

INSPECTION REPORT

GOODWAY NURSERY SCHOOL

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique Reference Number: 103128

Headteacher: Mrs Mary Larkham

Reporting inspector: Ms B Matusiak-Varley
19938

Dates of inspection: 20 – 21 October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706659

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
Type of control:	Birmingham Local Education Authority
Age range of pupils:	3 years – 4 years 11 months
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Goodway Road Great Barr Birmingham B44 8RL
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Appropriate authority:	Birmingham Local Education Authority
Date of previous inspection:	October 1996

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S Hussain Lay Inspector	Equal opportunities	
N Wales	Special educational needs Mathematics Knowledge and understanding of the world Physical development	

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The nursery prepares the children well for their next stage of education.
- All children, including higher attainers and those with English as an additional language, make good progress. Children with special educational needs make very good progress.
- The nursery's ethos is excellent.
- Use of homework is excellent.
- Outdoor provision is excellent.
- Children's attitudes to learning is very good, as is their behaviour.
- Relationships are excellent.
- Children's personal development is very good.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- The curriculum is vibrant, it is very well planned and is relevant to the needs of the children.
- Assessment procedures are very good.
- Overall provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Provision for support, guidance and children's welfare is very good.
- Partnerships with parents and the community are very good.
- The leadership and management of the nursery are very good.
- The nursery manages its resources efficiently.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is good.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. There are no significant weaknesses within the nursery.
- II. Only minor issues have been identified within the main report.

The nursery is a very caring organisation with no weaknesses. It provides a very good quality of education for its children. It serves its community very well and has a very good partnership with parents. Children are very well looked after by a hard-working and caring staff, who provide exciting and very well planned opportunities for all children to learn.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The nursery has made good improvement since the previous inspection. Very good schemes of work have been written which are impacting positively on standards. Time has been allocated appropriately so that a full range of activities is provided for the children. Nursery nurses and support assistants are more actively involved in working alongside teachers. There has also been an improvement in teaching, curriculum planning and assessment, leadership and management, attitudes to learning, provision for spiritual, moral social and cultural development and provision of support, guidance and welfare of children. Parental involvement is very good. Resources have improved, especially in outdoor provision. Progress of children with special educational needs has improved, as has progress in children's physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The nursery has made improvements in the quality of relationships, provision for personal development, attendance and punctuality and information to parents. Community links have also been improved. The nursery's capacity for improvement is very good.

Standards

Children enter the nursery with levels of attainment that are below those expected of children of this age. In

particular, children's skills of language and literacy and mathematical awareness are underdeveloped. All children make good progress. Children with special educational needs make very good progress. By the time they leave the nursery, children are likely to achieve standards which are in line with those expected of this age in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, physical development and personal and social development. Higher attainers achieve above these levels.

• **Quality of teaching**

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

The quality of teaching is very good and is a contributory factor to the good rates of progress. The teaching of children with special educational needs is very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the week of inspection. Fifty-six per cent of teaching seen was very good and 44 per cent was sound or better, of which 39 per cent was good. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers have good knowledge of how young children learn and plan their lessons very effectively, noting clearly what they want the children to learn. Teachers provide very good opportunities for developing skills of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

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

• **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good. Children have very good attitudes to learning and their personal development is very good.
Attendance	Good. The good rates of attendance contribute positively to children's attainment and good rates of progress.
Ethos*	Excellent. There is a strong emphasis on commitment to high standards; attitudes to work are very good and relationships are excellent.
Leadership and management	Very good. The board of managers are very committed to the nursery and are very supportive of the headteacher. The headteacher is an effective and charismatic leader, who has clear educational direction and monitors the quality of education very well.
Curriculum	Very good. It is broad, balanced and relevant and meets the needs of the children. Assessment procedures are very good and are used very well to inform planning.
Provision for special educational needs	Very good and all children with special educational needs make very good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual development is good. Provision for moral, social and cultural development is very good. Overall, very good provision.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Barely satisfactory staffing. Good resources. Barely satisfactory indoor accommodation, which makes provision for children's physical development unsatisfactory. Overall, satisfactory.
Value for money	Good value for money, although the nursery does not have a delegated budget.

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

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

What most parents like about the school

- III. Children are very happy in the nursery.
- IV. Parents are always made welcome.
- V. Parents are considered as true partners in their children's learning.
- VI. Parents receive detailed information about their children's attainment and progress.
- VII. The nursery is a stimulating learning environment.

What some parents are not happy about

- VIII. There were no negative comments.

Inspectors fully endorse parents' positive views.

· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

There are no significant weaknesses within the nursery, therefore, no key issues are raised in this report. However, the following minor issues should be addressed by the headteacher, staff, management body and the local education authority:

- The development of formal policies for the provision of spirituality across the curriculum. (Paragraph 42).
- The development of opportunities for children to acquire independence, especially at break times (for the distribution of milk and biscuits). (Paragraphs 11, 36, 69 and 74).
- The improvement of indoor accommodation in order to develop space for physical skills. (Paragraphs 12, 36, 67 and 100).

INTRODUCTION

§ Characteristics of the school

1. Goodway Nursery is situated in the Kingstanding/Great Barr area of Birmingham. This outer-ring area is known to have a high percentage of unemployment and one-parent families. The housing in the area is a mixture of local authority and privately owned accommodation. The nursery caters for children aged three to four years. Up to eighty children attend the nursery daily, of whom 24 attend full time. There is a total of 88 children on roll, of whom 52 attend on a full-time basis in the mornings and afternoons. Twenty-four children receive full-time education and ten children receive additional support for a short time during the week. Twelve children are supported through Section 11 funding. Twenty-nine children have been identified as having special educational needs. The nursery has a high percentage of children with special educational needs and this has increased since the previous inspection. Eight children are eligible for free school meals. The children are taught in groups in three classes by two full-time teachers, two full-time nursery nurses, one part-time learning support assistant and one part-time Section 11 learning support assistant. The headteacher has a half-day per week non-teaching commitment, which is used for managerial duties.
2. Since the previous inspection, there has been a new member of staff appointed. The academic profile of the children has altered with many children experiencing speech and language difficulties. Attainment on entry is overall below that expected of children of this age. Four children had Statements of Special Educational Need in 1997/98. The last few years has seen a trend towards a greater number of children having more complex needs, as a result, the nursery's training strategy is including input from the Educational Psychology Service, Outreach Service and Visiting Teacher Service. The nursery has a part-time assistant supporting children with English as an additional language.
3. The nursery's main aims are to:
 - ◆ Prepare children adequately for their next stage of education;
 - ◆ Implement successfully the first phase of the Birmingham Grid for Learning and become a Centre of Expertise for the local area;
 - ◆ Further develop links with the local community and Artists in Residence.

.. **Key indicators**

.. **Attendance**

.. As attendance is not obligatory, this table is not applicable.

.. **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	56
	Satisfactory or better	100
	Less than satisfactory	0

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

1. Children enter the nursery at the age of three, with levels of attainment that are very varied, but baseline assessments indicate that their skills of language and literacy, mathematics, physical development and personal and social development, are below those expected of children of this age. Children's attainment on entry in creative development is average. Attainment upon entry in knowledge and understanding of the world is below that expected of children of this age. Many children have been identified as having special educational needs in speech and language.
2. All children, including higher attainers and children who have English as an additional language, make good progress in the short time that they are in the nursery, and are on line to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all areas of learning by the time that they leave for primary school. Children with special educational needs make very good progress because the tasks set are matched to their needs and the nature of their difficulties is very quickly identified. The nursery has very good links with the psychology service and with the health authority, and these partnerships impact positively on children's attainment and progress.
3. In language and literacy, children are on line to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time that they are five. By the time that they leave the nursery, children have achieved the levels expected for their age in speaking and listening, reading and writing, and all children make good progress. Children with special educational needs make very good progress and higher attaining children, who also make good progress, are on line to achieve expectations which exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes in language and literacy.
4. Children sit and listen attentively as a group for short periods of time, and this developing skill gives them a good start to their education. The staff take every opportunity to join in conversation with children and, as a result, children make good progress in speaking and listening. In reading, children handle books carefully, turn pages without creasing them, and talk about their favourite characters. They know the meaning of author and title page, and they understand that the text carries the words of the story. Information technology is very well used to support children's skills in language and literacy and the nursery has produced a very good programme to support the trip to Sandwell Valley.
5. Early writing skills demonstrate a good knowledge of mark-making. Higher attaining children are starting to form isolated letters correctly and the majority of children can trace their name. Many children copy letters under their teachers' writing. Children use emergent writing to communicate meaning in the role play areas, and they are aware of the different purposes of writing. Since the last inspection, standards have been judged as satisfactory rather than good, but this is not due to any change in the nursery's very good provision, but to the academic profile of the children on entry. Good rates of progress have been maintained, but the progress of children with special educational needs has improved.
6. In the mathematical area of learning, children are on line to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time that they are five, and they make good progress. Children with English as an additional language make good progress also. Children with special educational needs make very good progress. Higher attainers are in line to achieve levels which exceed Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time that they are five. Higher attaining children already understand the concept of five. Children match and sort objects by colour and shape, and create and extend patterns. They know a good number of rhymes and they have an appropriate mathematical vocabulary for their age. They are developing sound concepts of 'one more than' and 'one less than'. Most children can

recognise circles, squares and triangles and make pictures and patterns with them. The nursery has maintained its sound standards identified in the previous report.

7. A contributory factor to the good rates of progress is the fact that the nursery has ensured that skills of literacy and numeracy are well developed in all the areas of learning. Teachers' planning indicates that the teachers have given a lot of thought and consideration to the planning of a very good curriculum, through which these skills are appropriately taught.
8. In the area of personal and social development, children are likely to achieve standards by the age of five in line with expectations for their age, and all children, including those with English as an additional language, make good progress. Children with special educational needs make very good progress. There is a strong emphasis on developing appropriate personal and social skills and, as a result, children quickly get to know nursery routines and behave very well. They are taught to be independent and this is demonstrated by their ability to choose resources, tidy up after themselves, and sit and listen as a group. Opportunities are not provided for children to exercise independence, for example in getting their own drinks and snacks at break times. Children develop confidence very quickly and persevere with tasks that they are set. The nursery has maintained the same standards identified in the previous inspection.
9. In physical development, children are on course to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time that they are five. All children, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, make good progress due to the improved provision of outdoor accommodation and curriculum planning, and this is an improvement on previous inspection findings. Children walk, run, skip, jump and climb with appropriate control over their movements. They have a good awareness of space and of others. The nursery has maintained the sound standards identified in the previous report. However, indoor accommodation restricts the provision that the nursery can make for children's physical development, due to the nature of the building. The nursery makes the best possible use of the accommodation available and has extensively developed outdoor accommodation in order to compensate for the restricted indoor space.
10. All children use pencils, paint brushes and coloured pens with appropriate control for their age and they show increasing signs of dexterity when using construction kits and jigsaw puzzles and when playing with small toys and figures.
11. In creative development, all children make good progress, including those with English as an additional language. Children with special educational needs make very good progress. By the age of five, all children are on line to achieve standards which are in line with the expectations for their age.
12. The nursery's link with Artists in Residence is a contributory factor to the good rates of progress that are made, because children are taught subject-specific skills appropriately. Children can paint, draw, smudge, stick, glue, do collective collage, and are developing good skills of observation. They can draw objects from the nature table appropriately, such as leaves and conkers, and they can choose colours needed for creating autumnal effects. Children have maintained the standards identified in the previous report.
13. In knowledge and understanding of the world, children are on line to achieve Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time that they are five, and all children make good progress including those with English as an additional language. Children with special educational needs make very good progress. Children are developing their emerging skills of chronology, they can distinguish between old and new things and they know that Monday comes after Sunday and that on Saturday they do not come to the nursery. Children use the environmental garden effectively and a love of nature is encouraged in the way they use the local environment. Children talk about their families and their environment, and recognise familiar features in their vicinity. They are developing sound skills of information technology and can use the mouse appropriately. Since the previous inspection, the

nursery has maintained its sound standards in knowledge and understanding of the world.

14. The overall contributory factors to the good rates of progress and to the attainment of the children being in line with what is expected for their age in all six areas of learning are:

- The very good quality of teaching;
- Very good curriculum planning, enriched through trips, visits and visitors to the school, and assessment procedures;
- Good improvement made since the last inspection in developing schemes of work;
- Very good leadership, resulting in effective team-work;
- Very good provision for special educational needs and good provision for English as an additional language;
- Very good partnerships with parents, supported by excellent provision for homework;
- Good quality resources.

§ **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

1. Children's attitudes to learning are very good. Attitudes have improved significantly since the last inspection. Children co-operate very well with teachers and support staff, show high levels of interest in their work and apply themselves purposefully to tasks. They take pride in their achievements. Most children are keen to answer questions and participate fully in their lessons. A good example of this was seen during the visit to Sandwell Valley Park, where they answered questions enthusiastically about animals, plants and trees. Children listen very well and are able to concentrate for sustained periods in their play and other activities.
2. Behaviour is very good. This makes a considerable contribution to children's progress in lessons. This nursery is a happy and friendly community. Children behave very well in classrooms and in and around the nursery. The children at this nursery are developing very good manners and they show respect for staff and visiting adults. They respond well to the high expectations set by staff. They are developing an appreciation of the need for an orderly community. There were no exclusions in the last academic year. Behaviour has remained very good since the last inspection.
3. Relationships are excellent. Children relate very well to each other, showing respect for others' feelings, values and contributions in lessons. Children are positively encouraged to think of, and care for others. They work well collaboratively when required. For example, some children helped each other to collect samples of acorns and leaves on their visit to Sandwell Valley. Relationships between staff and children are also excellent. Children are clearly confident about approaching staff about their worries and problems. There is no evidence of racial disharmony. Relationships have improved from the good quality found at the last inspection.
4. The children at this nursery are trustworthy and care for property. They use toys and learning resources sensibly. They are developing a good sense of respect for the property of others.
5. Personal development is very good. This aspect of children's development has improved since the last inspection. Most children are able to express themselves clearly and confidently for their age. Circle time allows children to positively develop their language and literacy skills. It also allows them to develop self-confidence and self-esteem as they take part in conversations. Children are generally developing a sense of responsibility for themselves and their learning. Staff encourage this very well. Children show a good level of independence. They are keen to experiment and try things without prompting. A good example of this was seen during a role play where three children organised themselves as a family undertaking a school trip by car. Each played an impressive and independent role. Staff take many opportunities to set tasks which children can do at home or in the community. For example, task sheets such as 'shopping to learn' and 'shopping to count' are given

to those parents who want to do additional work to support their children's learning. Children are also learning about computers and some are confident enough to try to type their names or play basic learning games. Some can use a mouse with growing skill. The nursery has a well developed programme of responsibilities for children. A good example is register duty. Children use their initiative well. For example, many readily help their friends to find toys and learning resources, and some offer to return the register to the office in the mornings. However, inspection findings show that more opportunities could be provided for children to take on more responsibilities, such as giving out milk and biscuits at snack times.

6. Children make a good contribution to the community. For example, they are currently involved in raising funds for the nursery through a sponsored nature trail. Clearly, children are given opportunities, which they take, to develop a sense of caring for their community.

23. **Attendance**

7. Attendance is good. The rate compares well with other similar nurseries. Although there is no statutory attendance requirement for the under-fives, all children attend regularly. There are firmly established procedures in place to follow up absences. Absence is nearly always due to medical reasons.
8. Registers are taken promptly at the start of each session and are conscientiously and accurately completed. This makes a good contribution to children's learning and preparation for primary school routines. All parents replying to the inspection questionnaire report that their children enjoy attending the nursery. Punctuality is very good and lessons run to the published timetable.
9. The rate of attendance and children's punctuality have improved significantly since the last inspection.

26. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

26. **Teaching**

10. The quality of teaching is very good. In 56 per cent of lessons observed, the quality of teaching was very good or better; in 44 per cent of lessons observed the teaching was satisfactory or better, of which 39 per cent was good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the week of inspection. Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has improved. The teaching of the early skills of literacy and numeracy is very good. Staff encourage children to talk about their experiences and their reactions to tasks that they undertake. They 'scribe' for children so that children can see a written record of what they have said, and good effort is made to improve children's emerging vocabulary. The nursery environment is well supported by print. Number skills are taught well on a daily basis, through songs, rhymes, counting apparatus, games, computer games and working with written figures. Staff effectively seize on many opportunities to practise counting with children as they pursue other routines, for example, counting how many children are present. Staff constantly promote good social skills, such as turn-taking, considering others and learning how to share equipment. The teaching of language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and personal and social development is very good. The teaching of physical development is good, although very little direct teaching was seen and evidence is gathered mainly from photographs, teachers' planning and observation of pupils outside. The teaching of creative development is very good and is enhanced by the very good use of artists in residence.
11. In all areas of learning, teachers have very good subject knowledge. They understand the needs of young children and know how they learn best. All teaching methods are underpinned by teachers having very good knowledge of educational theories and recent and relevant developments in early years education. This is because teachers place great importance on the need to be aware of recent and relevant information in relation to early years teaching.
12. Teachers have high expectations of their children, they use appropriate adult language when giving explanations and give a clear example of how they want the end product to be. This was seen in creative development, when the teacher reminded children to say their words clearly when singing so that people listening could understand the message in the song. Teachers ask children to voice their thoughts and this enables them to intervene in children's learning. In a very good literacy lesson, the teacher asked the children to visualise the shape of the letter and then draw it, she then helped the children identify the sound that it made. Teachers' planning is excellent. Very clear learning targets are set, cross-referenced to other areas of the curriculum so that children are given the opportunity to both consolidate and extend their skills. Teachers make sure that tasks set match children's needs so that children are encouraged to succeed and develop positive attitudes to

learning. Teachers' planning incorporates the school's mission statement in encouraging children to learn how to learn. During planning meetings, nursery nurses are actively involved in designing programmes of work for individual children. A contributory factor to the very high standard of teachers' planning is the fact that teachers know their children very well, because they have very good assessment procedures, and any problems that children might encounter are very quickly picked up and rectified.

13. Teachers' methods and organisation are excellent. Children are grouped both socially and academically. The pace of lessons is brisk and children do not have time to be bored by spending too much time on an activity. The grouping of children by ability is having a positive effect on both standards and rates of progress in the language and literacy and mathematical areas of learning. Teachers regularly evaluate their lessons and the nursery is building up a bank of ideas in relation to what methods work and what methods do not work in lessons. Teachers manage their children very well, this is a contributory factor to the good rates of progress in personal and social development, as children have very clear boundaries defined for them. For example, they know that when they are sorting out cards for matching activities, they must finish the task to the best of their ability.
14. The use of homework is excellent. Parents are given regular tasks to carry out with their children, such as making pictorial shopping lists, to increase their children's concentration span. Parents are very appreciative of the suggestions that the staff put forward.
15. The teaching of children with special educational needs is very good. This is due to the careful and detailed diagnosis of individual need, the excellent specialist knowledge of the co-ordinator and the detailed and rigorous planning related to individual education plans. Assessment on a day-to-day basis is an essential part of the planning process. Classroom support staff form an important and well-used part of the provision. Teachers plan activities, following previous assessment, to suit the needs of the children and these tasks are well matched to children's needs. The requirements of higher attaining children are also taken into account when groups are re-arranged, and activities provided to suit these children's needs. Integration is well managed so that all children can work alongside their peers. The teaching of children with English as an additional language is good. Children are effectively supported by caring staff who are well aware of children's emerging language restrictions, and who give valuable support to enhance children's vocabulary and understanding.
16. The very good quality of teaching is a contributory factor to the good rates of progress that children make. Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has improved. Teachers are very clear about what they are going to teach the children; also, they challenge children effectively and intervene appropriately in their learning.

33. **The curriculum and assessment**

17. The curricular provision in the school is very good. It is broadly based and well balanced in all areas of learning for children under five. This reflects a good improvement on the previous report. The key issues relating to schemes of work and outdoor play activities have satisfactorily been addressed. The children enjoy a vibrant curriculum that is enhanced by the number of visitors to the school, the visits made in the locality, extra-curricular swimming lessons and the involvement of parents in their children's learning. These, together with the careful monitoring by the staff of the activities which children undertake and the skills that they cover, have a very positive impact on the progress that they make.
18. Provision for literacy and numeracy within the curriculum is very good. These skills are taught through a stimulating range of activities, linked to topic themes and supported by the imaginative use of visits to Sandwell Valley Park, the Science Museum and a farm, and visitors such as the police, firemen, story tellers, artists, musicians and dentist. In addition the school has a good range of resources and the combined effect is to benefit the children's knowledge and understanding of the

world they live in. Effective small group work and individual support help to develop competencies in these areas. There is a clear programme, illustrated in the schemes of work, for pupils to develop their literacy and mathematical skills across the range of nursery activities.

19. The curriculum effectively promotes the pupils' physical development, mainly due to the excellent outdoor facilities that have been imaginatively developed over a period of time. However, the indoor provision is not of the same standard, due to the lack of space available for physical education activities. Children make good progress in their personal and social development. They are treated sensitively by staff, and the great majority quickly settle into school life. After a short time in school, inspection evidence shows that they are developing good classroom routines, follow the teachers' instructions showing a good level of understanding and are beginning to develop interest in activities and enthusiasm. There are insufficient opportunities to develop the children's independence. Appropriately challenging activities promote intellectual development.
20. All children, regardless of gender, race or background, have equal access to the curriculum. Careful monitoring of the children's work on a daily basis ensures that all curricular areas are sufficiently developed for each child.
21. The curriculum effectively meets the requirements of children with a special educational need. At present, there are no children with Statements of Special Educational Need, but those children with individual education plans work towards clear and manageable targets that focus on the most important learning needs of each child. Pupils benefit from the encouragement the school gives to parents to become involved in the education of their children and from the help they receive from support staff.
22. Curricular planning is very thorough. Good schemes of work have been developed since the previous inspection, covering all the areas of learning. Clearly identified topics help to develop the knowledge and skills of the pupils. Activities are carefully planned and teachers are aware of their lesson objectives and of the outcomes they are aiming to achieve. They identify teaching strategies, resources and assessment opportunities and support staff are aware of their roles in the lessons. Full-time nursery staff are involved in the planning and, in detailed discussions on the needs and individual education plan targets of pupils with a special educational need.
23. Assessment procedures are very good and data gathered is used very well to inform future planning. Effective baseline assessments, devised by both the local education authority and the school, contribute towards the children's record of progress and are administered twice a year. They are related to the areas of learning and are accurate, consistent and manageable. Assessment of skills and knowledge is judged on the basis of the area being visited, assessed, understood and, if necessary, re-visited. Very detailed observations are made of the children's progress to ensure that their needs are being met and assessment opportunities are built into daily planning. The school keeps a portfolio of children's work that acts as a useful record of progress and achievement. Teachers pass on assessment records to the next primary school, promoting continuity of learning between the two phases of education.
40. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**
24. Overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. It is good for children's spiritual development and very good for moral, social and cultural development. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, which found provision to be good.
25. At present there is no formal policy in place for planning for children's spiritual development, but provision for spirituality is evident in the tasks undertaken by the children. Opportunities for children to experience awe and wonder happen on an informal basis. Children marvel with delight at the changing colours of autumn on their visit to Sandwell Valley. On their environmental walks, they discuss the changing seasons and their subsequent effect on nature. Children know the names

of trees and their wonder of nature is encouraged by the nature table, where they can observe conkers, feathers and leaves. When playing with magnets, children squeal with delight when they see the force of the magnetic field. When talking about seeds, children wonder how big trees grow from tiny seeds and they are enthusiastic to explain how their environmental garden changes in different seasons. Children derive great enjoyment from shadow puppet theatres and marvel as to how light creates shadows.

26. Provision for moral development is very good. The nursery's aims and values are very well implemented throughout the curriculum. Teachers set very effective role models for the children and encourage them to talk about their feelings. Stories read by teachers often provide the basis for discussion of fears and emotional reactions to situations. The vast majority of parents returning the parents' questionnaires feel that the nursery's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children. Teachers successfully show children how to be aware of others and sensitive to their needs, and very effectively foster values of honesty, fairness and respect for one another. Parents are positively encouraged to help their children develop a sense of moral justice by reading appropriate literature recommended by the school and by taking an active interest in their learning. Staff make the principles which distinguish right from wrong very clear to the children.
27. Provision for children's social development is very good. Staff have high expectations of children in terms of providing a full range of social experiences for children. Children take part in Maypole dancing performances and are encouraged to take responsibility for tidying up and choosing their own resources for learning. Children work in both large and small groups and co-operate with one another. During plenary sessions and 'circle time', children listen attentively to the experiences of their friends and congratulate one another when good work has been done. Teachers actively question children in helping them to identify the things that make them happy or sad, and class rules are clearly explained and reinforced appropriately.
28. Provision for children's cultural development is very good. The nursery has placed an appropriately high emphasis on developing children's language and literacy skills through working with artists. Children have had access to a full range of aesthetic experiences. They have worked with storytellers, Asian dancers, African musicians and artists. The nursery enables the children to develop awareness of their own cultural traditions, such as Christmas, Easter, and Shrove Tuesday, and traditions of other cultures. Children celebrate Diwali, Eid and Chinese New Year. They study multi-cultural stories and taste different types of food. Children are well prepared to appreciate the diversity of a multi-cultural society.
45. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**
29. Provisions for the support, guidance and welfare of children are very good. The very caring ethos makes a significant contribution to the nursery community. The nursery has maintained the high level of pastoral care given to children and also considerably improved provisions to support and guide children, since the last inspection. There are good arrangements for induction to this nursery. New children to the nursery have the opportunity to attend well-organised sessions so that they can experience class routines. Children with special educational needs are very well supported by staff to enable them to participate in all learning activities. They receive a good level of specialist support from outside agencies where this is necessary. The level of external support has improved considerably since the last inspection. Individual education plans for children with special educational needs are of very good quality, providing a firm basis for their progress. The nursery has several children for whom English is a second language. These children receive very good quality support in their learning. The nursery clearly values all children within its care.
30. There are very good procedures for monitoring children's academic achievements and personal development. The nursery maintains children's portfolios in good order, and there are many tests and assessments undertaken at appropriate intervals. Assessments are very well detailed and are effectively used to inform and guide teachers in their planning. Staff liaise effectively with parents, outside agencies and each other about the needs and progress of individual children.

31. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour. The behaviour of individual children is carefully monitored where necessary, and appropriate support is provided. Appropriately detailed records are kept of any significant behavioural problems. Children are given opportunities to reflect on their behaviour when it falls below expectations. The nursery has a good quality and effective behaviour policy. Staff are very good role models for children, upon which they can base their own behaviour. Classes have well-established rules. The playtime rules are prominently displayed in the outside areas and this serves as a constant reminder for the community. Praise and encouragement are an integral part of teaching at this nursery. A good variety of rewards is effectively used to recognise and value children's achievements, including good behaviour. Behaviour management in lessons is very good. Circle and story times also celebrate children's good behaviour and help to maintain the high standards of the nursery. The nursery has effective strategies to eliminate oppressive behaviour. Pastoral education includes guidance on how to deal with name-calling and various forms of bullying.
32. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are very good. There are close and effective partnerships with the medical and welfare services. Attendance and punctuality are very closely monitored by staff. The nursery has significantly improved the quality of attendance, absence and punctuality records since the last inspection. Attendance registers are very well maintained and enable staff to identify any issues easily. Staff work effectively with parents and provide frequent reminders about the benefits of good attendance to children.
33. Child protection procedures are very good. The nursery complies with legal requirements. There is a designated member of staff who has received appropriate training and liaises effectively with outside agencies. The nursery has a good quality policy for child protection. All teaching and support staff have had training in child protection procedures and are fully conversant with the nursery's practices and procedures.
34. The nursery has very good procedures to promote children's health, safety, hygiene and wellbeing. Many opportunities are taken by staff to instill and develop awareness of the need for safety, good health and personal hygiene. For example, children were very well advised about the need for warm and appropriate clothing on the trips to Sandwell Valley. Supervision and safety arrangements were very good. Topic work includes activities and play about healthy eating, good habits and the need for regular exercise. Medical practitioners visit the nursery on a regular basis to screen and monitor children's health and physical development. The community police officer attends the nursery regularly, and talks to children about safety. Accident and emergency procedures are very good. There are two members of staff trained and qualified in first aid. Risk assessments and fire drills are carried out periodically. The nursery has fully addressed the safety issues identified at the last inspection. Fire exit and drill procedure notices are now appropriately located. The local authority has addressed the safety issues raised at the last inspection that required action on its part.
51. **Partnership with parents and the community**
35. Partnerships with parents and the community are very good. They make a significant and positive impact on children's attainment and progress.
36. Parents expressed very strong support for the nursery through the inspection questionnaire, and at the meeting with the registered inspector.
37. Parental involvement in the life of the nursery and in children's learning is very good. This has improved significantly from the good quality found at the last inspection. The nursery continues to use parents' questionnaires, and does so very effectively. The nursery positively encourages and welcomes parents to become involved in the life of the nursery. A considerable number of parents help in the nursery regularly. They assist in classrooms, help in the library, listen to children read and accompany trips. Parents work and liaise very effectively with staff. A very good example of

parental support was seen during the nature trail at Sandwell Valley Park. Many parents were seen to give children a very good quality of support in their learning. The school regularly and frequently organises workshops for parents. This enables parents to find out more about the curriculum and become more effectively involved in their children's learning at home. For example, workshops are held about information technology, fine motor skills development, literacy, numeracy and physical education. Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning at home. Many take the very good opportunities provided by the nursery to improve their children's learning skills in the community and at home. A good example of this is the use of task sheets such as 'shopping to count'. Parents occasionally give talks for children. For example, one parent from the clergy recently gave a talk that made a good contribution to the children's spiritual and moral development.

38. There is a close and effective partnership with parents of children with special educational needs. Parents are appropriately involved in reviews of progress and in setting future learning targets.
39. Information to parents is very good. It has improved from the good quality found at the last inspection. The nursery has produced a number of video tapes about the curriculum. These are effectively used at induction meetings with parents. The staff spend a considerable amount of time with new parents. The nursery routines and policies are very carefully explained, and they are provided with a good quality information pack. This includes a brochure and particular policies, such as the behaviour policy. Newsletters are sent to parents on a regular basis. These keep parents well informed about forthcoming events in the nursery. Various informative and useful notices are displayed in the entrance area. The nursery provides very good quality children's annual reports. Children's strengths, weaknesses and future learning objectives are clearly stated. The nursery regularly organises information sessions for parents. For example, sessions are to take place shortly about developing children's reading skills.
40. Links with the community are very good. Partnerships have improved from the high quality reported at the last inspection. Educational visits and trips are very well planned to support and enrich the curriculum. For example children recently visited a farm in the Sandwell Valley and inspectors accompanied the field trip to Sandwell Valley Park. Very impressive and valuable children's work is done at such visits, and subsequently upon returning to the nursery. Inspectors were particularly impressed by the high quality of children's work with the resident artist, immediately after the trip. Children produced high quality patterns and art using samples of autumn leaves they had collected. The whole exercise made a very good contribution to children's learning. The nursery also has very good links with other visitors, for example, musicians and story-tellers. There are very good links with the emergency and welfare services. For example, the community police officer and fire service are regular visitors that talk to children about safety. A considerable number of nursery nurse and care studies students undertake work experience placements at the nursery. This allows children to work with other positive role models. The nursery has effective links with the 'Top Sport' organisation. This makes a good contribution to children's physical development and allows children to sample a number of sports. The school has significant links with the church. Visits allow children to see and experience a place of worship.
41. The nursery has maintained its strong links with local businesses. Visitors from several businesses in the area give talks for children and this makes a good contribution to emerging skills of citizenship.
42. The nursery has effective links with local primary schools. Towards the end of the children's time at the nursery, introductory sessions are organised at primary schools. This gives children an opportunity to meet staff and experience the new routines of primary school life. Staff liaise effectively regarding the transfer of children's records and this ensures a smooth transition to the next stage of education.

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

59. **Leadership and management**

43. The leadership and management of the nursery are very good. The headteacher provides clear educational direction for the nursery and is ably supported by the managing board. There is a very clear sense of purpose in taking the nursery forward and there is very good team-work which results in an excellent approach to implementing the nursery's aims and values. The ethos of the nursery is excellent; it is based upon improving on previous best performance and all staff with management responsibilities execute their duties very well. The nursery ethos successfully promotes equal opportunities for all children. Relationships in the nursery are excellent.

44. The headteacher is a very effective, knowledgeable and charismatic leader, who has produced a very detailed school development plan, which has specific targets; it is costed appropriately and it is regularly monitored for the impact initiatives identified have on children's attainment and progress. Since the previous inspection, the nursery has made good improvement in addressing all of the key issues, and, as a result, the quality of leadership has improved. Each year, a realistic number of appropriate areas for development are agreed and sufficient time is given to ensure that changes are consistently implemented. The headteacher has made the nursery an example of very good early years practice. Her commitment to working with parents is a contributory factor to the children's average levels of attainment and the good progress that they make.

45. The headteacher is also the co-ordinator for special educational needs and her very good leadership has ensured that children with special educational needs make very good progress because their emerging problems are identified very efficiently. Support and monitoring of the teaching and curriculum development are very good. Teachers' plans are monitored to ensure that the curriculum delivered is broad, balanced, relevant and exciting. An exemplary feature of the implementation of the school's policies is the hard work that has gone into self-evaluation through the Investors in People Award that the nursery has recently achieved, and the Effective Early Learning Research Project.

46. All staff are included in decision-making processes, and the very good arrangements for professional development of staff are appropriately linked to priorities in the school development plan. This results in staff being well trained in order to take on identified initiatives, such as the recent information and communications technology training. Development planning, monitoring and evaluation are very good. The headteacher is very skilful at gaining grants in order to support the limited budget. The recent Artists in Residence initiative is very well organised and is proving to have a positive effect on children's literacy and numeracy skills.

47. The nursery's leadership is very effective in moving the nursery forward and this has improved since the previous inspection. The nursery has appropriate strategies to maintain sound standards and good rates of progress.

64. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

48. The nursery has a barely adequate number of teachers to meet the needs of its children and an adequate number of nursery nurses and other support staff. There are two teachers, one being the headteacher who has a full-time teaching role, in addition to her administrative and curricular responsibilities and her role as the special educational needs co-ordinator. All staff are appropriately trained and experienced and the learning support staff have, or are studying for, additional qualifications. The headteacher is very well qualified for her special educational needs role. Teaching staff and nursery nurses use their expertise very well in planning and assessing work for the children and involving parents in their children's education. All staff working with children with a special educational need are suitably trained, often through in-service courses run by the school. The school makes effective arrangements for the training of students and they contribute to

the development of the school curriculum through, for example, their involvement in visits and planning and carrying through a curricular activity. The key issue of the previous report, that nursery nurses should work alongside each other more frequently, has been satisfactorily addressed.

49. There is no induction policy for new staff, but informal procedures are satisfactory in giving clear guidance on the policies and practices within the nursery. Appraisal systems are effective and, together with careful monitoring of teaching by the headteacher, enable all staff to evaluate and improve their practice. Professional development arrangements for staff are very good. They effectively support individual staff development and contribute significantly to the development of the priorities of the nursery. The school secretary, caretaker and midday assistants make a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school.
50. The accommodation is satisfactory overall but there are significant weaknesses in the internal provision. Classroom space is just about adequate, but the school lacks a suitable area to develop the children's physical skills, especially when the weather is unsuitable for outdoor activities. Storage facilities are poor and the accommodation for the secretary's and headteacher's offices is very cramped and inadequate. Classrooms provide a stimulating environment for the pupils and are attractive and clean due to the efforts of the staff. The outdoor area is very well planned and effectively promotes the children's physical skills of balance, climbing, space awareness, individual control and general enjoyment of physical activities. Playground markings, climbing equipment and a wide range of other apparatus which is very well stored in a purpose built garage area provide very good opportunities for the children's physical and social development. The school has used the outdoor space very well to establish a range of environmental areas and these help to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. The involvement of artists in residence has resulted in a range of work, permanently displayed around the playground, and positively contributing to the children's creative development. Provision has been made for non-ambulant children. These findings reflect those of the previous report.
51. Resources for learning are good. The nursery makes full use of its apparatus for physical development. There is a good range of resources for the teaching of literacy and the school is aware of the need to further extend those for the teaching of mathematics. Computers are used well to enable children to begin to develop their skills. Very good use is made of resources beyond its building, such as the immediate environment, local shops and visits to places of interest. Children visit a local nature reserve, a museum and farm and begin to make comparisons with times gone by. The school makes very good use of help and grants that are available and uses these constructively to promote the progress of the pupils. The findings of this inspection are an improvement on the previous report.
68. **The efficiency of the school**
52. The annual budget is controlled, to a large extent, by the local education authority. The nursery manages its own capitation allowance and staff training budget very efficiently, and these two areas are directly linked to the school development plan. The school management committee is actively involved in considering and commenting upon the recommendations of the headteacher. The headteacher carefully costs proposed spending, and each area of learning is allocated a budget allowance. Resources for the school are effectively deployed within the limitations of the building, though the lack of adequate storage facilities does not always allow pupils to develop skills of independence and choice. Procedures for financial control are good since the recommendations of the recent audit report have been acted upon. They follow authority guidelines. Teachers and nursery nurses are efficiently deployed and work very well as a team. The school makes optimum use of the nursery nurse's skills in both planning and teaching. The cleaning, administrative and midday staff all contribute significantly to the smooth day-to-day running of the nursery. The nursery makes good use of its limited internal accommodation. The routine organisational, administrative and communication procedures in the school are clearly established and are well understood by staff and parents. Resources available to the school for pupils with special educational needs are used well and have a very positive effect on the progress these pupils make.

53. Taking into account:

- the below-average attainment of the children on entry,
- the good progress of the children,
- children's very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development,
- the very good quality of education, particularly teaching,
- and the good resources available to the nursery,

the school provides good value for money.

§ **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

§ **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

1. The nursery caters for children aged three to four years. Up to eighty children attend the nursery daily, of whom 24 attend full time. There is a total of 88 children on roll, of whom 52 attend on a full-time basis in the mornings and afternoons. Twenty-four children receive full-time education and ten children receive additional support for a short time during the week. Twelve children are supported through Section 11 funding. Twenty-nine children have been identified as having special educational needs. The nursery has a high percentage of children with special educational needs, and this has increased since the previous inspection. Eight children are eligible for free school meals. The children are taught in groups in three classes, by two full-time teachers, two full-time nursery nurses and two part-time learning support assistants and one part-time Section 11 learning support assistant.

71. **Personal and social development**

2. By the time that children leave the nursery, they are likely to achieve the expected levels of personal and social development at the age of five. This judgement is similar to that of the previous inspection findings. Children make good progress in this area of learning due to the sensitive input from the teachers and nursery nurses. Children who are higher attainers make good progress, and those who have special educational needs make very good progress. Children have maintained the very good behaviour as identified in the previous report, and relationships are excellent. Many children enter the nursery with limited ability to relate to each other and adults. During their time in the nursery, they establish excellent relationships with their teachers and feel secure in asking for help when they need it. Children increase their confidence because they are provided with a secure and caring environment, which places great emphasis on valuing the child as an individual.
3. Children learn to work in groups and on their own. They are keen to succeed and persevere with activities and problem-solving undertakings, such as matching colours and sounds to pictures on the computer. Children are sensitive to each other's feelings and all take turns when looking at books. Those children who stay for school lunches develop good manners because they are encouraged to give out food and clear away after themselves. Children have a good understanding of what is acceptable behaviour and why some things are wrong. This is encouraged by the teachers through good explanations and story telling sessions.
4. Children show a range of feelings appropriately. They show good levels of personal independence when choosing their own activities, however, further opportunities could be developed for children to be responsible for collecting their own milk and giving out biscuits. Good opportunities are planned for children to discuss their fears and feelings, and all teachers help their children to develop positive self-esteem by enabling them to participate fully in all activities.
5. Children have positive attitudes to learning, they are keen to learn about themselves and others. They participate fully in group work and can concentrate on tasks when they are working independently.
6. The quality of teaching is very good. Staff place great importance on children's personal and social development. They display the children's work very well and value all of their contributions; this, in turn, contributes positively to children's self-esteem. Staff encourage children to share their ideas in small groups and to offer their opinions. Staff very effectively identify children's individual difficulties by their detailed observations, and help parents to find strategies to deal with these difficulties at home. Staff pay due regard to health and safety of the children in all nursery activities. Teachers know their children well, they have good knowledge of how young children develop emotionally and they ensure that all children develop very positive attitudes to learning. Teachers

enable children to feel independent and offer continued support for their success. They make appropriate reference to class rules, this ensures that children feel safe in the nursery environment.

7. The curriculum is very good, it ensures that ample opportunities are planned for developing children's skills of independence. Resources are good. The books used in the nursery place important emphasis on developing emotional literacy and children are taught how to identify and name their feelings.

77. **Language and literacy**

8. By the time that children leave the nursery, the majority of them are on line to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes in language and literacy by the age of five. Higher attainers, of whom there is a small proportion, will achieve levels which are above the Desirable Learning Outcomes. All children, including higher attainers and those with English as an additional language, make good progress in language and literacy. Children with special educational needs make very good progress due to the fact that their needs are very quickly identified and very good measures are taken to match teaching strategies to their needs. Good provision is made for children who have English as an additional language, both through the quality of teaching and the resources used.
9. Many children enter the nursery with underdeveloped speaking and listening skills, and their basic vocabulary acquisition is low. Children lack sufficient nouns, verbs and adjectives to express their wishes and needs. However, these difficulties are very quickly identified by staff through the very good assessment procedures, and the use of information gained is a contributory factor to the overall good rates of progress children make. In the role play area, children play at working in the launderette, ice cream parlour and travel agents; this enables them to act out their life experiences.
10. By the time children leave the nursery, standards in reading are appropriate for their age. Children share reading activities, talk about favourite characters in stories, and enjoy listening to the antics of Teddy, who goes home with them on a rota basis; parents write a journal of his activities which is then shared with the children. Children handle books carefully, they know that print conveys meaning and they can turn pages without creasing them. Higher attainers can recognise several simple words and can identify a few initial sounds. The majority of children know that authors write books.
11. In writing, children are developing good pencil control skills and cutting skills. They can draw around templates, trace over letters, and execute simple pencil-play activities. Children's emergent writing contains shopping lists, messages, letters and diaries, recording important moments in their lives. Children are keen to draw pictures of stories that they have heard and write captions of what they have remembered. Children hold pencils and crayons correctly and make marks with felt tip pens using their writing skills to make signs in the role play area of the travel agents and launderette. The nursery's involvement with the local shops in the 'shopping to read' project is having a positive effect on both standards and rates of progress.
12. Children's attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good. Children listen attentively and respond appropriately; they are courteous, polite, take turns and, at such an early age, are aware of the needs of others. They share equipment appropriately and co-operate well together when sharing a book. Children persevere in tasks set for them and they know that tasks have to be completed.
13. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. Teachers take every opportunity to develop children's skills of language and literacy. They have created an exciting learning environment where children's senses are stimulated by the very good quality of interactive displays. Teachers have very good intervention skills, they know when to upgrade children's language in role play and keep them on task. Teachers ask good questions in order to include the children in conversation, and they have high expectations of the quality of responses that they wish to receive from them. When reading stories to children, teachers check children's understanding and make sure that all are involved in

listening appropriately. Teachers model correct sentence construction and ask the children to repeat full sentences back to them. This particular teaching method has a positive effect on children's attainment and progress. Teachers use drama to help children reinforce what they have learnt. Many stories, such as 'The Enormous Turnip' and 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar', are acted out. Children participate in a variety of productions to entertain their parents, and this enables them to become confident speakers. All activities are very well organised and teachers and nursery nurses explain tasks clearly. Praise and encouragement are used effectively and staff give helpful feedback to children on how well they are doing. Learning objectives are very clearly defined in teachers' planning and very good records are kept on children's progress.

14. The curriculum for language and literacy is very good; there are many opportunities provided for children to develop their skills in an exciting learning environment. Homework opportunities are excellent and parents are actively involved in their children's learning.
15. Staff assess children's skills at regular intervals and assessment information systematically provides the basis for planning future activities. This is a contributory factor to the good rates of children's progress. The curriculum takes into account planning for literacy in all other areas of the Desirable Learning Outcomes, and appropriate attention has been given to the implementation of aspects of the literacy hour, such as 'Big Book' work and plenary sessions.
16. Resources for language and literacy are good. The headteacher ensures that a thorough audit of resources is made in order to support children's learning. There is a full range of books in classroom libraries and parents are encouraged to change books on a regular basis with their children. Recently purchased Big Books are contributing positively to children's emerging skills of language and literacy.
17. Since the previous inspection, children have maintained their good rates of progress, but their profile of attainment on entry has gone down since the previous report, and standards are judged to be in line with what is expected of children of this age, rather than above, as was judged in the previous inspection.

87. **Mathematics**

18. In mathematics, children are likely to achieve standards that are in line with the nationally recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they reach five years of age. A majority of children make good progress in mathematics and this is evident in the short time they have been at the school at the time of the inspection. Standards in mathematics are similar to those at the last inspection. Children who are higher attainers make good progress.
19. Higher attaining children accurately count objects up to five and some beyond. In one lesson, a child who was finding difficulty in settling down that day, eventually showed his ability to count to three. They are beginning to learn a repertoire of nursery rhymes and songs that are linked to number, and are developing the concepts of 'smaller', 'bigger', 'more than' and 'less than'. They are beginning to recognise numbers up to five when written down above a line of washing. By the time they leave the school many are able to count and sequence numbers to ten, and higher attaining children to 20. Objects of the same colour and shape are matched, and children create their own patterns. A circle, triangle and square are named and primary colours recognised. Children explore capacity through experimental sand and water play and this is often linked to topics being studied, such as 'washing'. On visits, they use mathematical language to describe the shape, position, size and quality of what they observe, for example trees, leaves, animals and birds. They count, sort, match, order and compare using everyday items. Children enter the nursery with number skills that are generally below expectations for their age. They make good progress during their time in the nursery, and are well challenged individually and in small groups in the activities they undertake. The very detailed observations made by teachers, enables planning for the next stage of learning to be accurate and appropriate. This has a positive impact on the standards that children achieve. Children with

special educational needs are well supported and make good progress towards the specific targets set for them.

20. Attitudes to learning are very good. All children are learning to sustain interest in mathematical activities for appropriate periods of time. In the short time they have been at the school, the great majority, due to the teacher's organisation, have developed good classroom routines and are well motivated and enthusiastic in carrying out their tasks. The very good response of the pupils has a positive effect on the progress they make.
21. The quality of teaching is very good. Activities are well organised and prepared with an interesting range of resources ready for children to use. Teachers plan activities skilfully and set clear learning objectives. They are aware of what they are trying to achieve in each lesson and monitor the progress individual pupils are making. The results of teacher assessment are used in future lesson planning. This information is used by all staff and positively affects the progress that pupils make. All staff relate well to the children and intervene sensitively to extend their thinking. The teachers seize many opportunities to practise counting with children as they pursue activities in other areas of learning, for example during the visit to Sandwell Valley Park.
22. The curriculum for mathematics covers all the aspects of this area of learning. Long-term plans ensure the progressive development of children's skills and understanding during their time in the nursery, and so the majority of children attain standards in line with those expected for their age. A minority attain standards above those expected. The teachers carefully assess children's attainment and this is well used to plan future work. The resources overall are good.
92. **Knowledge and understanding of the world**
23. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developed well and they make good progress. This is an improvement on the previous report, where attainment was found to be in line with expectations and where children were found to be making satisfactory progress. The progress of children with special educational needs is very good, and higher attaining children and those with English as an additional language make good progress. By the time they are five, the great majority are likely to attain standards in line with national expectations. They know about their roles and relationships in families and learn about the immediate environment including different types of homes and clothes. In this they are helped by visits in the locality and visitors to school. They benefit greatly from the stimulating external environment of the school that includes a nature trail. As a result, they develop their skills of observation well and quickly become aware of trees, shrubs, vegetables, herbs and flowers. They observe changes in plants, learn about the life cycle of a frog, observe mini-beasts and handle snails. A visit to a farm enables them to become aware of animals. They observe the weather and are aware of hygiene when making biscuits and fairy cakes. A visit to the science museum enables them to learn about sound and light. During a topic on 'washing' they learn to understand the processes involved in washing, and ironing clothes, and find out what the effect of water is on different types of clothing. They discover what happens when soap is used in water, and become aware of the differences between washing now and long ago. During a visit to a nature reserve, they make collections of tree bark, leaves and berries and observe squirrels, bulls, ducks, geese and swans. Children use computers to control and move screen images with a mouse. They move clothes by using the mouse and are able to dress a person. In 1996, attainment in information technology was above expectations, and, from the present inspection findings, this is still the case. With the help of an artist, they use the computer to draw pictures of leaves. A variety of construction apparatus is used, enabling children to join parts together and use their imagination to make models.
24. Children's attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good. They ask appropriate questions and show an interest in everything around them. Both in and out of the classroom, they behave sensibly and respond to the instructions of the teachers and support staff. When outside school, they behave well on a coach and when under the supervision of teachers, support staff and parents.

25. The quality of teaching is very good. Lessons, including visits, are well planned and organised. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They understand the needs of young children. Teachers are very clear on what they want children to learn in a lesson. Adults working with children have a clear understanding of what the purpose of the activity is. Good explanations are given, for example when using the mouse to move items on a computer screen, and resources generally are used well. Teachers, support staff and parents guide children sensitively when encouraging them to observe and collect items. Teachers use questioning and discussion well to extend the children's learning and understanding. Detailed assessments of children's capabilities are kept, and teachers always encourage them to succeed. There is a good scheme of work that supports the work of the staff. Resources are good and effectively deployed.

95. **Physical development**

26. The majority of children are on target to reach the recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five. Attainment is in line with national standards and pupils make good progress during their time in the nursery. These findings reflect those of the previous inspection, though there has been an improvement in the progress that children make. During the inspection, due to the timetable and weather conditions, no actual lessons were seen. Evidence has been taken from a portfolio of photographs that reflects the previous year's work, and from discussions with staff. With limited observations, it is not possible to comment on the progress of children with special educational needs and the higher attainers.
27. By the time that they leave the school, children move with increasing confidence and imagination. They walk, run, skip, jump and climb with appropriate control over their movements. They show developing skills of balance on logs and tree trunks in Sandwell Valley Park. The outside area is conducive to the development of physical skills and reflects the good planning in relation to the Desirable Learning Outcomes. Children have an awareness of space when pushing prams and riding tricycles and cars, and carefully avoid colliding with others by controlled steering and pedalling. They use the climbing frame and adventure play equipment with increasing confidence and agility, and develop skills of throwing using balls and bean bags. Children benefit from regular swimming sessions at a local swimming pool. This takes place due to the help and co-operation of parents. Opportunities are provided for dance, including Maypole dancing, the use of a slide and trampoline, and athletics.
28. Children use pencils, paint brushes and coloured pens with appropriate control for their age. They show increasing signs of dexterity when using construction kits, jigsaw puzzles, threading beads and when playing with small toys and figures.
29. All children display positive attitudes towards physical activities. They are well motivated, happy and developing in confidence.
30. The quality of teaching is good. Since the previous inspection, appropriate time has been allocated to the teaching of outdoor activities, and the quality of resources, which are now good, has improved. The curriculum is now well planned, with clearly defined learning intentions for all outdoor activities. The teachers have secure subject knowledge of this area of learning, and, over a period of time, very impressive work has been done in developing the outdoor opportunities for the children. They make the best use of the nursery's available space. They are, however, unable to plan for the full extension of children's physical skills in indoor lessons due to a lack of suitable space. Good use is made of an outdoor covered area with a climbing frame, but this only compensates to a small extent for the restricted indoor space. The teachers ensure that the children behave sensibly at all times and work with a good awareness of the need for safety. There are very good storage facilities outside for large pieces of equipment. Assessment and recording are securely in place and are used well to inform planning.

31. By the time that children leave the nursery, they attain levels appropriate for their age and they are on target to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time that they are five. All children make good progress. Children with special educational needs make very good progress. This is because the nursery has placed a high emphasis on working with professional artists in order to give children examples of excellence and also to develop their language and literacy skills through art. Since the previous inspection, sound standards have been maintained.
32. By the time that children leave the nursery, they have good singing skills. They sing in tune, recognise patterns, articulate the words clearly and genuinely have a feel for the tempo of the music. They are able to sing gently, and have very good attitudes to singing and listening to music. When the headteacher plays the guitar or piano, all children are fascinated by the sounds produced. They know that a guitar has strings which make different sounds and that the piano has keys which make high sounds and low sounds.
33. Children have good skills of painting with water colours. They make collage portraits of faces, they can finger paint, colour mix and print with a variety of media, including fruit, vegetables, cotton reels and wooden bricks. They have sound skills of observations and know how colours change when they are overlapped with cellophane. Children make salt-dough models of themselves with intricate designs, hand prints using autumnal colours, and chalk drawings. They make textured letters using a variety of media, including sand, pasta and buttons.
34. Children can perform Maypole dances, country dances, Indian dances and they know how to use their hands to represent a deer and an elephant when performing Indian dances. Children can keep a steady beat to African drum music and they delight in being given the opportunity to try out different drum sounds. They use paint programs on the computer, and some very good examples of leaf designs were seen during the week of the inspection, when children were working with an artist in residence.
35. Children's attitudes are very good; behaviour in classes is also very good. Children use resources carefully and put paintbrushes away after they have used them. They share resources well and take turns when using chalk, crayons and felt tip pens. They are developing good skills of evaluating their work.
36. Teaching for creative development is very good. Teachers model skills for the children, show them how to mix paint, sing correctly and demonstrate how they want the end product in art to look. Teachers encourage children to use their senses appropriately and provide a range of tasks for the children to respond imaginatively.
37. The curriculum is very good. The nursery has placed appropriate emphasis on working with artists and the headteacher goes to great lengths to secure grants in order to offer the best possible experiences to the children.
38. Assessments are very good, and are well used to inform future planning. Resources for creative development are good. The children have access to a wide and varied range of resources. The good quality of the resources impacts positively on children's emerging skills.

108. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

108. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

39. The school was inspected by three inspectors over a period of six inspector days. Each inspector spent two days in school.
40. Just under 20 hours were spent observing learning activities; 18 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Two inspectors spent just over half a day accompanying children and staff on a nature trail at Sandwell Valley.
41. Inspectors sampled children's work, talked to children and shared reading books with them and observed behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes. In addition, registrations were attended and time was spent in discussion with teachers and school governors.
42. The views of parents were canvassed through a questionnaire and a meeting arranged for that purpose. Teachers' planning and record-keeping files were scrutinised and policy documents analysed. Meetings were held with the managing board, the headteacher and staff. Budgetary information was also examined.

112. DATA AND INDICATORS

112. Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Nursery	52	0	29	8

112. Teachers and classes

112. Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	26

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

Total number of education support staff:	5
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	84

112. Financial data

Not applicable to non-delegated budget.

112. PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 68

Number of questionnaires returned: 62

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	68	32	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	71	29	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	55	36	9	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	61	37	2	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	58	40	2	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	71	29	0	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	77	23	0	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	48	47	5	0	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	73	26	2	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	74	26	0	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	85	15	0	0	0