities, including water play, big block construction and creative design. Each registration group has a home base where they can find a quiet place to choose and share a book. At the end of each session there is sufficient space for children to group together with their teacher for a story. However, the concentration of children is sometimes disrupted by the movement of equipment in the open area as staff prepare for the end of the session. The outside area is unsatisfactory. There is sufficient space, but it is under developed. Although staff do provide a cross section of the curriculum outside the children do not have sufficiently stimulating areas to explore and investigate independently; for example, there is no designated place for planting and digging. Many children enjoy pedalling around on the tricycles, but they are not sufficiently challenged with corners, slopes or barriers to enhance their control and awareness of space. It is unsatisfactory that the headteacher does not have an office of her own. However, the school has well conceived plans for major re-organisation of both the inside and outside accommodation, with precise expenditure set aside for these educational priorities.
8. The school has a good range of resources. Nearly all areas of the curriculum have a good amount of appropriate and well-maintained resources. Money has recently been well spent in upgrading many of the resources. Equipment is stored neatly and tidily. Books and resource packs are labelled well. Many of the everyday resources are accessible to children, encouraging independence and responsibility for their activities. Of particular note is the very good range of mathematics equipment, storybooks and multicultural instruments. Outside the resources are unsatisfactory for the promotion of climbing and gross motor skills. The climbing equipment is not sufficiently stimulating for the children. There are no slopes, turns or road markings to encourage more accurate control of the tricycles. The role-play house is a good outside resource. During the inspection week it was attractively decorated and used well as a 'party house'. The school has maintained the good levels of staffing and resources since the last inspection and has agreed plans to improve the accommodation.

59. **The efficiency of the school**

9. The school is very efficient and effective in using the finances and resources made available for the best use of the children's education. There has been substantial improvement since the last inspection. At that time a key issue for the school was to develop whole school planning, action plans and budget plans in order to arrange effectively for future school improvements.

The school then had a substantial amount which had not been spent and which was carried over to the next year. In the next few years the school had unstable leadership and the carry over amount increased as major spending plans were held in abeyance. Since the arrival of the new headteacher and the greater involvement of the governing body financial planning has dramatically improved. They have acted very promptly to overcome deficiencies in budget planning. A very successful whole school review day was held last term. It included governors, staff and parents and resulted in a clear statement on the school's aims and vision. The school development plan is a very good working tool and clearly links the priorities for the school with the money available. The school management has worked very effectively to ensure that the large contingency figure is now earmarked for essential educational spending in the school. The proposed carry over figure now stands at a much more sensible level of five per cent of the whole budget. Money allocated for special educational needs and children with English as an additional language is spent very wisely. The recently convened finance working party is experienced and knowledgeable. It scrutinises spending very carefully to ensure that it is cost effective and ultimately benefits the education of the children.

10. Very effective use is made of teaching and support staff. Teachers are deployed very well to promote learning across the three groups of children. Nursery nurses and other staff supporting children with English as an additional language or with special educational needs are used very effectively. They are all fully involved in planning and assessment, so that children are given tight individual support whatever activity they are doing in the nursery. The teachers and nursery nurses who share jobs across a split week are effective and efficient in communicating information for the benefit of the children's learning. The effective deployment of staff has improved since the last inspection, particularly in relation to clearing up at the end of the sessions.
11. The use of learning resources is good. Resources are well managed and available for all areas of the curriculum each day. They are very neatly stored and catalogued for quick and effective retrieval. Children are able to fetch their own resources because of how effectively they are labelled and stored in accessible places. The use of accommodation is good. Inside space is limited, but with very effective management all areas of the curriculum can be accommodated, including water, sand and brick play. Every small corner or available wall space is stimulating and educational. Outside some areas are under used. There are some areas of grass, but they are not developed to encourage children's independent investigation and exploration. During the inspection week children enjoyed riding around on tricycles. However, the tarmac is not adequately laid out, for example, to promote improved control and make effective use of this outside area.
12. The nursery has good financial control and school administration. The school administration officer has been at the nursery for many years and knows the secretarial procedures very well. She runs an efficient day-to-day organisation allowing the teaching staff to concentrate on their work with the children. Invoices and orders are sent out and paid effectively with reference to the funds available. The administration officer is competent in handling the finance systems, but as yet no one involved with the finances is sufficiently knowledgeable about computerised procedures. There are plans to address this in the immediate future. The headteacher and chair of governors ensure that there are tight financial controls. Recommendations in the last audit have been satisfactorily met.
13. Taking into account the average attainment of the children on entry and the resulting good attainment and progress after their time in nursery, together with the very good teaching provided and the very positive attitudes to learning which the children acquire, the school gives very good value for money. The value that the school gives has improved since the last inspection.

64. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

64. AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

14. Since the last inspection, the staff have improved upon the good practice identified in the previous report. They have also resolved issues raised by the previous report. Staff have increased the number of opportunities for pupils to make choices and decisions in their learning and help them develop further as independent learners. For example, when they arrive the children choose an activity straight away and select their own materials from a wide variety of resources which are well organised and easy for the children to retrieve. Children make very good progress. Children's attainment in personal and social education is likely to be well above expectation by the time they are five years of age.
15. Children have settled very well into the nursery in a very short space of time. They are very familiar with routines and move about the nursery with confidence. Most children can make decisions about tasks well. They are interested in their activities and generally settle well and persevere. The children have very good opportunities to participate in activities which promote their personal and social skills. For example, they help themselves to overalls before painting or playing with water. Children work very well in groups, such as when they play board games and pass cards to each other, address each other politely and make good eye contact. They sustain interest and concentrate very well when working as individuals, completing tasks and placing their work in the appropriate place. All children participate well in tidying up.
16. Children's progress is very good. Staff have high expectations of good behaviour. The staff and children have developed simple positive class rules including 'use your hands carefully'. They make very good progress in their social skills and take part in group games where they practise negotiating skills well. Children with special educational needs have opportunities to practise taking turns in the speech and communication group and progress very well.
17. Children have very positive attitudes to learning. They come into the nursery happily and separate from their parents well. They respond very well to the polite example set by staff and courteously address each other by name. Children obey rules; for example, they keep the wheeled toys behind the drawn boundaries for most of the time. They listen attentively and respond to instructions very well. All behave very well and take responsibility, for example, one girl was delighted when she was giving out the work to others. Children are keen to be involved in clearing up and several check what needs to be done.
18. The teaching of personal and social education is very good. Staff are consistent in using the same good strategies and methods. They have a good knowledge of the children's backgrounds and effectively engage both the children and parents in conversation at the beginning of sessions by referring to events in their lives. For example, one member of staff asked if Granny was still staying with them. This promotes children's confidence in coming to the nursery, supports them in feeling valued and develops their self-esteem. Staff promote very good social relations, for example, in a board game a member of staff asked a child to give a card to another who needed it and was very active in encouraging another child to request a card from one of his peers. This promoted negotiation strategies very well. Staff are very good at noticing and commenting on positive behaviour. For example, children were praised when they wiped their feet before entering the hut and sat quickly ready for an activity. All adults are excellent role models. For example, two members of staff provided a good example of sharing when one child looked confused as she had brought only one map from home for everyone to use. Children with special needs are supported well with clear instructions, for example, 'You are going to do good listening' and 'Put the label in that bin'

which promote listening skills and independence. The organisation of resources and the clear learning objectives in the planning support the development of children's independence skills very well. They are all very confident in accessing and retrieving resources, for example, the musical instruments from the music area, and taking off and putting on their own coats.

69.
LITERACY

LANGUAGE AND

19. Attainment during the last inspection was generally as expected for children of their age. At that time, all children made good progress overall, especially in reading. However, the pace was too slow in writing, particularly for higher attaining children. Teaching was satisfactory overall but planning for language development was not given sufficient focus and some groups at story time were too large to satisfactorily meet the different needs of the children involved. The quality of teaching is now good overall and strengths in the provision have been maintained. Planning carefully details the language to be used and encouraged by staff. The organisation of groups is more appropriate and higher attaining children progress at a suitable pace in writing.
20. By the age of five, most children are likely to achieve expectations for language and literacy in all areas except reading where standards are likely to be above expectations. All children make good progress. In general, children listen to stories well but find it difficult to listen to comments made by each other in a group. They are able to listen carefully to songs where they have to make contributions at the right moment. Most children respond to instructions appropriately. Twelve children with English as an additional language used only their heritage language to communicate prior to entry to nursery. Many now know and use simple words and phrases in English and understand more than they are able to articulate. Some children with special educational needs have very limited communication skills. Other children are extremely articulate, use interesting vocabulary and can give reasons for the things they experience in their activities. All are very familiar with handling books. Many use pictures as prompts to retell familiar tales accurately recalling repeated refrains. Children learn to recognise their names through self-registration and by using labels to identify their work. Higher attaining children collect their names from alphabetically ordered pots and also have sight recognition of names of their friends. They are aware of at least the initial letter of their name, often know its name and the sound associated with it. They can identify the same letter when it appears in different writing. Most children regard themselves as writers and even if they do not yet use recognisable letters they make marks to which they ascribe meaning.
21. Children particularly enjoy listening to stories and are eager to comment on the characters and illustrations. Higher attaining children speculate on what might happen. They happily write in role-play, for example, completing orders in the restaurant, some using recognisable figures and letters, others using representative marks. All children including those with special educational needs and who use English as an additional language make good progress. Careful teaching means these children grow in confidence in their ability to communicate effectively. This progress also relates to the careful planning for language development and choice of resources to match the different attainments of all the children.
22. Teaching is good overall with some very good features. In particular, staff use their voices extremely well to captivate children at story time so that they have a love of books and make a flying start in developing the right attitudes in learning to read. They make best progress in the sessions where they are encouraged to comment on the story and illustrations as well as to listen to the story. Puppets and other resources are used very well to bring stories alive. Children's behaviour is managed very well. Staff use songs very effectively for many purposes. For example, when a group had difficulty listening to someone talking about his holidays, the teacher started up a song where they had to listen carefully to add their name in the verse. Songs are also used to reinforce early literacy skills of phonics and rhyming.

Children make very good progress in speaking skills when they are encouraged to respond to open questions which require extended answers rather than single words. However, this strategy is not consistently adopted. Planning carefully considers the language children could use within their different activities and identifies questions which will promote good quality learning. The involvement of staff with a focus on bilingual children means their work dovetails into the curriculum very well. Staff make succinct and telling observations of children which inform the planning process well and ensure targets set for individual children are effective.

23. Management of language and literacy is very good. Weaknesses in the provision highlighted in the last report have been addressed very well. An appropriate action plan is in place to take the area forward. The quality and quantity of books and resources is excellent.

74.

MATHEMATICS

24. Since the last inspection, improvements have been achieved in the teaching and learning of mathematics. At that time children's attainment was generally in line with what might be expected, however higher attaining children achieved better standards in number. All children made good progress. The quality of teaching was satisfactory overall, but sometimes failed to focus on the language of mathematics, gave insufficient opportunity for problem solving and was too infrequently used in creative play. Most children are now likely to achieve above the expected standards by the time they are five. Teaching is good, carefully promotes the understanding and use of mathematical language and exploits the mathematical potential in children's activities across the curriculum.
25. All children make good progress in developing understanding across the breadth of mathematics. Most children develop counting skills well; for example, they count the number of children who have chosen to take part in dance. Higher attaining children recognise numerals 0 to 9 and use them in recording the bill in the burger bar. They are able to sort by colour and several inquired of inspectors why they had purple name labels because everyone belonged to blue, red or green groups. Many children are aware of how different shapes are used in the environment, for example, circles make good wheels, squares are used for windows and rectangles for name labels. Some children can identify the shapes by name. They are developing an awareness of the properties of three-dimensional shapes. Spheres roll well whereas cubes do not and some children orientated a cylinder so that it rolled and then so that it slid. Children are developing an awareness of time and one remarked of a character in a story 'Daddy will be there after a long time'. Celebration of birthdays helps children become aware of their ages and some know the months of their birthdays. Incidentally, while making sand castles, children compare size remarking 'My one's bigger than yours'; they use words such as 'heavier than' and many understand even if they do not use language describing the position of objects.
26. Children greatly enjoy the mathematics woven through their daily activities. Some will spend time concentrating on pouring water from one container to another or fitting mathematical interlocking puzzles together. Playing hopscotch is clearly enormous fun as is negotiating the price of their lunch in the restaurant. Children with special needs or who are extending their mathematical language enjoy their activities because of skilful intervention by staff.
27. Teaching is good. Children's mathematical understanding is developed across the curriculum. Adults extend children's play in the burger bar. They ask 'How much do I owe you?' and request 'Please could you write that down for me?' and 'May I have one more?'. They encourage children to comment on whether they have sufficient chips. In design and making activities, the shapes children use in construction are discussed and relevant opportunities to reinforce counting are exploited. Open questions, such as, 'how can we make it balance?' and 'what do we need?', are used well to encourage children to think. Children are carefully supported in acquiring the necessary computer skills to use programs which practise

recognition of numerals and reinforce concepts of size. Planning pays appropriate attention to the extension of children's mathematical language and children with English as an additional language are carefully drawn into mathematical role-play. Staff use mathematical language well and children are encouraged to take up the good example in their play.

28. Management of mathematics is very good. The learning environment is carefully monitored to maximise children's involvement and this has resulted in effective reorganisation. Resources are very well arranged and labelled and an effective action plan is in place in order to maintain high standards.

UNDERSTANDING

29. Since the last inspection, the nursery has improved on the standards in teaching, which is now good overall. Attainment remains in line overall but is above expectations in technology and science. The children continue to make good progress. There are now more opportunities for problem solving in the activities planned. This is an area of development identified in the co-ordinator's curriculum action plan in response to the previous inspection.
30. Attainment by the age of five in knowledge and understanding of the world is likely to be in line with expectations. For information and communication technology and science, attainment is higher; for example, children know that magnets attract and pick up objects and magnifying glasses make things bigger. Many understand the journey of a letter; even children with English as an additional language contributed to telling a story containing reference to a post-office. Children are able to describe what they are doing. For example, in the outside building site activity, children could respond to questions and explain preferences. One child remarked, 'I like the truck because it's got stronger wheels'. One child spent a long time solving a problem by making a barrier out of small bricks to prevent his truck from falling off the edge and could explain what he was doing. In sand and water play, children use appropriate language, for example, when referring to a sand mould, 'My one's bigger than yours,' and 'full', 'empty', 'more', 'less' and 'overflow'. Children using the computer are able to play counting and matching games. They have good mouse control and can use it effectively to drag and match, for example, shoes to the appropriate person. Most children are aware of printing from the computer. The many well-planned visits to the local shops, health clinic, Godstone Farm and the Science Museum, support their understanding of the wider world. Children have experience of the past and present through the celebration of birthdays and festivals. Some children have a wider experience and can talk about, for example, being on an aeroplane for a long time when visiting Australia. They are becoming increasingly familiar and independent in using a range of techniques in designing and making activities, for example, cutting, sticking, taping and gluing.
31. Children's progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Children gain knowledge and develop confidence in using information technology very quickly and children with special educational needs are well supported and overall are making good progress. Children with English as an additional language are sometimes making slower progress, for example, in the magnet activity because of the lack of understanding due to their limited language. Children are consolidating problem-solving skills of pushing and pulling, for example, using the trucks on the building site. Good cross-curricular links are made; for example, during a group story time children learned what happens when air is released from a balloon. Good progress is made in understanding the properties of water and building upon prior knowledge. Through the children's own investigations and the adults' encouragement, children extend their understanding, for example when they are experimenting in the water tub.
32. Children enjoy the many varied activities offered to them. They are very well behaved during the lessons and persevere in tasks. They are confident; for example, in the role-play area they act out the role of the restaurant users and owners. They are keen to participate, for example, looking at the effect of the kaleidoscope and examining seeds with magnifying glasses. They sustain activities for a good length of time and listen to the staff very well. They have very good relationships with each other when sharing resources, for example, at the interactive display on the growing table. Children who have English as an additional language are keen to respond and sometimes do so using their heritage language. Children have a good rapport with each other. They talk to each other and ask for equipment when they are experimenting in the water tub.

33. Teaching is good overall. Staff have a good understanding of the subject and have clear learning objectives in their planning for this area. They employ very good questioning skills to extend children's investigative skills and knowledge. For example, in the building site, the teacher asked open-ended questions such as 'What does the truck need to get up here?' which promoted problem solving. When working with children on the computer, questions such as 'What shall we do?' promoted children's inquisitive skills. The children's vocabulary is extended through questioning and responding to children's questions. For example, when asked by a child if it was raining, a member of staff took the group to look in puddles to see if they could see raindrops splashing. The staff have very good, calm interactions with the children and use their voices effectively to gain attention and sustain interest. The staff behave in an inquisitive way and use technical language correctly, for example, when working with the children on a focus activity investigating magnetism or with magnifying glasses at the plant collection. Not all staff are confident in operating computer peripherals, for example, the printer. Relationships are very good between adults and children and staff are very aware of the needs of children with English as an additional language. Children are encouraged to persist with a task until it is completed. Good use is made of the resources and they are attractively arranged and displayed.
34. The subject co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and useful plans for developing the outside area, which is limited at the moment in its contribution to this area of learning. The annual science week involves both children and parents in exciting problem solving activities. Visitors such as staff with animals from the local city farm enrich children's understanding of the wider world.

85.
DEVELOPMENT

PHYSICAL

35. In 1996, the children achieved standards expected for their age and made good progress. This progress was best where adults were involved in helping children develop skills, for example, balancing. The quality of teaching was good and the outdoor environment was carefully planned. Children benefited from a swimming programme and quickly gained confidence in the water. The swimming sessions continue to make a very positive contribution to the children's physical development. However, whilst the teaching of fine motor control, for example, handling tools, is good, it is only satisfactory for developing the children's gross motor skills outside.
36. Overall, children's attainment in physical development is likely to meet expectations by the age of five and they make satisfactory progress. However, they make very good progress in developing fine motor skills and confidence in the water and are likely to achieve higher standards in these areas. Children with special educational needs make good progress in all respects because of the active adult involvement in developing their confidence and independence. Many children make marks using felt tips, pencils, paintbrushes, and many, but not all, already have a secure tripod grip. The children are capable of precise movements, for example, filling containers in a water tray and balancing a tall construction of blocks and adding to it. They use glue sticks and apply liquid glue with a glue spreader. Whilst some children have mastered the correct use of scissors, others are still practising this skill. They complete simple jigsaws and join other interlocking equipment successfully and use a range of movements for printing, for example, sliding and tapping. In dance, the children are learning a variety of movements, including marching, skipping, hopping, tip toeing and galloping. The relatively few children who used the climbing and balancing equipment, vehicles and balls during the inspection generally used this equipment competently. Those observed swimming were confident and most were fearless about putting their faces in the water, floating on their backs with and without a float and were developing good leg and arm strokes.
37. Children enjoy all aspects of physical development whether it is the refined movements of

printing with paint or climbing in the playground when adults are involved in their learning. However, children rarely use the climbing and balancing equipment without active encouragement. During the inspection, children of Afro-Caribbean heritage showed the most spontaneous enjoyment of and initiative in using the equipment outside.

38. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good and very good features. Swimming is taught very well. Appropriate strategies are used for young children, for example, imagining cuddling a teddy bear while floating on their backs with a float. Parents make a valuable contribution to developing the children's confidence in the water. The children's finer movements and control are developed successfully through exposure to an impressive breadth of tools and techniques. Skills are carefully taught with the aim of each child becoming independent. Dance contributes well to mastery of a range of movements and the children are encouraged to link movements together in response to music. In contrast, there is generally insufficient involvement by adults in the development of children's control, co-ordination and awareness of space outside. Few children use the equipment available without encouragement and those that do need more support in extending their activities and in understanding how to use the equipment safely although children with special educational needs are supported well. Planning has given these matters attention in the weeks prior to the inspection but they lack the need for continual focus.
39. The improvement of the outdoor space is an appropriate and high priority on the school development plan. At present, there is little protection from poor weather, no provision for growing things and the area is unstimulating.

90. **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

40. At the time of the last inspection attainment was in line with expectations. The children made good progress in dance and some aspects of music. However, children working in very large groups made limited progress. The provision has improved in important respects. Children, by the time they are five, are now likely to exceed expectations for this area of learning. The quality of teaching remains good overall. However, the grouping of children is now more appropriate resulting in consistently good progress being made.
41. Children are confident in mixing colours independently for painting. This area of learning supports their personal development. They ask appropriate questions such as 'Do I need a tiny bit more?'. They control brushes for stirring paint and use sponge shapes to print using Paul Klee paintings as a model. The higher attaining children can describe shades of colour, for example, light and dark blue. They quickly learn how to use tools such as the sticky tape dispenser to help them in their collage work. Role-play is strongly developed. Children in the restaurant role-play area engage in imaginative play and interact well using the language of the restaurant, for example, 'We have beef burgers but we do not have any chips' and 'Coke is off, it's milk shake today'. Children with special educational needs participate but with less verbal interaction. Children play imaginatively together in other areas of the nursery. For example, two children were acting out going to hospital to have a baby. In dance, most children are mastering a range of movements and some use these to move imaginatively to music. Most children can participate in songs and rhymes responding appropriately to instructions in the songs. For example, the children with special needs in speech and communication could respond to a name song well. Children, including those with English as an additional language join in playing musical instruments and most are able to shake and tap along with a clapping rhythm. They are able to select and tidy away the instruments very well in the attractive music area.
42. Progress is good for all children including those with special educational needs. Children develop listening skills well through following actions in songs, for example, 'head, shoulders, knees and toes' and most, when encouraged, join in singing and remember songs. Children

practise moving and responding to music both inside and outside; for example, children learned to form a circle for a singing game. In painting children completed patterns and consolidated paint mixing skills well. Higher attaining children were beginning to put their own name on their work.

43. Children respond well to this area of learning. They enjoy playing instruments, select them independently and tidy away and respond well to each other. They sustain concentration and co-operate; for example, when they were working at the collage table one child commented 'We are sharing'. Overall children persist in tasks for a good length of time and respond to staff well. Most children are attentive and follow instructions; for example, holding hands together in singing games. They are sensitive to others; for example, inviting a child with special educational needs to join in the game. They make good links across the curriculum. They were very interested to see a fox through the fence and one child went inside to draw a picture of it. Most join in singing when encouraged by the staff and enjoy reciting rhymes especially when different voices are required; for example, in the three bears.
44. Teaching is good overall. There are clear learning objectives in the termly and weekly plans and the activities match the needs of the children. The plentiful and attractive resources support the children's learning very well. The creative area is very well organised. Children are able to access the resources which supports their development of independence. In dance the children are encouraged to participate by selecting a disc to say they want to join in. The pace of lessons is good overall and children's interests are sustained by, for example, choosing a variety of music in dance. Good questioning promotes imaginative play in the role-play area, for example 'How much do I owe you?' and good examples of politeness such as 'Thank you, that was delicious' supports children's social development well. Observation skills are encouraged, for example, one member of staff drew the children's attention to Paul Klee's work to help them create patterns in a similar style. Children are encouraged to work and tidy away in a calm manner with good use of voice to retain attention. Staff have high expectations for children to participate in singing and music making. Occasionally staff have unclear knowledge of specific needs of children who are participating in their activity.
45. Staff work well together to develop policies in drama, music, art and dance. The change in approach to music by integrating sessions into the day has raised standards but may not cover all aspects in this area with all children. Staff keep track of children who participate and are working on ways to achieve full coverage. The music fortnight and carnival with visiting musicians, both professional and local school children, reflect the multicultural diversity in the nursery and support this area of learning very well.

96. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

96. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

46. A team of three inspectors carried out the inspection spending a total of 6.5 days in school. The inspection included an initial visit to the school, the collection of evidence from a wide range of documents provided by the school and discussions with staff, governors, parents and educational professionals who visit the school. In addition, the team spent 15 hours 55 minutes making lesson observations, five hours 20 minutes examining children's work and teachers' observational notes and three hours five minutes discussing children's work with them, sharing books, watching videos of the nursery and tracking individuals involved in a variety of activities.

47. The inspectors took account of a range of factors in reaching judgements about each child's progress in lessons. These were their age, their stage on the special needs register and where relevant their use of English as an additional language. The inspectors observed the

beginnings and ends of day, accompanied a swimming lesson off site and attended meetings concerning planning and special needs. The views of 26 parents who attended a meeting prior to the inspection and 45 responses to the parents' questionnaire were taken into account when making judgements.

99. **DATA AND INDICATORS**

99. **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Nursery	58.5	0	14	N/A

99. **Teachers and classes**

99. **Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	4.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	26.6

99. **Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)**

Total number of education support staff:	10
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	155
Average class size:	19

99. **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998/99
	£
Total Income	242,542
Total Expenditure	226,176
Expenditure per pupil (146 pupils)	1,549
Balance brought forward from previous year	22,458
Balance carried forward to next year	38,824

99. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out: 119
 Number of questionnaires returned: 45

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	56	40	4	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	60	40	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	27	51	22	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	50	50	0	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	43	52	5	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	50	48	2	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	57	36	7	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	45	43	12	0	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	58	35	7	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	44	53	2	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	82	16	2	0	0

No other issues were raised by groups of parents.