

INSPECTION REPORT

Baylis Court Nursery School
Slough

LEA area: Slough

Unique Reference Number: 109761

Inspection Number: 189883

Headteacher: Mrs. V. Smith

Reporting inspector: Mrs. G. Crew
22837

Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706972

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
Type of control:	Local Education Authority
Age range of pupils:	3 to 5
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Oatlands Drive Slough Berkshire SL1 3HS
Telephone number:	01753 521917
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Appropriate authority:	Slough Borough Council
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. D. Almond
Date of previous inspection:	October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs. G. Crew, Rgl	Mathematics	Attainment and progress
	Knowledge and understanding of the world	Teaching
	Creative development	Leadership and management
	English as an additional language	The efficiency of the school
Mrs. M. Malin, Lay Inspector	Equality of opportunity	Attendance
		Support, guidance and children's welfare
		Partnership with parents and the community
Mrs. J. Denham	Personal and social development	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
	Language and literacy	Curriculum and assessment
	Physical development	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
	Special educational needs	Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Children's attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good. Relationships are good across the school. The provision for spiritual, moral and social education is good and provision for cultural development is very good. The standards in social and personal development make a significant contribution to children's learning and progress across the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory and children make sound progress. The provision for children with special educational needs is satisfactory and provision for English as an additional language is good.
- The adequacy and use of resources are good. The available accommodation is used effectively.
- Efficiency of financial control and school administration is very good.
- Procedures for promoting good behaviour and discipline and for promoting attendance are good.

• Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Procedures for assessing attainment and the use of assessment to inform planning are very poor. Monitoring of discipline and good behaviour is very poor. Procedures for monitoring progress and personal development and for promoting wellbeing, health and safety are poor. There are health and safety risks in the school grounds and interior.
- II. Development planning, monitoring and evaluation are poor. Support and monitoring of teaching and curriculum development are also poor.
- III. In the garden area, overall supervision, teaching and planning for the improvement of physical development are poor.
- IV. Equality of access and opportunity for full-time children, for higher attaining children and, to a slightly lesser degree, children with special educational needs is unsatisfactory.
- V. Children's attendance and punctuality is poor.

The school has a number of important strengths. The weaknesses will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which 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 been through a prolonged period of uncertainty and this has affected the rate of improvement. Since the last inspection improvement has been poor. There has been little progress in addressing the key issues or minor issues raised in the previous report. The new headteacher has implemented some structures as an interim measure, but these have only been in place since September and it is too soon to judge effectiveness. However, the reorganisation of the school day and a review of the curriculum have been positive starting points. The school has continued to provide a wide range of opportunities for learning and a positive, caring ethos. However, rates of progress have not improved and outdoor opportunities for children to learn new skills remain limited. A complete revision of the school's curriculum guidance has not taken place. No policy for assessment or procedures to ensure greater co-ordination and consistency of approach have been established. Whilst the headteacher has established an interim school development plan, construction has not improved to ensure it provides greater detail. The school has not sufficiently addressed the weaknesses previously identified. Nevertheless, the commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors to improving school development indicates that the school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

· **Standards**

Children’s attainment on entry to the nursery is generally well below that expected for their age in most areas of learning. The majority of children have English as an additional language, and speak and understand very little English. Some have below average skills in their own language. A number of children have very little or no English. They have limited understanding of spoken language and find it difficult to maintain their attention for long. By the time they are five, the majority are on line to reach the national desirable learning outcomes in personal and social education and progress is good. In language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding attainment is below expectations for the majority of children. However, they make satisfactory progress from the low level of attainment on entry. A significant number of children make good progress and achieve the expected level in creative development. Physical development of manipulative skills are also developed well through creative activities. However, children are not taught to develop their physical skills outdoors and progress is just satisfactory. Children with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall and those who have English as an additional language make good progress when they are given appropriate support. Standards of attainment have declined slightly since the last inspection when reported as average in language and literacy and in mathematics and above average in scientific activities and physical development.

· **Quality of teaching**

Teaching in areas of learning	
Personal and social development	Satisfactory
Language and literacy	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Good
Physical development	Satisfactory
Creative development	Good

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In 45 per cent of lessons teaching is good. Unsatisfactory teaching was observed in 5 per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching has declined slightly since the last inspection when there was no unsatisfactory teaching. There has been no rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning since the last inspection. Teachers and nursery nurses carry out teaching equally. An almost equal number of lessons were observed for each group of staff. The nursery nurses taught more than double the percentage of good lessons. The quality of teaching is variable across the school with a higher percentage of good teaching in the small room. The quality of teaching is reflected in the good progress made by the children and parents recognise and appreciate the quality of the non-teaching staff’s work.

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	Good, particularly when children are supported to understand each other's behaviour.
Attendance	Poor. Attendance in some group sessions falls to 71 per cent.
Ethos*	Satisfactory overall. Attitudes to work and relationships are good, but the lack of assessment and monitoring procedures weaken the climate for learning.
Leadership and management	The headteacher is providing satisfactory guidance to the staff and governors, but systems and structures for moving the school forward are currently weak.
Curriculum	The curriculum is broad and generally balanced with the exception of areas of physical development. The curriculum does not ensure that children's knowledge, understanding and skills are built on progressively during their time at the school.
Children with special educational needs	Provision is satisfactory. However, individual education plans do not include appropriate and specific targets to ensure good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good. Cultural development is very good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The number, match and experience of staff is satisfactory. Accommodation is adequate for the delivery of the curriculum and aspects of the interior have been enhanced through redecoration. The grounds and exterior are not as well maintained. Resources are used effectively to promote learning.
Value for money	Satisfactory.

**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	What some parents are not happy about
VI. Children generally enjoy coming to school. VII. Children are cared for and looked after. VIII. Children learn to play and live together. IX. Nursery nurses and the secretary are always there to listen.	X. Unhappy about the process of reporting XI. That children seem to be handled XII. Changes in the nursery routines.

	XIII. Communication with and from the
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Inspectors' judgements support the positive views held by the parents. Inspectors found the child protection procedures to be appropriate and children were treated with respect during the inspection. It is noted that there are inconsistencies in managing children's behaviour across the school. Changes in routines and systems have been appropriately put in place as response to a key issue from the last inspection. It is the inspectors' judgement that this has been an effective management decision although it is too soon to review their effectiveness. The headteacher has had only a short time to work towards establishing positive relationships with all parents. She is aware of the need to involve parents in the life of the school and develop good communication.

• **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to improve standards of education and rectify weaknesses identified in the inspection, the headteacher, school staff, governing body and appropriate authority must:

- ◆. Improve the leadership of the school by:
 - . producing and implementing plans for strategic development that identifies success criteria for proposed priorities which are time related, measurable, evaluative and impact on the quality of education;
 - . establishing and implementing policies and guidance that reflect the school's aims and ensure consistency.
(Paragraphs: 22, 24, 30, 31, 35, 40-42, 44, 45, 46, 51, 54, 55, 58, 61, 62, 66, 67, 69, 70-72, 74, 77)

- ◆. Raise the standard of attainment through the use of effective assessment by:
 - . implementing a policy;
 - . using assessment to inform planning;
 - . monitoring progress and personal development.
(Paragraphs: 11, 13, 16, 18, 22, 26, 29, 34, 36, 38, 40, 41, 45, 61, 72)

- ◆. Ensure the equality of access and opportunity for all children throughout the school day by:
 - . improving the organisation of the day;
 - . grouping children appropriately;
 - . planning activities to provide suitable challenge for children at different levels of attainment;
 - . improving attendance.
(Paragraphs: 12, 13, 16, 18, 22, 26, 29, 34, 36, 38, 40, 41, 45, 61, 72)

- ◆. Improve the quality of education provided in the outdoor area by:
 - . revising and reorganising outdoor provision in line with national guidance;
 - . increasing direct teaching and intervention during outdoor time to promote children's physical skills.
(Paragraphs: 10, 20, 21, 36, 38, 39, 41, 79, 83, 120, 123, 124)

- ◆. Improve accommodation and grounds to reduce the risks of health and safety for children and staff.
.. (Paragraphs: 58, 78)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Baylis Court Nursery School was established approximately 53 years ago as a day nursery to accommodate the children of the women working on the Slough Trading Estate during the Second World War. The original buildings were demolished nearly twenty years ago and the present buildings were erected as temporary accommodation at this time. Air raid shelters built during the war open onto the nursery garden and are used for storage. The school site is relatively spacious and shares the same campus as the neighbouring infant and junior school. The school now serves the local area of Manor Park and a few families come from the wider Slough area due to family connections in the area of the school. Housing is generally older local authority housing and small pockets of new developments. In April 1998, Slough became a Unitary Authority and took over control of the school from Berkshire Local Education Authority.

2. The school currently has 10 full-time and 118 part-time children, which gives a full-time equivalent of 73.5. This is fewer children than at the time of the last inspection. The number of full-time children has remained stable since the last inspection. The criteria for allocation of full-time places is unclear. Part-time children attend either five morning or five afternoon sessions. Children begin attending the nursery the term after their third birthday, but leave at different times according to the school they will be moving to. Some children leave at the end of the term before they become five and some at the end of the term in which they become five. A minority leave at the end of the summer to start in reception classes in the September of the academic year in which they become five. Consequently, children spend varying amounts of time at the nursery.

3. Sixty two per cent of the children are boys, and 46 per cent are girls. This difference is more marked than in the last inspection when 51 per cent were boys and 49 per cent were girls. The difference in the gender balance does impact on groupings for teaching. Seventy two per cent of children are from ethnic minority groups, mainly Indian and Pakistani, which is similar to the time of the previous inspection and a greater number than average. Twenty eight per cent of the children are white. Currently there are some refugee children attending the school from Somalia, Albania and Kosovo. Sixty nine per cent of children have English as an additional language and 16 per cent of these are supported by Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant funding that began in April of this year. The nature of the school population is transient and, as reported in the last inspection, a significant number of children go abroad for extended visits each year. Fifteen per cent of the children have identified special educational needs.

4. Slough has been identified as having more children than average coming from disadvantaged homes, and a significant number of the children are from single parent families and many from homes where the nature of employment cause stress and anxiety. For example, parents working difficult shift systems or mothers working long hours. One third of the full-time children are eligible to free school meals. The attainment of children on entry is overall well below that expected for their age with very few having any experience of attending a playgroup before starting the nursery. Attainment is compounded by the difficulty of many children in understanding and expressing themselves in English.

5. The previous inspection reported that significant changes had taken place in staffing after a long period of stability. Since the last inspection there has been a considerable change in staff and the school is only just emerging from a five year period of uncertainty with regard to staffing and the future of the school. During this time, five school terms, the school was supported by an acting headteacher. The current headteacher took up post with effect from

September 1999 and the newly appointed deputy headteacher does not take up post until January 2000.

6. The school has not reviewed its aims for sometime. The school prospectus states that the school aims to:

- educate the child as a whole in an atmosphere of mutual respect through planning activities and experiences so that they are child-centred;
- encourage children to explore and experiment so that they are finding out about the world in which they live both natural and man made.
- promote children's learning about their own customs and festivals and those of others so that they develop cultural awareness.

1. The headteacher has set targets in the current school development plan that generally reflect the key issues of the last inspection. She is aware that the targets set are priorities for school development in 1999/2000. Targets identified are to:

- organise the day to maximise the opportunities for teachers to intervene effectively in a planned activity;
- improve outdoor play and health and safety;
- continue to develop assessment;
- revise curriculum guidance, develop planning and improve opportunities for language development.

1. Key Indicators

Attendance

Attendance is generally in the region of 84 per cent.

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	0
Satisfactory or better	95
Less than satisfactory	5

8. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

8. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

8. Attainment and progress

2.Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is generally well below that expected for their age in most areas of learning. Few children have attended playgroup provision before starting school. The majority of children have English as an additional language, and speak and understand very little English and some have below average skills in their own language. A number of children have very little or no English. Other children have special educational needs, or have lacked appropriate experiences to develop their language and literacy skills to an expected level. Many children enter the school only able to speak single words or very short sentences. They have limited understanding of spoken language and find it difficult to maintain their attention for long.

3.By the time they are five, the majority are on line to reach the desirable outcomes for this stage of their education in personal and social education and progress is good. A small minority do not achieve expected levels. These children tend to be those who have entered the school with well below average skills in their home language, and no English, and those with special educational needs. A few have both these difficulties. Nevertheless, these children make at least satisfactory progress due to the support they receive. Levels of attainment in this area of learning have been maintained since the last inspection. In language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world attainment is below expectations for the majority of children. However, they make satisfactory progress from the low level of attainment on entry. There are a small minority of children who achieve the expected level and several who achieve above expectations. At the time of the last inspection, attainment in these areas of learning was reported as in line with expectations. Children make good progress in creative development and achieve the expected level of attainment. They also develop their manipulative skills well through creative activities. Children are not taught how to improve their physical skills when outdoors and progress in physical development is satisfactory. Overall, children achieve the expected levels of attainment in physical development. At that time, attainment was reported as average in language and literacy and in mathematics and above average in scientific activities and in physical development.

4.Standards of attainment have declined slightly since the last inspection. The number of children with special educational needs has increased significantly and as a consequence the level of attainment on entry has been affected. However, the school has not addressed key issues of the last report regarding assessment and the curriculum in order to improve the quality of learning and standards achieved.

5.Children with English as an additional language make good progress when they are supported by the bi-lingual support assistant and develop their home language and English. The majority of these children attain similar levels to their peers. Children with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in sessions where they are supported by the special needs support assistant. They attain levels in line with their abilities. During the afternoon sessions the special needs support assistant frequently works with the group of full-time children. The majority of these children do have special educational needs. However, work is not planned to match targets on individual education plans. This is unsatisfactory. Girls and boys achieve similar standards.

6.The rate of children's progress is not always consistent during sessions and is improved when the quality of teaching is good and children build upon their skills, particularly when they have English as an additional language. Children who attend the nursery full-time generally

make progress in line with their peers. However, the same activities are generally on offer in the morning and afternoon session and this limits the opportunity for children to build on their knowledge and skill in order to reach higher levels of attainment.

7.Many children start nursery with limited personal and social skills. Initially, children have to learn the nursery routines, to work and play together and to consider others. Children have many opportunities to work together in pairs and groups. They learn to co-operate, to take turns when playing games and to wait patiently. Children enjoy social activities in their groups and share fruit or drink at snack time while chatting to friends and they learn to be independent. They put on aprons and help to tidy up, and replace equipment in the right place when asked. They are responsible for their own coats and belongings and established routines ensure that few need help with to wash and dry their hands. Relationships with each other are good. They enjoy each other's company and join in activities happily. Many speak to their friends in their home language and English to explain instructions. All children become confident and keen to try new activities and this promotes their learning across the curriculum. Children have a very good understanding of the range of differing beliefs and cultures found both in school and in the wider community. This enhances their personal, social and cultural development very well.

8.Attainment in speaking and listening covers a wide range. The higher attaining pupils are confident and are able to talk about their experiences and answer questions. The more reticent children and children with limited English frequently respond in one or two words or short phrases. All pupils respond to instructions. Children are interested in books and stories and look carefully at the pictures. However, the majority do not identify that print carries meaning. Children learn to recognise their own names and some recognise the names of other children in their group. Letter identification is promoted through a commercial scheme and this provides the opportunity for children to learn the names and sounds of letters. A minority of children attempt to write their names, but mark making is frequently a drawing. Higher attaining children write for meaning using random upper and lower case letters. They copy write with increasing accuracy, but are more reliant on doing this than having a try themselves. Lower attaining children do not attach meaning to their mark making.

9.Children make satisfactory progress whatever their ability in language and literacy. Progress in language and literacy is enhanced through personal and social development. As children learn to work together and apply themselves, their language and literacy skills develop. Children who are competent in their home language learn English quickly due to the level of support and generally attain the same level as their English speaking peers. Those with more little or no language on entry or special educational needs make satisfactory progress, although their levels of attainment in language and literacy are well below the desirable outcome for this area of learning by the time they are five. The small minority of children who are on line to attain expected levels by the time they are five make good progress due to their ability. However, few attain at this level or above due to insufficient challenge for the higher attaining children. The introduction of a focused teaching time has enhanced provision as the opportunity for direct teaching of skills has been improved. However, insufficient attention is given to planning for different abilities during these sessions.

10.All children, including those with special educational needs, have opportunities to develop their mathematical skills in small focus group sessions when they are taught skills and concepts and through the range of activities on offer at choice time. They sort and match by colour, by size or shape. The higher attaining older children can sort using two or three different criteria. Children recognise and copy patterns and the older children make repeating patterns independently using pictures and beads. They use non-standard measures, such as containers in the sand and water, and then move on to standard measures when weighing and measuring ingredients in cooking activities. Many children understand that counting needs to link with actual items and the higher attaining children count on in ones from zero to ten.

Children's use of mathematical language develops alongside their overall language skills. They use mathematical language when comparing size, for example with the compare bears, and describing shape. Older children know that more means to add on and the highest attaining children know that less means to take away.

11.Children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in the area of mathematical learning. The introduction of a focused teaching time has improved provision. It has provided more opportunity for skills teaching although teachers do not plan for the different ability levels within the groups and higher attaining are frequently unchallenged. Children with English as an additional language generally make progress in line with the their peers. They receive very good support from the bi-lingual assistant, who frequently explains the concepts being taught in the child's home language. When higher attaining children make good progress they are motivated and challenged during activities due to good questioning from staff.

12.The majority of children enter the nursery with knowledge and understanding of the world at a lower level than expected for their age. However, all children, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Children with English as an additional language also make satisfactory, and on occasion good, progress. Children have skills, knowledge and understanding in this area of learning below expectations by the time they leave the nursery. A small minority of children meet the desirable outcomes for this area of learning. Many have the expected knowledge in some areas, such as design and technology. However, some other aspects of this area of learning are less well covered, for example science, or not specifically planned for, for example those relating to early historical and geographical knowledge, and children's skills are less well developed.

13.Children's creative development is on line to reach the desirable outcomes of this area of learning by the time they are five. They make good progress. Children have daily opportunities to use paint, draw and make models using the range of materials provided for them. They enjoy singing together as a group and make use of the percussion instruments. Children engage in imaginative play and act out ways in which families relate to each other and live. However, imaginative play skills are less well developed overall due to the little emphasis on adult support during daily activities that encourage role-play. When an adult is involved in the role-play progress is good and children particularly develop their language skills. Children use the large outdoor apparatus to play imaginatively, but opportunities for development of creativity outdoors is restricted by the poor provision and the lack of direct teaching.

14.Children initially show poor co-ordination when running and jumping or controlling tools, pencils and paint brushes. However, they make good progress in manipulative skills due to the range of creative activities offered on a daily basis. Children's progress is less marked, although satisfactory, in the use of space and in gross motor control skills, as there are no planned teaching opportunities in the outdoor environment.

15.The levels of attainment and rates of progress are restricted by provision for some children and this is unsatisfactory. There is no guidance in structuring groups and children are allocated in an arbitrary way. Children are not necessarily grouped most appropriately to meet their needs or the needs of the group. Groupings do not consider age, gender or ethnicity. The school is unable to securely identify ability because they have limited tracking procedures and very limited assessment occurs. During the inspection, a wide range of abilities was seen in each focus group and staff made no difference to the activity for children at different levels of attainment. The school has not considered ability grouping for literacy and numeracy so those children can be suitably challenged. The school has limited data available to track children's attainment and progress. Assessment of attainment on entry has only taken place this term. Staff do make daily notes on key achievements and track four children per week for more detailed observation. However, there is no guidance available to ensure that notes are

objective and purposeful or to indicate how this information could be used to build a profile of academic attainment and progress.

22. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

16.The children's attitudes to learning are good. They are happy to come to school and enjoy their time there. They take part in activities with enthusiasm and show perseverance with their work. During activities they respond well to the directions and guidance of staff. They are generally interested in what is going on and usually their response to lessons is good. The majority of children concentrate, listen attentively and respond to questions asked. They help one another when necessary and work together in groups when required to do so. On occasions, particularly when the work is not challenging, a few pupils lose interest and can become restless. Generally, staff become aware of these situations and respond effectively to regain attention and concentration. Children show respect for the school environment and resources are well looked after. The children are encouraged to take responsibility for tidying up at the end of the sessions and most pupils do so diligently and agreeably.

17.Behaviour is good. This standard has been maintained since the last inspection. Children respond to the expectations of staff. They are courteous to each other and show respect for each other's feelings. On occasions, when children find it more difficult to conform, they are reminded about what is acceptable behaviour and what is not in a caring way by staff. Behaviour is not managed consistently across the school. When this is dealt with most effectively, staff explain to the child how their behaviour affects others. They are spoken to calmly and fairly. As a result, the great majority of children understand what is right and wrong and are supportive and understanding of those whose behaviour is less good. Racial relationships are harmonious. Incidents of harassment or bullying were not observed during the inspection and there have been no exclusions.

18.Good relationships have been developed between pupils and staff and staff act as positive role models. The quality of relationships has been maintained since the last inspection. Children trust the staff and readily go to any adult for help. Visitors are treated well by the children and are invited to join in with their activities. Children generally share toys and equipment well and are good at waiting their turn and play co-operatively with each other

19.The personal development of the children is good overall and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Children are independent and organise themselves well during choice activities. They develop good social skills as they work and play in a wide variety of situations. They co-operate when working in groups. All the children have the responsibility for tidying up and clearing away and this fosters a sense of teamwork and community. The children who have special educational needs and those who have limited English are sensitively supported by staff. When staff lead discussions on how the effects of individual actions impacts on others and how they might feel personal, social and moral development is enhanced. Children explore their feelings and the feelings of others during role-play. At the time of the last inspection, children were not encouraged to initiate their own choice of activities from knowledge of what was available. This restricted the development of independence in learning. The new organisation of sessions has addressed this as children are informed of the activities on offer while they are in the small group session. The personal development of full-time children is restricted at lunchtimes due to the fact that children are put to bed and expected to rest. This is an inappropriate use of time and there are no opportunities for play or for the development of other important skills through structured activities.

26. Attendance

20.Overall attendance is poor, averaging only 85 per cent for the morning session and only 83 per cent for the afternoon session. Attendance in some groups is reduced to 71 per cent. This is considerably down on the previous inspection. Much of this can be attributed to parents taking their children on extended holidays during the year.

21.Registers are marked in accordance with the school requirements and returned to the office after 9.00 a.m. Children arriving after registration have to enter the nursery through the main entrance and are then registered by either the school secretary or the headteacher.

22.Punctuality is poor. Parents have signed an agreement to have their children at school by 8.40 am and yet there are several pupils who consistently arrive late and some after 9.15 daily. The headteacher speaks with parents whose children arrive after the register has closed and this was seen by inspectors during the week of inspection. Although the school has tried to reduce any disruption by late arrivals, it is inevitable that some disruption is caused and this does have an effect on the start of the day and other children's learning.

23.There is no attendance policy in place and as yet there are no procedures firmly in place for following up absences. The school is working hard at trying to improve attendance and punctuality and emphasise this regularly in their newsletters.

30. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

30. **Teaching**

24.The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In 45 per cent of lessons teaching is good. Unsatisfactory teaching was observed in 5 per cent of lessons. Overall, the quality of teaching during the last inspection was never less than satisfactory, very good teaching was observed and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching has declined slightly. There has been no rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning since the last inspection and there are no guidelines for teaching and learning.

25.Teaching is carried out equally by teachers and nursery nurses and judgements are based on observations of all these staff. An almost equal number of lessons were observed for each group of staff. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in 69 per cent of the lessons observed for teachers and good in 25 per cent. The nursery nurses taught more than double the percentage of good lessons. The quality of teaching is variable across the school with a higher percentage of good teaching in the small room. The quality of teaching is reflected in the good progress made by the children and parents recognise and appreciate the quality of the staff's work. Teaching is at its best when adult input is focused and staff use intervention to develop children's skills.

26.Staff generally have an appropriate understanding of the needs of children of this age and their knowledge of how young children learn is reflected in the range of activities that they plan. Staff use language which is appropriate for young children. When teaching is good, a good model for language is provided, but too often staff do not enrich children's language development by using a wide range of stimulating vocabulary themselves. The bi-lingual assistant makes a very good contribution to ensuring children with English as an additional language have equal opportunities for understanding and making progress. Staff have appropriate expectations of children's ability to make decisions and work and play independently, to behave and follow routines and to look after resources. Staff generally show the children consideration and listen to them carefully. This contributes very well to children's personal development.

27.The national desirable outcomes for children's learning are used as the framework for planning. New planning arrangements are in place this term as the effective planning identified in the previous report had declined and clearly identified learning outcomes were not detailed sufficiently. Teaching staff are currently working together to plan literacy and numeracy sessions and identify the objectives of the lesson. The framework for the rest of the curriculum is planned by the teachers and covers knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. Teachers identify the main objectives of the

activities and following this staff plan activities together. The current practices are ensuring that the full curriculum is covered. However, it is not always clear from the objectives set what it is the staff intend the children to learn. The range of activities planned do not consider differences depending on the age or ability of the children or for the full-time children who may visit the same activity more than once during the day. As a consequence, the children are not effectively challenged, most especially the higher attaining children. Whilst they enjoy the activities, progress is not maximised as there is insufficient attention to developing children's skills, knowledge and understanding. Although children make good progress in their personal and social development, planned opportunities to promote this area are limited.

28. Daily planning is developing, but the setting of clear learning objectives, the depth of content and the evaluation of planning is inconsistent and variable across the school and across the areas of learning. Despite the shortfalls in planning, where teaching is good staff are skilled in promoting children's skills and understanding in more than one curriculum area during one activity in practice. This contributes to their progress across the curriculum. For example, when working on making Indian sweets, the member of staff extended speaking and listening skills as children described what they were doing, their mathematical skills as they measured out ingredients, their personal and social skills as they shared equipment and their physical skills as they used tools to mix.

29. The organisation of the nursery has been revised this term. This is the first response to a key issue of the previous inspection report and arrangements for the start of sessions in order to ensure that children are made aware of the opportunities for learning during teaching time has now been addressed. The reorganisation has also provided a focused time for staff to teach key language and numeracy skills. This provides time for sustained involvement in an activity where teachers can maximise their input. The headteacher was aware that prompt action was required in order to positively promote learning and staff report that changes are beneficial and children are more focused in their choice of activities. The new arrangements are satisfactory. However, the use of the period of free choice activity following the first session should have not been reviewed. There are no teaching opportunities planned outside, there is insufficient intervention to support and challenge children's skills in activities indoors and outdoors and the timing and use of 'snack' time should be revised to make it an effective learning opportunity.

30. General classroom organisation is satisfactory and staff work effectively together to organise the classrooms to provide an interesting environment. There are attractive displays and these represent all areas of learning. They are used as a teaching tool and also to celebrate children's achievements. The teamwork between the staff in each class base is good, but this is not extended across the school. As a result, teamwork is not contributing to the smooth running of the nursery and to children's security and progress. Management of children generally has a positive effect on their behaviour and personal development, although there are inconsistencies of approach across the school. Staff are calm, and generally guide and encourage children to join in the range of activities.

31. The nursery is set up ready before children arrive at both morning and afternoon sessions. Time is used to the maximum for the first activity of the session. Children move straight into their focus group for registration and teacher directed time. This means that their concentration is maximised and motivation is not lost. The time for free choice activity includes a long session outside. This time not used successfully to promote learning or extend children's play either indoors or outside and this is unsatisfactory. All staff take on a supervisory role during this time and this is an inefficient use of teaching time. Time at the end of sessions was reported to be used well during the last inspection for small group activities and for children to talk about their work. This time is currently being used for story and this is satisfactory. However, snack time is tagged on to the end of story and this is unsatisfactory as time allocated is at the end of the session and is sometimes rushed as a result. As a

consequence, time is not used effectively to further promote learning or personal and social development. During the inspection, opportunities to challenge the children to think and talk were not consistently built into the sessions, neither were children seen consolidating their learning by reviewing, through discussion, what they had done during the session.

32.The nursery is well resourced and staff plan what to use carefully, changing aspects on a daily basis. For example, one day there may be play-doh available for the children to touch, feel and manipulate, whilst on another it may be cold cooked pasta. The use of available resources in each classroom is good and they are easily accessible. This helps the children to make choices and take decisions independently. The outside area is not used effectively as an extension to the classroom. Toys and equipment are not sufficiently varied on a daily basis.

33.Day to day assessment is poor. There are limited planned opportunities for assessing what children have learnt. Each week four pupils are identified to be tracked. There is a checklist to inform staff what to assess while they are tracking a child. This also used to record when a child can achieve set goals. However, this information is not used to inform planning, to set work for individual children at particular level or to inform individual education plans. Staff informally assess children through the use questioning when they work with a group or individual. However, key questions, or opportunities for assessment, are not identified in daily plans so it is often unclear whether children have achieved the learning objective of the lesson. The methods for recording daily observations of the children are not consistent and it is unclear across the school which staff do this. In one classroom the nursery nurses use daybooks to record observational notes. In the other room, the teacher has introduced a quick system where all staff record observations on post it notes that are kept in the different areas of the classroom. Discussions are held, both formally and informally, to discuss children's achievements. However, there is no evidence that the information gathered is used to inform future planning for the whole group or more specifically for individual pupils. There is very little objective information used to track children's progress.

40. **The curriculum and assessment**

34.In general, the curriculum has not improved since the previous inspection. However, the curriculum is currently satisfactory. It is generally broad and balanced and is planned to cover the areas of learning highlighted in the national document that outlines the desirable outcomes for children of this age. However, for the majority of the session children make their own choices of activity. There is no record of the activities children have chosen and this can result in them, most especially those who attend full-time, not experiencing an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum. This was reported on in the last inspection. At that time, the school was stated as being aware of this and some staff had begun to target children in order to monitor their uptake of activities. The report maintained that further extension of this was required. There has been no improvement since the last inspection and the situation has declined as there are no records of the activity children have chosen at present. In addition, the area of physical development does not take due account of outdoor opportunities and these are not addressed fully in planning. Staff who are outside are there to supervise safety only and there is no programme for structured play. This is poor provision.

35.Few policies have been written since the last inspection and progress towards meeting the key issue – complete the revision of the school's curriculum guidance is weak. The headteacher has begun to address this issue by developing a curriculum framework based on national guidance and to put clear learning intentions in place within planning. This is new this term and has been a good start to reviewing the curriculum. The children receive a range of learning experiences with opportunities to improve their social and language skills. This term changes have been implemented to the organisation of the day and literacy and numeracy are taught in focus group lessons at the beginning of each session. The changes have made a significant difference and improvement in provision for literacy and numeracy.

36.All staff acknowledged the importance of planning to the inspectors. Long term planning currently takes the form of a four-year topic plan covering each term and encompasses all areas of the curriculum. This is satisfactory and is linked to the Slough Nursery Objectives that include literacy and numeracy. Planning has been reviewed this term and staff are planning the curriculum jointly. The area of knowledge and understanding of the world is broken down in two aspects for planning, namely history and geography, and science, technology and information technology. The creative area of learning is divided into two areas; music and art and design and craft.

37.Medium term planning identifies the subject of the topic and breaks this down into the areas of learning. However, there is no guidance that breaks each area down into progressive steps that identify targets for learning that build progressively across the school. Short term planning shows the weekly learning objectives for each area of learning. The staff pool their ideas together for activities for the week. This provides the opportunity for a wider range of activities relating to the specified topic. Teachers' planning generally identifies learning objectives, except for physical activities during outdoor play. However, these objectives frequently lack focus on what the teachers expect children to learn and do not identify what the outcome of the activity should be. This is unsatisfactory. Support staff sometimes find the plans more difficult to put into place if they have not had input into the objectives. Plans do not specifically identify objectives for children who have English as an additional language. The support assistant does identify these for herself when she supports specific groups or individuals, but these are not shared with all staff so that everybody can monitor progress. Evaluation of daily plans is an expectation. The completion of this is variable and it does not record information that can inform planning. At the time of the last inspection, it was identified that the school's teaching and learning guidance identified learning outcomes for a range of activities and that this took account of children's development and, to some extent, the different ages and abilities of the children. This aspect has declined since the last inspection.

38.Equality of access to the curriculum is unsatisfactory. This was not reported on separately in the previous inspection report and is not comparable. Activities are not varied for children of differing abilities and this affects the rate of progress of pupils of all ability levels. There is no teaching and learning guidance and staff do not plan for different abilities. The individual education plans for children with special educational needs are insufficiently detailed and are not used effectively to plan activities to meet children's needs. There are currently ten children receiving full-time education. No staff are able to state why particular children have been selected and why others have been left in part-time education. There is no information available that clarifies why particular children attend full-time and there is no clear admissions policy to support decisions. There are no records kept of the activities that pupils choose and full-time children generally repeat the same work when they stay for the afternoon session. On a few occasions during the week they have a modified curriculum when they work with the special needs support assistant, but this only goes a short way to meeting the children's needs. Full-time pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Although the children may have a different focus group leader in the morning and the afternoon, work is repeated and the pupils are bored. During the long lunch time period children are required to lie down in a darkened room even though they could be in full-time education. There is no provision for extending their academic progress during this time or opportunities to develop their physical skills outdoors. Staff are not channelling children's energy appropriately. The school is not addressing the needs of full-time pupils.

39.The procedures for assessment and the use of assessment to inform future planning are very poor. At the time of the last inspection the school was reported to lack a co-ordinated and consistent approach to assessment. A key issue was to develop a policy and procedures for consistent and co-ordinated assessment. The progress towards this issue has been very poor and the information recorded on children's attainment and progress is very limited. There are no policies or procedures on record keeping or assessment and opportunities are not

identified in planning. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. At the time of the last inspection, the school was due to introduce assessment on entry, this has just been piloted this term. There is an expectation that records kept on children will include an entry to school sheet, a child profile form, the second term report, on-going recorded observational notes and a final report written in the last term the child is at the school. However, these are inconsistently updated and in some cases non-existent. The quality of information recorded is variable and provides very little information from which to judge or track attainment and progress. The best identifies what the children have been taught, but records do not evaluate sufficiently or effectively what children know, understand and can do. This has not improved since the last inspection. Notes kept by individual staff help to build up the children's profile, but they do not track the children's progress overtime as there is no set criteria for the recording of information. When notes are kept, staff sometimes talk about them these at planning meetings, but there is no procedure or guidance form for staff on how to use the information for targeting any key skills to be taught to groups or individuals as a result. Opportunities for assessment or details of what might be assessed during an activity is not identified in any planning. There is no evidence to support that information gathered by staff informs planning at any level for classes, groups or individual pupils.

40. A visiting specialist, for example a speech therapist, generally undertakes assessment of children with special education needs, and this is satisfactory. However, the school should develop specific assessments in order to build up a clear picture of what a child's needs are in order that information can be used to establish realistic targets for children and record their progress well. At the time of the last inspection, assessment information for this group of pupils was reported to be used effectively to support these children and their progress was recorded well. There has been a decline since the last inspection and this area has not been monitored. The bi-lingual support assistant frequently assesses children's understanding in their home language and this helps to establish if a child has a general learning problem as opposed to limited English. While this information is very valuable, the school staff pay insufficient account of it when planning activities or in the deployment of the assistant.

47. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

41. The school makes good provision for children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development overall. Cultural development is very good and is a significant strength of the school. The quality of provision for moral and social development has been maintained since the last inspection and provision for spiritual and cultural has improved.

42. Spiritual awareness is fostered by the staff drawing children's attention to the beauty of the world around them, science, art and music. This was seen in the inspection when children marvelled at a candle flame flickering in the half light and exclaimed 'wow' when they saw their hand prints with mendi patterns. The school recognises the festivals and celebrations that children celebrate at home and this further promotes spiritual awareness. The school effectively promotes knowledge and understanding of religious practices and beliefs through the teaching the topics. The inspection coincided with the festival of Diwali and a range of activities were planned to develop children's knowledge and also contributed to spiritual development. For example, when making a Diva candle holder the children were encouraged to think about the festival of light. The children's spiritual awareness is developed when the class comes together, for example the special moment shared when the candles were lit on a cake to celebrate a child's birthday. In the context of the good provision, staff miss opportunities for quiet reflection, which would further enhance spiritual development, as there is no time for pupils to review the session and their achievements before going home. The day-to-day life of the school supports moral development successfully and it is good. Moral values are learned well; the children know the difference between right and wrong. Stories are often used to give children examples. Both adults and children show respect for each other. The children respond well and treat each other courteously. They work and play well together

and are keen to offer help. For example, one child shared his trike with another when there were no spare ones available. Children are encouraged to take care of school equipment and the environment.

43.The social development of children is good. The youngest children gradually settle into school routines. Children develop self-confidence. With encouragement they learn to relate well to each other, taking turns to use equipment, play and work amicably together. In the role-play areas children learn how to set a table and say please and thank you when buying sweets in the shop. Children are taught to wait for a turn, for example when working on the computer. Opportunities for full-time children are enhanced at lunch times when they sit and have their dinner with members of staff. They learn good table manners and are encouraged to be polite.

44.Teachers know their pupils well and have good relationships with them. This contributes to moral and social development. Individually, staff provide good role models for pupils. However, across the school the staff do not work as one team and there is an apparent inconsistency between the two class bases of the school. This does not provide a good model for children's development.

45.The school promotes cultural development very positively and celebrates the richness and diversity of the school community. School prepares children for life in a multicultural society. The school values many cultures and traditions. Signs and labels reflect different languages. Events are celebrated through sharing times, storytelling, role-play and topic work. Music and art from a range of cultures are used to promote children's understanding of similarities and differences. Children are encouraged to understand how different cultures live through the celebration of festivals and these are brought alive for children through first hand experiences. For example, making Indian sweets and the shop selling saris in the role-play area.

52. Support, guidance and children's welfare

46.The overall provision for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils is poor. This is considerably lower than reported in the previous inspection report where the arrangements were reported to be good and a strength of the school.

47.Procedures for monitoring children's progress and personal development are poor. There are no detailed records of attainment in all areas of the curriculum and there is very limited monitoring and tracking of academic progress. Procedures for monitoring personal development are equally poor. Although there is some monitoring by observation, there are no detailed records kept in order to track progress in this area. Reports produced are spasmodic and although they are supposed to be provided at least twice for all children this does not always happen. Some parents who have children about to leave the school state they have never received a report. When reports are written they lack clear and sufficient detailed information on what children know, understand and can do. Children with special educational needs do not have clear targets on their individual education plans and this makes it almost impossible to match activities to support their needs. Consequently, their progress is not regularly or effectively monitored and reviewed. Transitions in and out of school are sensitively handled and children are well supported in and out of their nursery education.

48.Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and discipline are unsatisfactory overall. Procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are good, but no monitoring takes place and there are no records of incidents. This is poor practice. There is a behaviour policy in place, which is well embedded and generally applied by all staff. There is a system of rewards and sanctions, but this lacks consistency as some staff apply their own system and this is likely to confuse pupils. Staff have high expectations of good behaviour and appropriately reward positive attitudes with praise, but some go further and give stickers and

others do not. The school has procedures in place to deal with harassment and bullying, although these are rare, and ensure parents are suitably involved. The lack of any monitoring prevents the school from having a planned programme to deal consistently with unsuitable behaviour.

49.Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. The systematic marking of registers by staff commenced at the beginning of this academic year. Previously attendance had been marked on scrap paper and sent to the office where the headteacher transferred it onto the register. When completed, registers are now collected by the secretary and held in the office, either the secretary or the headteacher will enter those children who arrive late and the headteacher checks through registers in order that she can have an indication of any patterns of non attendance or lateness. The monthly newsletters, and in some cases individual letters, stress the importance of regular attendance to ensure good progress. However, there are a number of parents who take their children on extended holidays during term time.

50.Appropriate child protection procedures are in place. The headteacher is the named member of staff with responsibility for child protection matters. Staff are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of any concern, they all receive training and are kept informed of child protection issues.

51.There are serious weaknesses in some aspects of the schools procedures for promoting the health and safety of pupils. There is a health and safety policy in place and some risk assessments have recently been completed. A nursery nurse has recently taken on responsibility for health and safety and will receive training in January. All staff have attended emergency first aid training and there are two first aid boxes located in the school and another that is used for trips out. However, areas for concern are that children have to use toilets that are too high and too big for their age group. During the summer there was an infestation of rats, mainly in the area of the bins, however there is still evidence of some there now and also evidence in the kitchen area. The kitchen area and cooker is too easily accessible to children and could result in a nasty accident. Hot pipes are within reach of children, there are broken tiles around sinks and a number of worktops are broken and cracked leading to very unhygienic areas. There are also a number of cracked windows, which have been temporarily taped. In the event of a fire everyone can be removed very quickly into the grounds, but all the gates are locked and the keys are not obviously accessible in an emergency. The headteacher has agreed to review this urgently.

58. Partnership with parents and the community

52.Overall, the relationships between the school, its parents and the local community are satisfactory. This does not reflect the good quality of relationships reported in previous inspection that were enhancing the quality of education. A lengthy period of instability and a change in management, which has brought about some quick changes, may have temporarily affected the quality of partnership

53.The majority of parents appreciate the work of the school and the support given to their children. They are particularly complementary with regard to the work undertaken by the non-teaching staff. A minority of parents raised concern with the registered inspector that they have felt it difficult to approach the headteacher, that they were not consulted regarding changes to the organisation of the sessions and that the headteacher has not been understanding of their needs. It is the inspectors' judgement that the headteacher has had only a very short time to work towards establishing positive relationships with all parents. She is aware that this is an area that requires input, but has had to put her energies into improving academic provision as an immediate priority without wide consultation. The headteacher has also had to enforce

some school policies and procedures that have lapsed over a period of time and this has caused upset to some parents.

54.The school provides parents with a good prospectus, regular newsletters and governors provide an informative annual report. Some parents receive academic reports in their child's second term, but these are not consistent and are not received by all parents. There are sound informal communications between home and school and staff are available to talk with parents at the end of each session, but there are no formal meetings or parents evenings. Parents of children with special educational needs have insufficient involvement in their individual education plans and there are no clear targets set for these children. Individual education plans, although in place, are not used to inform future planning and there is no indication of what is being put in place for children by whom or for how long.

55.There is no policy on parent partnership and parental involvement in children's learning is unsatisfactory. The headteacher tries to make herself available and highly visible as parents and children arrive at the start of each session. She always makes sure that there is an interpreter available for those parents whose first language is not English. Parents are not used in classrooms although they have been previously. This term parents did not offer their services to the school. Some parents do help on visits out. There is a home school agreement which parents sign to agree to have their children attend regularly and also punctually, but not all parents comply with the agreement they have signed. Parents state that their children enjoy coming to school. The school has a lending library and a number of parents participate borrowing books and games for their children. Parents also make a considerable financial contribution to the school, which is well used to improve the standard of equipment and the school environment. There is no formal Parent Teacher Association.

56.The school has sound links with the infant school to which the majority of children transfer. This is located on the same campus and the headteacher has joined the board of governors. There are combined fayres with the infant and junior schools and the headteacher has organised coffee mornings to encourage parents into school. The school has a range of days out where children are taken to shops or to a farm. There are some visitors into school, for example Farmer Bob. The contribution of links with the community to the personal development of children is satisfactory.

63. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

63. Leadership and management

57.The school has been through a prolonged period of uncertainty for an extended period of time. Prior to the appointment of the current headteacher, the school had been led by an acting headteacher for two years. Whilst she was effective in maintaining the school during this time and supported the staff through a period of low morale, long term strategic planning was not possible. The acting headteacher did not know her position for more than a term at a time and the future of the school was also unknown. The acting headteacher made considerable progress in improving the learning environment and in addressing some of minor issues identified in the previous inspection.

58.The headteacher took up her post at the beginning of this term, September 1999. The governing body appointed the current headteacher in January 1999 and through the interim period she was able to establish a positive working relationship with the acting headteacher. This enabled her to identify key priorities to address with effect from September in order to improve the quality of provision.

59. The headteacher is providing satisfactory leadership and has a clear vision of the direction of the school should take. However, she has had limited opportunity to communicate this fully to staff, governors and parents. At present, she is not supported by a deputy headteacher although this is due to be rectified in January 2000. This should assist the headteacher in establishing the direction of the school and to delegate some responsibilities she currently maintains to other staff members. Despite the initial positive improvements in provision, leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory overall, which is a decline in the position reported in the last inspection. Improvement since the last inspection is poor and no key issues identified in the previous report have been fully addressed.

60. The governing body has no statutory responsibilities, but perform the functions expected of them. They are committed to the school and supportive of its work. The prolonged period of uncertainty has made it difficult for them to carry out their role to effectively. The governors meet regularly and have formed working parties to address issues when this has been appropriate. They have been involved in the annual review of the budget and are given reports by the headteacher regarding finance. Since the present headteacher took up her post there has been one full governing body meeting, but governors have offered support and have been kept informed of developments. The governors are aware that school development planning has lost momentum since the last inspection, but acknowledge that the local authority review assisted them in understanding the position of the school. Members of the governing body are not currently involved in developing a strategic view of the school. The governing body is in a good position to work with the headteacher in the future development of the school.

61. Roles and responsibilities have been reviewed for this term. All staff, including nursery nurses, have areas of curriculum responsibility. Many have additional responsibilities for aspects of the school's work, such as health and safety. As yet, staff have had little opportunity to carry out these roles and the impact of this organisational strategy on provision cannot be judged. Appraisal has not been carried out for sometime and the headteacher is currently assessing individuals' strengths and areas for development through observation and informal discussion. Professional development is currently linked to school priorities through discussion, for example, for the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies. The collaboration and co-operation between staff provides an effective environment in which children can learn and develop. Staff meetings to cover different aspects, including curriculum planning, are being held on a frequent basis. This results in all school staff, including the headteacher, being involved in developments, the day to day running of the school and in sharing information about children.

62. Support and monitoring of teaching and curriculum developments is poor at present. The headteacher has had limited opportunity to undertake an effective monitoring role in the short time she has been at the school. However, she has informally observed all staff teach and given feedback. The role of the co-ordinator is not sufficiently developed to include monitoring at present. Within classes, teachers do not monitor the work of other staff or which activities the children have engaged in. They do not have an overview of the whole classroom environment. There are no systems or guidance in place for monitoring in order that staff understand the process and it is able to contribute to school improvement.

63. The headteacher and the acting headteacher worked together to form an interim development plan for the school. This has helped the headteacher to identify the main priorities for immediate development. However, development planning is poor overall. The written development plan does not clearly reflect the headteacher's vision of the development of the school. It does not contain specific targets with clear timescales for action, costings linked to the financial plan, prioritised staff development or success criteria that will help the school to measure the progress towards completing developments or the impact on the quality of provision. The plan provides limited detail and does not identify the strategies that will be

used to achieve the targets. Although it is too soon to evaluate the success of the plan, no procedures or systems have been established that will enable the school to judge the effectiveness of initiatives. Whilst it was necessary for the headteacher to re-establish development planning, the current format will have limited use in supporting developments. Staff and governors have not been involved in this cycle of development planning. This prevents them having a clear understanding of developments in the school and the reason for priorities.

64.The school's aims have not been reviewed for some time and are not linked to the development plan. Policies are at an early stage of development. The headteacher recognises that the aims need reviewing and that the school needs to develop policies and procedures that will establish consistency throughout the school. Despite the need to update the school aims as set out in the school prospectus the school is successful in meeting its current aims. There is some confusion about the criteria for allocating full-time places to children and this appears to have been done on an arbitrary basis over the last two years and arrangements are unsatisfactory. The ethos of the school is satisfactory and whilst staff do not actively plan to ensure high achievement, they are committed to helping children progress. As a result, the environment stimulates children, their attitudes to work and behaviour are good, and relationships are also good.

65.Provision, and the management of the provision, for children with special educational needs is satisfactory. The Code of Practice is implemented and there are effective procedures for identification and liaison with outside agencies. Individual education plans are written for children when appropriate, but the targets are not specific and are sometimes confusing. Inconsistent attention is given to children's special needs within grouping and children do not make the progress of which they are capable. The school has appointed a learning support assistant to work with children with special educational needs. She provides good support when she is working with specific individuals or groups of children. However, the assistant is sometimes deployed to work with full-time children during the afternoon in order that they are offered a different activity. This decreases the time that she can work directly with all children on their individual targets. The quality of support for bi-lingual children by the specialised learning assistant is very good. She is deployed effectively to support language development and identifies learning objectives for planned activities linked to this. When children benefit from her support they gain access to the whole curriculum and frequently make good progress. The school has additional teaching support for these pupils on one day a week and this also contributes to the progress children make. Provision for this group of children is also good due to the total acceptance, inclusion and celebration of the multi-cultural population of the school.

66.There has been a decline in the management of the school since the last inspection. However, the appointment of the headteacher and deputy headteacher has strengthened the management structure. The headteacher has clear vision for the school and the school capacity for improvement is satisfactory.

73. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

67.All teaching and non-teaching staff suitably qualified and many have considerable experience and expertise. They have an appropriate knowledge of the curriculum and requirements for children under five years of age. Nursery nurses and learning support assistants have a valuable contribution to children's learning and they contribute very effectively to the planning and delivery of the curriculum. Although the non-teaching staff are very effective and offer a great contribution to the school, there is a lack of co-ordination of the support staff and this gives rise to inconsistency in practices. An example of this is the daily records of children's achievements. Staff funded by the Local Education Authority supplement the school staff. This includes a special needs learning assistant, a bi-lingual assistant and a

teacher for children with English as an additional language on one day a week. At the time of the last inspection the school benefited from the provision of a full-time teacher for English as an additional language. Whilst the bi-lingual assistant currently employed under revised arrangements is most effective in fulfilling her role she does not have compatible qualifications as the person employed at the time of the last inspection. An additional complication is that her terms of employment require her to support 20 pupils, 17 per cent of the number on roll, while the number of children with English as an additional language is 69 per cent of the total on roll.

68. There is currently no deputy headteacher and this does not reflect the situation at the time of the last inspection. A new deputy is due to join the team in January 2000, but until then the headteacher is maintaining many responsibilities that will be delegated to the new member of staff. The nursery nurses effectively support the children's learning in all areas of the curriculum. They share in planning and use their initiative to provide suitable learning activities. Currently the team morale is reported as being lower than in the past due to the uncertainty the school has been experiencing for at least two years. The headteacher is aware of this and is working towards the school staff developing to ensure a team philosophy and shared sense of purpose. The school does not have a caretaker and the headteacher fulfils this role. This is not a satisfactory arrangement.

69. The secretary is very competent and provides considerable support to the smooth running of the school. She is aware of her position as the first point of contact for many parents and spends a large amount of time in supporting parents and helping them feel comfortable with the school. This has a positive impact on relationships and ultimately, on children's security and ability to learn.

70. At the time of the last inspection, arrangements for appraisal and staff development were good. There has been a decline since the last inspection due to Local Education Authority recommendations and the change in leadership. The headteacher has not been trained to appraise. Targets set for staff at professional development interviews over the last two years have not been followed up and staff feel anxious about this, as it does not help them to carry out their role effectively or efficiently. The headteacher has endeavoured to have informal discussions with staff this term, but time has been limited and there have been no opportunities to link professional development needs to training opportunities as yet. Arrangements for staff development are currently unsatisfactory, as they have no secure link to the needs of individuals or the school development plan.

71. Classrooms are generally well planned and space is carefully organised to achieve good use of learning areas. Shared work areas are well organised to enable all of the children to use them and this results in efficient use of space. Accommodation is adequate to teach all areas of the curriculum. Areas are enhanced by some attractive stimulating displays of children's work and teaching materials, for example the firework display including sounds that fireworks may make, and the picture gallery displaying children's art work. The indoor environment has been enhanced by the decoration that has taken place since the last inspection and the clean condition of most areas. The outdoor play space is large, but the grounds cannot be reported as being as well kept as the time of the last inspection. There are areas that appear neglected and the exterior of the building does not present itself as welcoming. There are issues regarding the outside area. Some of the play areas, for example the playhouse, are used by local youths during the evenings and this presents the school with additional health and safety problems.

72. Resources are generally good and support all areas of learning outlined in the desirable learning outcomes for children of this age. The computers and other information technology equipment have recently been replaced and are of very good quality. The range of software supports the children's linguistic and mathematical understanding. Resources, artefacts and

books represent a variety of languages and cultures and very positively reflect the diversity of the school community. This makes a very good contribution to children's cultural development. Provision of books in focus group areas supports the acquisition of reading skills; they are sufficient, of good quality and are appropriate to the age range in the school. There is sufficient range of outdoor equipment although the amount of some resources, for example trikes, means that there are always children waiting a turn. At the time of the last inspection, the outdoor area was judged to be well equipped.

79. The efficiency of the school

73. The efficiency of the school is good overall with particular strengths in the use of learning resources and accommodation, and financial control and administration. The school does not have a fully delegated budget and the Local Education Authority controls the overall budget. Nevertheless, considerable autonomy has been given to the school since Slough became a unitary authority, and financial planning procedures are developing. Financial planning is currently satisfactory in the light of the school's position, which includes the school working in retrospect when for some elements of expenditure. This is a decline since the last inspection when financial planning was reported as being good, but has been affected by the reorganisation of authority procedures.

74. Current financial planning is not linked to the school development plan and educational developments, governors are insufficiently involved in initial budget and development planning, and in monitoring the effectiveness of expenditure in relation to planned outcomes. There are no procedures by which to evaluate value for money and expenditure and this is unsatisfactory. Governors have recently become better informed of the up-to-date financial position in relation to the planned budget by computer-generated budget monitoring reports. The school makes satisfactory use of the money designated for spending on training and staff development. At present, this area is not securely linked to development planning or to staff needs as identified in professional interviews. Current arrangements do not contribute towards the staff's effectiveness in promoting progress.

75. The day to day administration of the school is very good and well organised by a hardworking and efficient secretary who is working in close collaboration with the headteacher. The office is efficiently and effectively run, although until recently, the secretary did not have the benefit of a computerised financial management system as the school was burgled during the summer and vital hardware was lost. Replacements have just been installed and this will contribute to further financial efficiency. Fortunately, the school had appropriate back-up information on disk and in hard copy and the financial control is very effective.

76. Teachers and nursery nurses are generally deployed effectively to promote children's learning. However, the special educational needs assistant and the bi-lingual assistant are not consistently deployed effectively to meet the needs of specific children and outdoors there is insufficient direct teaching and intervention. There is some inappropriate use of time over the course of a session and during lunchtime break for full-time pupils. Learning resources generally are used well, flexibly and efficiently and motivate the children to learn and promote a satisfactory quality of education. However, there is unsatisfactory use made of the outdoor area as a stimulating teaching space incorporating activities in all areas of the curriculum. Effective use of this resource was reported at the time of the previous inspection.

77. Taking into account children's well below average attainment on entry, their satisfactory progress overall, the good attitudes to learning and quality of relationships, the satisfactory quality of teaching, curriculum and management, the school provides satisfactory value for money. This is a decline since the previous inspection when value for money was reported as being good.

84. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

84. AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

78. Personal and social development is given an appropriate priority. Many start school with skills lower than expected for their age and most have not had any pre-nursery experience of play-groups. As a result, some initially have difficulties in learning to settle to work and play, but settle quickly into school routines. However, most make good progress and the majority are on line to reach the desirable outcomes for this area of education by the time they are five. A minority of children do not achieve the expected levels. These children tend to be those who have entered the school with below average skills in their home language, and no English, and those with special educational needs. A few have both these difficulties. Nevertheless, these children make at least satisfactory progress due to the quality of support they receive. Children have a very good understanding of the range of differing beliefs and cultures found both in school and in the wider community. This enhances children's personal, social and cultural development. The standards in social and personal development make a significant contribution to children's learning and progress across the curriculum.

79. Children work well together, either in pairs, such as when washing the doll's house or when in a much larger group for story or music. They co-operate when playing games, for example when matching jigsaw pieces each child takes a turn, waits patiently, and do not interfere even when they know which piece goes next. Children enjoy social activities in the classrooms, for example celebrating a birthday or sharing fruit and drinks while chatting to friends. Outside, all share toys such as scooters and pushchairs.

80. Children learn to be independent. They put on aprons and coats, help to tidy up, and replace equipment in the right place when asked to. The children who have dinner at school choose their meal on a daily basis. Children are responsible for their own belongings, for example full-time pupils look after their lunch-boxes, and established routines ensure that few need help to wash and dry their hands. They rarely rely on adults. Good organisation of resources promotes children's independence effectively. Helpful labels, in more than one language, help children to know where equipment is stored. This promotes literacy skills as well as encouraging responsibility and order.

81. Children's personal development is good and they make good progress. This is an improvement from the last inspection when it was reported as sound. Relationships with each other are good. Children enjoy each other's company and join in activities happily. They will move over to make room for friends to join in activities such as building a station and rail track. Many speak to their friends in their home language and English to explain instructions. Most children quickly respond to the positive approach of staff and gain confidence to try out new activities and are enthusiastic and eager to learn. During choice activity time, they show initiative in choosing an activity and generally in maintain their interest for sometime. Some children do have difficulty staying at activity for an extended time outside when there are no structured activities for learning and a minority wander in and out not settling anywhere. Overall, children concentrate well and are good at completing chosen task. Many persevere even when tasks are difficult for them, for example when adding on one more number progressively and in sequence.

82. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. All staff place a strong emphasis on the development of social skills. Activities are generally appropriate to the ages of children and this encourages them to be independent and make their own decisions, for example if they want to go outside. Many activities contain an element of surprise to motivate children, for example coloured pasta or sparkly play-doh. There is no direct planning for this area of children's development, but staff link personal and social development into many activities

they plan, for example washing the dolls clothes in warm soapy water and hanging them out to dry. Staff do not make the most effective use of time available during 'snack' to further promote this area of learning because there is no planning and because of the timing of this event and this is unsatisfactory. Expectations of good behaviour are high. However, there are no procedures to monitor children's behaviour. Children are generally well managed which is reflected in their good behaviour. However, the management of behaviour is inconsistent. At best, staff explain why a certain behaviour is unacceptable and how it affects others. Occasionally, teaching is less effective and behaviour is not monitored, for example during a singing session. The class were expected to follow a well-established routine, but there were several children who did not want to do this and it was not explained to them, by supporting staff, why they should conform. The words of the songs became unintelligible to those who did not know them already as children carried on chatting. This made it difficult for the youngest children and those with English as an additional language to know what to do.

83. There is not a planned curriculum for personal and social development that identifies progressive steps towards the desirable outcomes of this area of learning. There are no guidelines and policies on associated issues, such as social and moral development, that help to ensure a consistent approach. There is no clear, formal means of assessing children's levels of development although staff do make occasional notes that cover this area of learning. However, this assessment does not relate to the expected outcomes of an activity and does not inform curriculum planning, or the setting of particular challenges for individuals. Anecdotal assessment of social and personal skills is inconsistent, and the summative record in children's records give little indication of their abilities at particular stages. The present systems rely too heavily on staff knowing their children well rather than on what knowledge, skills and understanding should be developed as an outcome of an activity.

84. The headteacher is responsible for leading the co-ordination of this area of learning and she is supported by a nursery nurse. However, she has had no time to review current provision or develop this area of learning since her appointment as there have been more important aspects of the school development for her to address.

85. The school's resources are used effectively to promote children's personal and social development. They include books, pictures, jigsaws and collections of items that have been gathered to support particular topics, for example a set of Indian cooking utensils in the home corner during Diwali.

92. ***Language and literacy***

86. On entry to the school most children's skills are well below expectations for their age. The majority of children have English as an additional language, and speak and understand very little English. Some have below average skills in their own language. Other children have special educational needs, or have lacked appropriate experiences to develop their language and literacy skills to an expected level. Many children enter the school only able speak single words or very short sentences. They have limited understanding of spoken language and find it difficult to maintain their attention for long. The majority of children achieve below the desirable outcomes for this area of learning by the time they are five. This is a decline from the last inspection when children were reported to attain the standards expected.

87. Most children listen attentively, answer questions and follow instructions. Those children with limited understanding of English language watch support staff carefully for prompts and follow their friends. Children who are more confident listen equally well to English or their first language and answer questions in either language. Children using language in role-play. For example, when talking about Diwali parties they have been to in the home corner describing their celebrations. On this occasion, and in the Sari shop, children used their first language for the majority of the time. When working in the sweet shop children used a range of languages to answer and ask questions. One boy very eloquently informed his friends of the special

offers available and the 'buy one get one free' opportunity. Higher attaining children give suggestions to their friends as to how they might improve their work. For example how to make a their Mendi patterns more effective to look at. Children enjoy chatting to one another. For example, when they work at the computer in the afternoon they talk about lunch at McDonalds. Children wait patiently for their turn in a group discussion, or listen to their friends in a conversation. A good example of this was seen when the whole class celebrated a child's birthday and he talked about his presents.

88.Children are interested in books and stories and pay attention to pictures. However, the majority do not identify that print carries meaning. Children learn to recognise their own names and some recognise the names of other children in the group. Higher attaining children anticipate repetitive phrases in stories they listen to and other children join in when they have heard the text several times. Books are used daily at focus group times as a teaching tool and in the last session before children go home they are encouraged to listen for pleasure. Higher attaining children re-tell simple stories and the oldest identify some sounds and letters in text and words. Letter identification is promoted through a commercial scheme and this provides the opportunity for children to learn the names and sounds systematically. Few can yet name and sound all the letters of the alphabet. During the inspection, children were learning about the letter 's'. They could identify items beginning with the sound, and some could give a number of words starting with the sound. However, the scheme being used has some illustrations that confuse the pupils and this could lead to reinforcement of wrong learning. For example, the picture of a shoe looked like a boot and children in each group made the mistake of naming it as such. A minority of children read simple familiar words, but they do not fully understand that words fit together to make a sentence. Children are encouraged to borrow books and the school is well resourced with a range of books suitable to use with adults and there are picture books and some with limited text so that pupils can begin to recognise words for themselves. All children enjoy books and handle them with care. The higher attaining children enjoy 'reading' to an adult and do this with some expression.

89.A minority of children attempt to write their own names, but mark making is frequently a drawing. Almost all older children hold a pencil and form recognisable, correctly formed letters. Higher attaining children write for meaning using random lower and upper case letters. Children copy write with increasing accuracy, but are more reliant on doing this than having a try themselves. Lower attaining children do not attach meaning to their mark making. A minority of children understand that writing is a form of communication and enjoy writing for different purposes. Few show emergent writing at different stages or record findings, such as the results of heat on melting wax.

90.Children with English as an additional language receive very good support from the bilingual assistant for the development of their language and literacy skills. They make satisfactory progress overall and good progress whatever their ability when supported by the assistant. Those whose competency in their home language is limited also make good progress, but generally attain well below the desirable outcomes by the time they are five. Those who are competent in their home language learn English quickly due to the high levels of support and generally attain at the same levels as their English speaking peers, particularly if they attend for several terms. Children with special educational needs and those without any particular difficulties make satisfactory progress and are on line to attain below the expected levels by the time they are five. Few attain at above this level and this is due to insufficient challenge for the higher attaining children.

91.Children are enthusiastic about all aspects of language and literacy due to the focused teaching groups, choice activities and story sessions and these promote their skills. Children respond well to each other and to staff. They concentrate, generally sustain interest in their activities and are well behaved. They ask and answer questions at story time and when in focus groups. Children use resources well and treat them with care.

92.The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Staff understand the needs and development of young children. They understand that many have difficulties in expressing themselves and give them support to be able to do so. This is particularly the case for children with English as an additional language who are supported in their home language until they become competent in English. This gives them the security and confidence to learn and make progress. The introduction of a literacy session during the focused group time is a positive improvement to the provision for language and literacy. However, day to day planning is limited on paper and does not consistently identify learning objectives or outcomes that reflect in the activity. It does not identify where activities are altered to match the ability levels of pupils and during the inspection children were not given work that was matched to their abilities. It is impossible to evaluate the success of an activity in raising standards or improving progress as the objectives are frequently confusing. The development of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are threaded throughout the school's work in practice, but plans for activities across the curriculum do not identify the language skills that can be developed during a specific activity. Activity sessions are not always a suitable balance between direct teaching and the encouragement of independence and choice activities frequently have no adult input. Full-time pupils repeat the same focused teaching activity at least twice during the week. Writing is not always an important aspect of many activities and consequently children's writing is not always valued sufficiently.

93.Day to day assessment of children's skills is poor. Records of children's attainment are kept in the form of a checklist completed when children are tracked and this provides some information that could be used for reporting. Note making also occurs on an ad hoc basis, but this is irregular and the information recorded is anecdotal and informal. It is inconsistent across the school. There are no identified opportunities for assessment on plans. Focus group sessions do not provide opportunities for a review of the day's activities and group work, particularly in speaking and listening, and opportunities are missed to reinforce the day's activities. Assessment against defined learning objectives is not carried out and therefore not used as a basis for curriculum planning. There is little information available to inform planning, attainment, progress or the overall quality of education and that which is available is not used for this purpose.

94.The curriculum for language and literacy is developing. The co-ordinator has had this post since September and is employed for a limited period. She is supported by a newly qualified teacher who will be in a good position to continue the co-ordination of the area of learning. Staff have attended the Literacy Strategy training, and are incorporating activities in the programme of work to the school planning. There is not yet a suitable documented curriculum to give a firm framework for planning activities with clear, progressively challenging outcomes as central to the guidance. As a result, children are not sufficiently challenged from an early age and this limits their progress. There are no formal assessment procedures linked to the curriculum and this is very poor.

95.Resources are well used and varied. The range of suitable fiction and non-fiction books, in various sizes and languages are suitable for group and individual reading. They are easily accessible and in good condition. The resources for home-corners and role-play areas encourage creativity, but there is a not good range of mark makers and paper freely available to encourage children's writing skills. This was better developed at the time of the last inspection. Books are well used to promote both language and literacy. The school is developing as a literate environment. Children choose a book to take home each day which involves parents well in their children's learning and prepares the children for homework when they are older. Displays, storage and resources are all clearly labelled in more than one language and this promotes the value of other languages and promotes literacy.

102. **Mathematics**

96.Children enter the nursery with mathematical skills well below expectations for their age. By the time they are five, children achieve below the expected level for this age. At the time of the last inspection, children were reported as achieving the expected level. Very few children attain levels which are expected for their age and above due to lack of appropriate challenge for higher attaining children. Many children are not yet able to show their understanding of shape, position, size or quantity and a minority do not always recite numbers in the right order. A few children know no numbers and a significant minority do not recognise any numerals or shapes. However, from the low levels of attainment on entry children make satisfactory progress. Children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language also make satisfactory progress although their attainment may not be as high.

97.Children's use of mathematical language develops alongside their overall language skills. All children are encouraged to use mathematical vocabulary in everyday activities. For example, the children are encouraged to make comparisons of shape and size when making models and using construction equipment. Older children know the names of two-dimensional shapes. All children, including those with special educational needs, sort and match by colour, by size or shape. There are appropriate computer programs that encourage understanding of these concepts. The higher attaining children can sort using two or three different criteria. Children recognise and copy patterns and the older pupils make repeating patterns independently. They measure carefully and begin by using non-standard measures such as containers, and then move on to standard measures. For example, when involved cooking activities. Many children understand that counting needs to be linked with actual items and the higher attaining children count on in ones from zero to ten. They use mathematical language when comparing size and describing shape. Older children know that more means to add on and the highest attaining children know that less means to take away.

98.Children's recording skills are under-developed. They have few opportunities to record what they find out. Children recognise numerals and can join matching numbers with a line. A small minority of higher attaining children are beginning to write down numbers and make 'sums'. Few children use and apply their skills to problem-solve.

99.Children enjoy mathematical activities, both in focus group activities when involved in practical tasks within another activity such as cooking. They enjoy number songs and rhymes and this reinforces their learning. When involved in a set task such as a number game, all concentrate and show perseverance until the game is finished.

100.The quality of teaching is satisfactory and generally takes place during the numeracy focus sessions. Teachers demonstrate satisfactory subject knowledge. The tasks set are appropriate to children's age, but not for each ability. Planning does not identify what children of different ages and abilities are to learn from their activities. This is a weakness and the lack of challenge for all children means that maximum progress is not ensured. There is a balance of direct teaching during the focus sessions and informal experiences, such as the use of puzzles and matching activities. However, the lack of teaching of skills and concepts during some activities does not ensure consolidation of knowledge or new learning. This reflects findings of the last inspection. There is insufficient attention given to the promotion of mathematics during all the activities available. Day to day assessment during lessons is poor. There are some records kept, in the form of a checklist, that could be used to report what a child can do over a period of time. Note taking is inconsistent in when it happens, in who is assessed and for what reason. Although staff do have time together to discuss their findings information gathered is not used to inform planning for individuals or groups of children.

101. Provision for the development of numeracy has been improved with the establishment of the focus group sessions, but staff should maintain choice activities that promote mathematical learning. The documented curriculum is under-developed and does not include sufficient indication of what children are expected to know by the time they reach five years of age. The school has begun to use the Local Authority nursery guidance and this has improved the overall curriculum. There are no formal assessment procedures linked to the curriculum and this is very poor. The lack of planned targets for children of various ages and abilities results in poor links between the records made during daily sessions when staff are tracking specific children and future planning. The area of learning is co-ordinated by a teacher supported by a nursery nurse. Currently their role is under-developed and they have not been involved in a curriculum review.

102. Resources are easily accessible and frequently updated. They provide a good variety and choice to interest all children and make a good contribution to their progress. Displays reflect an appropriate emphasis on number.

109. ***Knowledge and understanding of the world***

103. The majority of children achieve below the desirable outcomes of this area of learning by the time they are five. This is a decline from the time of the last inspection when achievement was reported as being average. Children have a wider spread of knowledge than expected in some areas, such as design and technology and cultural education. Some other aspects of this area of learning are less well covered, for example science, and not specifically planned for, for example those relating to early historical and geographical knowledge. Children's skills in this area are less marked. A minority of children have skills, knowledge and understanding in line with expectations by the time they leave school.

104. Children make satisfactory progress overall and by the time they leave have gained some knowledge and understanding of the world. Children with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress and attain levels in line with their abilities. Pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the richness and diversity of their society.

105. Geographical and historical learning is linked to the experiences of the children. Many children start the school with limited experience of the community other than their own family. They happily make simple observations about themselves and their friends, but do not yet look at similarities or differences between. By the time they are five, children talk about their homes, their families and important events in their lives such as Diwali and other festivals. They understand the purpose and importance of people and place. Children have a very good understanding of the multi-cultural nature of their community and many of the customs and festival that are associated with their own culture, other local cultures and the school community. The higher attaining children, a minority, understand that people's lives are different in different parts of the world. Many children have a well developed sense of family, particularly those who are looked after by their extended family and this enhances their historical understanding.

106. Children's early scientific skills are under-developed developed and below those expected for their age due to the inadequacy of planning for this aspect of the area of learning. They begin to recognise, value and talk about the features of living things. Through practical activities such as cookery, they understand that some materials change when mixed and heated, for example the ingredients to make a pizza, but that others change state, such as a candle that is hard to soft wax when heated. Children are not having sufficient opportunities to record their observations in various ways, or to interpret their own results.

107. Children's construction and design skills are well developed and many are on line to achieve at expected levels by the time they are five. They choose a variety of materials to

create two and three dimensional work. Children make collage pictures with an interesting range of materials. Almost all children use glue and scissors competently in their work, a few just snipping but most cutting along outlines. Children use a wide range of commercial construction materials, and use their imagination well. Children use small world play to construct scenarios with animals and people. They use rolling pins, spoons, cutters and other implements to make foods such as sweets and pizzas, and a similar range to cut out and shape items from play-doh.

108.Children's information technology skills are appropriately promoted and they are competent in using the computer and tape recorders. They are confident in turning the recorders on and off as well as altering the volume. The majority are confident when using the computer by the time they leave the nursery and know the names and purposes of many of the keys. They know how to use the mouse and are familiar with several software packages. This enables them to work on their own or within a small group and stay on task. Children were seen using icons on the screen to move through the requirements of the program.

109.Children are eager to learn about all aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world. They enjoy the practical nature of the subject, particularly investigations such as science work on heat and melting, but have no opportunity to be proud of findings as there are no set procedures for recording results. Children are very careful with delicate items, such as candles, and concentrate well on whatever they are doing. Their behaviour is good.

110.Teaching seen in this area of learning is good overall. Staff generally bring in elements of other areas of learning to supplement their work. For example, stressing appropriate terminology such as 'dissolving' during science activities and promoting decision-making in model making activities. The use of comparisons, estimation and suitable mathematical language was observed when pupils engaged in food technology activities. Day to day planning is limited on paper and does not consistently identify learning objectives or outcomes that reflect in the activity. It is impossible to evaluate the success of an activity in raising standards or improving progress as the objectives are frequently confusing. However, activities are generally chosen to be interesting and provide good learning opportunities. They are plentiful and well set out. Children are managed well, and praise and encouragement is reinforced. Staff assess children's understanding through questioning informally as they work, although there are no linked assessment procedures to any aspect of the area of learning and this is very poor.

111.The area of learning is divided into two sub-groups for planning and co-ordination. Geography and history are linked together and science, design technology and information technology are grouped. The role of the co-ordinator is under-developed at present and staff have not been involved in a review of the subjects for sometime. The curriculum is better in practice than in documentation. The areas of learning have brief statements of intent and broad learning targets, but these are not well brought together into a single document representing knowledge and understanding of the world. Information technology has a written policy. Children's experiences are activity-based, with the staff's skills enabling children to make satisfactory progress across the area. There is no underlying structure or outline of progressively challenging targets for children to aid planning and it is scant in some areas such as early historical and geographical knowledge. Informal daily assessment is inconsistent and does not promote children's progress partly because there are no suitable learning targets associated with the planning, and partly because the records kept do not cover this area well. There are no formal procedures or guidance for assessment of children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

112.Resources for the subject are good and very well supplemented by staff, parents, and books.

119. **Physical development**

113. By the time children, are five, they achieve the expected levels outlined in the desirable learning outcomes for children of this age overall. Activities which promote manipulation and fine motor skills are well used and children make good progress in these activities, which are well supervised. During inside activities, children handle small equipment increasingly well as they mature. They use scissors with increasing skill and snip and cut around shapes well. Children work with patience and care and exercise good self-control in these sessions. Children demonstrate good manipulative skills when using the computer, finding their way around the keyboard and most use a mouse to click on and drag icons. They build large and imaginative constructions using bricks carefully to make them balance. By the time they leave the school, most have developed a good pencil grip which they use to draw imaginatively and to write many letters of the alphabet. Children's gross motor skills are satisfactory, but their control and is less well developed. In games, some find it difficult to stop, start and turn to face the other direction on order. Progress in this area of development is satisfactory. Skills are not fully promoted due to the limited range of activities and the lack of direct teaching in outside activities. This reflects the findings of the last inspection.

114. When outdoors, children use a range of equipment. They steer pushchairs and trikes and some can ride a small two-wheeled bike. However, many have not yet developed control of stopping to avoid running into someone else and have little sense of direction. Children climb apparatus and descend ladders efficiently. They kick footballs and hit smaller balls, but this is sometimes indiscriminate and encroaches on others space. Older pupils can throw a ball at a target and bat with increasing accuracy.

115. Children are keen to be involved in daily activities indoors and generally in the free play outside. However, there are a few children who find it difficult to maintain concentration and wander in and out undecided what to do. All children co-operate with each other when asked and play is small groups indoors. However, when outside and left on their own some do not know what to do and how to channel their energy. They race around with insufficient attention and care.

116. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall as the range of activities provided indoors all promote physical development to some degree. For example, water and sand play, construction, painting and music. Activities in the garden area come under the planning for physical development, but there is insufficient intervention and direct teaching to actively promote children's gross motor skills, for example in self-control. One example of direct teaching was seen during the inspection and this was satisfactory. Staff were not seen suggesting different ways for children to work and play. This is a decline from the last inspection when staff were reported as supporting children's learning well. Expectations of children's performance on indoor activities is appropriate, but low outdoors. The overall management of children's time outside, and the use of teaching time, are unsatisfactory. Staff focus on supervising one area, which is a unsatisfactory and does not promote children's progress. They are not challenged and the development of skills.

117. The area of learning is co-ordinated by a teacher who is supported by two nursery nurses. The role of the co-ordinator is under-developed and the staff have not yet reviewed provision or the curriculum. Curriculum planning is minimal and no there are very few links between the indoor and outdoor curriculum. The outdoor curriculum does not provide exciting, stimulating and challenging opportunities and this results in poor provision. There are no learning objectives for outdoor activities and play is not structured in anyway. Plans for indoor activities, which change regularly, are in place. The range of creative activities on offer are generally good and promote physical development and enhance progress. There are no detailed aims or guidelines to support staff in planning or to promote the progress of children of differing ages and abilities. The assessment of overall progress in skills is very poor and there is no formal assessment of progress towards identified targets to inform and develop the

curriculum. There are no records kept of the activities children choose and this could result in children never going outside.

118. Large and small resources used indoors are good. Equipment outside is inadequate in the range and amount available. Resources indoors are easily accessible and, where necessary, safely stored.

125. ***Creative development***

119. The creative development of all children is on line reach the desirable outcomes for this area of learning by the time they are five and children make good progress.

120. Children appreciate music and join in confidently with songs and rhymes, singing from memory and maintaining a tune. Many children can supplement their singing with clapping at intervals using the right rhythm. Children are learning to listen carefully and start singing at the right moment to a voice accompaniment. They are familiar with a range of music from different countries, and sometimes play along on a percussion instrument.

121. Children's art skills are well developed. They enjoy art activities and name and choose carefully from a range of colours. They understand that mixing paints together results in one of a different colour, and one child observed spent a considerable amount of time making purple lighter by adding an increasing amount of white. Children have looked at famous artists' work. Children print using a range of shapes, and learn about symmetry through Mendi hand printing. They use dough to make a variety of items, and mark, roll and cut the dough to obtain the effect they want.

122. Children's creative play skills are satisfactory. They engage in role-play that was based around the home corner and shops selling sweets or saris during the inspection. Children playing with cars, trains, small figures of people and animals and use these imaginatively when supported by an adult. They do not use the outside resources imaginatively or create stories around the apparatus they are using. Children are responsive in story time, and enter into the spirit of stories enjoying the plot.

123. Children enjoy creative activities. They generally respond well to opportunities given in all areas and some opportunity is given for children to practice skills through choice activities. Children work well alone, in co-operation with one another or in a large group. Their behaviour is good and they persevere with their activities. They are responsible with their equipment and toys, tidying up carefully at the end of activities.

124. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers generally have good levels of knowledge in this area, particularly in art. On one occasion the concept of reflection was being taught through making Mendi hand prints and children were being taught about the concept of symmetry. Staff expect good levels of behaviour and application, and children perform accordingly although there are inconsistencies of approach across the school. Staff's management skills are appropriate and children are motivated by encouragement, praise and exciting work. Activities are always well prepared for children to start using without delay at the start of a session and resources are good. Staff assess children on an informal basis to offer them guidance and support which goes some way to promoting their progress.

125. The curriculum is good in practice, but not well documented. The area of learning is broken down into art and craft and music for planning and for co-ordination. The curriculum has not been reviewed for sometime. There is a brief statement and broad learning targets in art and music, but insufficient detail or outline of progressively challenging targets for children to aid planning. This makes planning limited in some areas such as imaginative play and does not enable a steady approach to be taken to developing children's skills, knowledge and understanding as they mature. These procedures are insecure and rely too heavily of staff expertise to promote children's progress through activities offered. Informal daily assessment is inconsistent and does not support children's progress well partly because the record of achievement does not cover this area of learning sufficiently. There are no formal assessment procedures. Resources for the subject are good.

132. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

132. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

126. The inspection was undertaken by a team of three inspectors including a lay inspector. During the week, 42 lessons or parts of lessons were observed and evaluated. A further 12 hours were spent on other inspection activities. Discussions were held with children, teachers, nursery nurses, support staff, administration staff, members of the governing body and parents. Documentation was analysed prior to and during the inspection. This included samples of records, reports, individual education plans, school policies, curriculum documents, staff planning documents; minutes of the governing body and financial records. Children's work was scrutinised. The views of a meeting attended by 24 parents and 16 responses to a questionnaire for parents were also taken into consideration.

127.DATA AND INDICATORS

Child 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	73.5	0	19	3

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18

Education support staff

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked each week	95

Average class size:	40
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Financial data

Financial year:	1998/1999
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	£
Total Income	207 981
Total Expenditure	199 141
Expenditure per child	2 553
Balance brought forward from previous year	16 000
Balance carried forward to next year	0

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	128
Number of questionnaires returned:	16

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	32	63	5	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	41	53	6	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	0	56	41	6	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	29	33	14	19	5
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	52	31	7	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	18	53	24	6	6
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	35	35	24	6	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	12	24	53	6	6
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	34	45	7	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	24	59	18	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	63	37	0	0	0

134. Summary of responses

Included when there are only a small number of returns