

INSPECTION REPORT

RIBBLESDALE NURSERY SCHOOL

Clitheroe

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119089

Headteacher: Mrs J Dewhurst

Reporting inspector: Mrs A Dawson
11608

Dates of inspection: 21st – 23rd March, 2000

Inspection number: 190254

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

© Crown copyright 2000

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 4

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Queen's Road
Clitheroe
Lancashire

Postcode: BB7 1EL

Telephone number: 01200 423672

Fax number: 01200 423672

Appropriate authority: Lancashire County Council

Name of chair of governors: Mr B Jones

Date of previous inspection: 19th November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Anna Dawson	Registered inspector	Language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; English as an additional language.	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school; the school's results and pupils' achievements; key issues for action; leadership and management;
Clive Davies	Team inspector	Personal and social development; creative development; physical development; special educational needs; equal opportunities.	Teaching and learning; quality and range of opportunities for learning.
Jennifer Farmer	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; partnership with parents and carers; Pupils' welfare, health and safety.

The inspection contractor was:

Focus Education and Business Consultants,
The Court,
8 Bar Meadow,
Dobcross,
Saddleworth,
Oldham.
OL3 5QW.

Tel: 01457 872427

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	16
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	22

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The nursery is situated in the market town of Clitheroe. There are 101 children on roll, who attend part time in the morning or afternoon session. There are 5 children who have English as an additional language, and 6 children who come from ethnic minority backgrounds. There are 6 children on the school's register for special educational needs, 2 of whom has a statement of special educational needs. The majority of children have attended one of the local playgroups in the local area. They enter the nursery at the age of 3 years with a wide range of attainment and most have above average language and social skills. Children leave the nursery to enter full time education in the year in which they will become 5. The attainment of the children leaving the nursery and starting school full time is broadly above average. There have been no significant changes to the characteristics of the school since the last inspection report.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective nursery school with many good features and no major areas for improvement. The quality of the teaching is good and children make satisfactory progress in personal and social development, language and literacy and mathematics. They make good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. By the time the children leave the nursery, most are on course to exceed the nationally expected Desirable Learning Outcomes in all areas of learning. However some of the higher attaining pupils could achieve better standards, particularly in reading and writing skills. There is good leadership and the school monitors teaching and learning satisfactorily. The strengths of the school outweigh the areas for improvement.

What the school does well

- The headteacher has successfully built an effective team who work together to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum for the children.
- Teachers are particularly effective in using ways of furthering the progress of the lower and average attaining children.
- There are strengths in children's achievement in information technology, imaginative play, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development.
- The provision for children's social and moral development is very good. Children are sensitive to the needs of others and are independent in their learning. They behave very well and are keen to learn.
- The excellent learning resources and a well-organised learning environment have a significant impact on children's learning.
- There is a very good partnership with parents, who make a positive contribution to children's learning.

What could be improved

- More planned opportunities should be provided for higher attaining children to improve their achievement.
- The initial assessment record needs additional detail to provide a more effective starting point to measure children's progress.
- The quality of teachers' questioning skills to promote children's thinking and learning is inconsistent.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last report in November 1996, the school has maintained its standards and made good improvement in developing systems for the assessment of children's attainment and monitoring the quality of children's work. However, the initial assessment system for the assessment of children's progress lacks rigour. The school is now monitoring teaching and learning and seek to improve the quality of their teaching and the standards of attainment. New initiatives to raise parents' awareness of children's literacy and numeracy skills are successful. The accommodation has been improved to create additional teaching space for small groups of children.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about the achievements of pupils in relation to the national early learning goals by the time they leave the school.

Performance in:		Key well above average A above average average B C below average D well below average E
language and literacy	B	
mathematics	B	
personal and social development	B	
other areas of the curriculum	B	

The Desirable Learning Outcomes are goals for children's learning by the time they enter compulsory education at the age of five. The Desirable Learning Outcomes emphasise early literacy and numeracy skills, the development of personal and social skills and contribute to children's knowledge, understanding and skills in other areas. They are presented in six areas of learning; personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. The children enter the nursery with above average standards in social, language and mathematical skills. The majority of children are on course to exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are 5 years of age in all areas of learning. Most children make satisfactory progress and achieve satisfactorily in personal and social development, language and literacy and mathematics. In knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development, children achieve well and make good progress. The children with special educational needs and those children with English as an additional language who are supported effectively make good progress. A very few of the higher attaining children need more planned opportunities to particularly develop their early reading and writing skills.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children have very good attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic and keen to learn. They often concentrate for a long time to complete their activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of the children is very good. They respond well to instructions and the code of behaviour in the nursery. They clearly understand the difference between right and wrong.
Personal development and relationships	There are very good relationships between the children, staff and other adults, that have a positive impact on children's learning. Children are considerate towards one another and are willing to take turns and share their resources fairly.

Attendance	Attendance is very good and children enjoy coming to school.
------------	--

The positive approach by the school towards encouraging good behaviour and attitudes to work is central to its ethos. There is a focus on encouraging children to make their own choices of activities and materials, and building their self-esteem so they become confident and independent learners.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

The children are taught well. The quality of teaching is good overall. Out of 34 lesson observations, 9 per cent were very good 71 per cent were good and 20 per cent were satisfactory. There were many other observations of children at work. All areas of the curriculum are taught well and there are particular strengths in the teaching of information technology and imaginative play. Where teaching is satisfactory, the teachers' questioning does not sufficiently challenge children in their learning. The teaching meets the needs of the vast majority of children, apart from a very few higher attaining children where there are fewer planned opportunities when they are taught reading and writing skills. Activities to develop literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well throughout all areas of learning. Voluntary help by parents and friends of the school, make a good contribution to the teaching. The effective teamwork of the staff contributes significantly to the good quality teaching that the children receive.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to all ages. The activities are varied and interesting. The planned visits to the locality and visitors into school enrich the curriculum and extend children's understanding of the wider world.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good provision is made for children with special educational needs. They are supported well and make good progress. The nursery involves their parents from the earliest stage in meeting the children's needs.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	There is good provision for these children. All the staff take care to meet the needs of these children. They are integrated well into the life of the nursery.
Provision for children's personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision for children's moral and social development. The staff are good role models and set high expectations for behaviour and the children's personal and social development. There is good provision for children's spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares	The school cares well for the children. It has very good systems for promoting good behaviour and effective systems for supporting

for its children	children's personal development and attendance. There are satisfactory systems for assessing and monitoring children's progress. However the staff do not always use their assessments to plan future work.
------------------	---

The curriculum is varied and interesting and includes activities that are chosen by the children and those that are directed by adults. Priority is given to personal and social skills, which are frequently reinforced during each session. All children, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language have equal access to the curriculum. The staff know the children very well and respond effectively to their individual needs. The school has very good links with the parents who hold positive views about the school. However, the initial assessment of children's attainment on entry to school lacks rigour in its effectiveness to measure children's progress. There are good quality initiatives in place to involve parents in their children's learning, and this is having a positive impact on children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The nursery is well led and managed. The staff work together effectively and with a common purpose to meet the aims of the school. Staff are committed to improving standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are experienced and knowledgeable about the school. They are supportive; receive good information from the headteacher and work appropriately with the headteacher to meet the school targets.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has good procedures for monitoring teaching and learning. These are used effectively to evaluate and improve the quality of education provided in the nursery.
The strategic use of resources	The accommodation is very good and there are excellent resources. The school makes good use of these to help children learn and develop skills.

There is a good number of staff to meet the demands of the curriculum who work effectively with the headteacher to realise the aims and values of the school. The local authority manages the school budget centrally. However the school always seeks the best value for funds when decisions are made for new resources, which are carefully costed against the school development plan.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is effectively led and managed • The progress their children make • The good quality of the teaching • Their children enjoy coming to school • Parents feel welcome in school and comfortable in talking to the staff • The school works closely with parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very small number of parents feel that their child doesn't get the right kind of work.

The inspectors agree with the positive views of the majority of parents. A few of the higher attaining children could achieve better standards in reading and writing with more frequent planned activities to develop these skills.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 On entry to the nursery, the children's attainment is above average in personal and social development, language skills and mathematical understanding. The majority of children make satisfactory progress in personal and social development, language and literacy and mathematics. In their knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development children make good progress and their attainment is above average. They are on course to exceed the expected outcomes in all areas of learning by the time they are 5. Standards across all six of the areas of learning are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection.
- 2 The majority of the children are already meeting the national outcomes for personal and social development. In its brochure to parents, the nursery sets out to create a school where the children can 'develop a positive self image; self confidence and respect for others; independence in learning; positive relationships and consideration for others, kindness and politeness.' It is successfully achieving these aims. The children's behaviour is very good. They concentrate very well and persevere until they complete what they are doing. They get along very well together, sharing and taking turns fairly, and they are growing in independence and self-confidence. The children's achievement is satisfactory in this area and they make overall satisfactory progress. However, some variability in teaching and planning restricts children's progress to satisfactory rather than good. For example, children's progress in independent learning is limited by the lack of planned opportunities for them to take responsibility for their learning. Some of the questioning by staff does not extend pupils' thinking and development of skills and staff sometimes miss opportunities during snack time for example to reinforce learning in this area of development.
- 3 Language development and the development of literacy are priorities in the nursery. The children enter with above average skills and their attainment is above average in all areas of language and literacy. The majority are on course to exceed the nationally expected outcomes by the time they become 5. Imaginative play features strongly in the curriculum. The ease with which the staff take on roles within the launderette or the street within the playground and their expertise in successfully intervening in the play successfully extends the children's listening skills, thinking and vocabulary. Targeting language and literacy has resulted in the children being able to listen attentively and to talk confidently about their experiences in groups led by adults. For example, in sessions such as group time and story time they discuss stories they have heard. Most children are articulate and able to speak at length about their work. All children enjoy books and sharing them with their parents makes a positive contribution to their attainment and progress. The most able are retelling the stories in their own words and are ready to begin to read. However, these children need more frequent adult support to further their early reading skills. In the development of their writing, the children understand that print carries meaning and there are opportunities for them to practise making their first marks by writing out shopping lists or letters. Most are attempting to write their names, the more able write them correctly. The more able children, when writing their stories, are beginning to record single words to accompany their pictures. However, their achievement is satisfactory in reading and writing. They are capable of learning a vocabulary of common words and write simple sentences. The lack of frequent and regular planned opportunities to develop these skills restricts their progress to satisfactory.
- 4 In their mathematical development the majority of children make satisfactory progress and are on course to exceed the nationally expected outcomes by the time they become 5. The

children use mathematical language when they are comparing items for shape or size. Most are able to match, sort and sequence objects by colour, shape and size. They count to ten and beyond. Through activities in the water and sand trays, they are coming to understand early concepts of capacity. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical concepts and skills during the day through their play and their planned activities. However, some of the higher attaining pupils are capable of greater achievement in learning to record their mathematical learning.

- 5 Their knowledge and understanding of the world is developing well through the varied curriculum provided for the children. The children make good progress and are likely to exceed the nationally expected outcomes by the time they reach the age of 5. This area includes elements of science, technology, history and geography. The children achieve particularly well in information technology with some of the more able pupils working towards the early stages of the National Curriculum. For example, in their work on the computer, they accurately drag and drop pieces of a jigsaw into place.
- 6 In their physical development, the children are on course to exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes. They pedal the wheeled toys skillfully and make imaginative use of large apparatus and bricks. Imaginative play is particularly well represented in their outdoor play. Indoors, the children handle equipment and small tools such as scissors accurately. Most colour and cut out shapes without going over the lines.
- 7 Good use is made of linked themes to promote the children's creative development. For example, seasonal topics focusing on autumn and spring allows them to explore and respond to what they see, hear, smell, touch and feel. A particularly positive feature is the emphasis placed on extending children's knowledge and understanding beyond the nursery. Frequent visits to the local shops and gardens as well as visitors into school, give the children an awareness of places beyond their own environment and furthers their personal and social development.
- 8 Children with special educational needs make good progress because their needs are identified early and in partnership with their parents, the school makes good provision to address these needs. Similarly, the children with English as an additional language are supported effectively in their activities and make good progress in language skills. These two groups of children achieve well. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys or girls. The lower and average attaining children achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. A very few of the higher attaining children are not sufficiently challenged in their reading and writing skills or recording of their mathematical work. The expectation for these pupils to achieve, particularly in early reading and writing skills is not as high as it could be. There are too fewer planned opportunities for these pupils to practice these skills. Some of the teachers' questioning during discussions does not effectively extend thinking and problem solving which results in satisfactory achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 9 The majority of children in the nursery have a very good attitude to learning and are keen to participate in activities and contribute to the lesson. Children are beginning to concentrate for extended periods, as is shown in the story time. On occasions they show great enthusiasm for their learning as was seen in the singing lesson with most children doing all the actions as well as remembering most of the words. One or two even express preferences and make suggestions as to what songs should be sung.
- 10 Behaviour is very good. Children enter the nursery confidently at the beginning of each session and soon settle to activities without direct supervision of the staff. They understand

the rules and conventions of the nursery and are keen to be seen abiding by them. For example they all know that only so many children are allowed at any one time at a certain activity. When music is played children understand that it the signal to gather on the carpet and they do so with the minimum of fuss. Children share their resources well, and show consideration for other children when participating in activities, by taking turns to ride on the wheeled toys for example or by waiting their turn to speak.

- 11 Attendance levels are very good for such young children. Children enjoy school. Most attend regularly and are keen to begin their activities. There are very good relationships between children and between children and staff. Rarely do children fall out or squabble, and they often show concern for each other's safety and well-being. Children quickly become independent and settle to the nursery activities without the comfort of their parents' presence. They access and use equipment and resources in a calm and positive manner. They make their own choices of activities and help to clear away and tidy up after activities. Children are confident and relaxed in the presence of the staff and visiting adults to the nursery and interact very well with them

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 12 Teaching is good. In the vast majority of lessons the teaching is helping children to improve their basic skills. The lower and average attaining children achieve well as they are challenged effectively in their learning. The small group of higher attaining children achieve satisfactorily as they not always sufficiently challenged in their early reading and writing skills or recording of their mathematical work. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and all staff are confident in knowing what the needs of very young children are. The good quality of teaching reported during the previous inspection has been maintained.
- 13 The teachers and nursery nurses share day-to-day responsibility for teaching groups of children and each has an identified group with which they work regularly for a small part of each day. There is much mutual respect amongst the adults working in the nursery and they have complementary skills enabling some to take a specific lead in different areas. This system successfully allows time each day for children to be working in a formal setting with an adult. Group leaders take responsibility for the assessment of pupils' achievements, which is an improvement to the system of assessment during the last inspection.
- 14 Each adult working with children talks confidently with children but the level of questioning tends to vary. For example, one of the teachers discusses the story of Jack and the Beanstalk with a group and uses her questioning very effectively to help the children sequence the story. In another example, a well prepared teacher uses a pile of clothes for the children to sort but is not able to get the most out of the session because she does not allow children enough time to think about their answers.
- 15 One of the strengths of the teaching is the adults' ability to intervene at the correct time. Careful intervention extends children's learning and sometimes provides further stimulation for them. One adult sensitively intervenes when overseeing the work of two children working on the computer. She shows good knowledge of the program being used and her intervention allows the children to have a greater challenge. In another example the adult working in the outdoor play area successfully intervenes to make the activity more interesting and stimulating for the children. She introduces road works on the roadway that is set out and the children take on different roles, for example, a road worker or a traffic organiser. The later introduction of traffic lights sees one child act as a traffic warden and she has a pad to write down the names of children passing through the red light.

- 16 When adults are working with children on basic skills as is seen when children are making their own 'Jack and the Beanstalk' books, the quality of the work is consistently good. The organisation allows for planned time for groups to work on specific skills and when higher attainers do so they produce good results. However, the bringing together of able children is not a regular event, which reduces their progress and achievement. Children clearly enjoy books and when provided with opportunities to do so they show good pre-reading skills. During these sessions, adults are demonstrating good teaching techniques but the organisation does not allow frequent enough teaching of these skills. Higher attaining children in particular are not being challenged enough because of their irregular access to planned activities to promote their reading and writing skills.
- 17 The adults working with children manage children very effectively. They anticipate problems and when necessary intervene sensitively. This results in children being able to settle very quickly to the routines in the nursery.
- 18 Teachers make very good use of the local environment and this is seen at its best when a group of children who visit the local charity shop sit together and draw a map of the route they have just taken. In this case, good questioning is the catalyst that enables children to start to remember the details of the journey. The teacher is determined to develop the initial responses she receives from the children and is not prepared to accept any answer. Her insistence on detail helps to improve the children's memory and this results in the map they draw being very detailed and accurate and makes a good contribution to children's mathematical thinking.
- 19 The adults are particularly good at working together to plan interesting and exciting tasks for the children. The use of clothes for sorting, making concertina books for story writing and using tactile materials for creative work are three examples of this good progress. This helps to provide for more imagination in children's learning. The nursery is very well resourced and the staff make very effective use of these resources to make learning interesting for the children. The use of pegs with many different attributes during a mathematical development lesson is one such example. Although teachers keep comprehensive records of the activities that children have been involved with they do not always use this information to inform their future planning. In other respects the planning is very thorough and takes full account of all areas of learning and gives appropriate attention to practical tasks.
- 20 The children with special educational needs are very well provided for and are integrated successfully into all lessons. One child who has physical impairment is able to have access to all activities thanks to the good quality support that is provided for him.

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

- 21 The nursery's curriculum provides a satisfactory balance across each of the six areas of learning identified for young children. The activities planned are interesting, stimulating and well resourced. There is good attention given to personal and social development and children settle very quickly to the routines that have been established in the nursery. Most activities take good account of developing children's numeracy skills with frequent opportunities for children to count or to sort items. There is appropriate awareness of the need to develop children's literacy skills.
- 22 There is an appropriate balance between directing children to certain activities and allowing them free choice. The staff have worked hard to try and overcome the concern expressed at the time of the previous inspection about the limited amount of direction provided for

- children. As children start each session they are able to move to one of many activities set out for them on tabletops. Within a short time they gather into one of five colour groups with their adult leader. During this time discussions take place about the activities set out in the nursery and the children are encouraged to plan their movements during the session. This provides a solid start to the session and helps children to think about their work and makes a positive contribution to their personal development.
- 23 There are three other times when adults will direct some children to a particular activity. The first is a timetabled outdoor playtime when one group a day is directed to a specific time outside. In this way all children will have had at least one organised outdoor play session per week. There are other opportunities for children to have access to the outdoor play area but not during the closed period identified for the one group each day. This provision is appropriate and because the outdoor play area is of high quality it enables children to have good access to the physical experiences organised for them.
- 24 The second planned time is known as focused activity time. This takes place in a small room away from the main classroom. In this area specific activities take place, such as planting seeds or making greeting cards. The children are selected so that each child will experience one set time in this 'yellow' room. The work in the room is very directed and it provides an appropriate opportunity for children to concentrate on one activity for a prolonged period. It also enables the adult working with the children to encourage children to work together. The quality of the work that takes place in this room is good with children being able to focus on one activity away from the potential distractions of the main room.
- 25 There is one other occasion when children are directed to an activity. After the children have dispersed from their coloured groups at the beginning of the session a small group is selected by adults to work on specific skills. For example, sorting clothes according to a number of attributes. This session is aimed at improving particular skills and the children are identified for well-defined reasons. A teacher working on pre-arranged skills leads this session. A group of children develop their own 'Jack and the Beanstalk Book', for example, where they have an opportunity to practise 'mark-making and writing'. The session provides children with an intense period of working where they are expected to stay with an adult and improve their skills.
- 26 This balance between directed and free choice activities is appropriate except that there is a reluctance to identify, and therefore work on, the needs of the most able children. The specific skills group does to a certain extent provide for their needs but this is not planned for in a formal way. The tracking of children during a session is informal and whilst staff feel confident that each child has a balanced range of activities during any session it is possible for a few children to move from one activity to another without being noticed. This problem was highlighted in the previous inspection and whilst some headway has been made there is still some way to go in addressing the issue. The quality of the activities set out for children to move to is good. For example, the launderette, which is the focus of the simulated play area, is well resourced allowing children access to a range of interesting and stimulating experiences.
- 27 In contrast, the needs of children with learning or physical impairment are well catered for. Children who require specific help are well supported and participate in all activities. One child who has an adult supporting him for the whole of the session to help him move around is able to participate in the full range of activities provided in the nursery. Other children with special educational needs are identified early and their needs are addressed appropriately. The children with English as an additional language are appropriately integrated into nursery life. There is no additional provision from outside agencies but the

children manage to work and play appropriately with others. Adults are effective in working with them and have enough knowledge to meet their needs.

- 28 The school makes very good use of the local community. The school is well known in the area and they take advantage of the local shops and supermarket to help children develop their knowledge and understanding of the way shops operate. Frequent walks to the nearby shops help children to learn about buying and selling and they are often invited to specific events that occur locally. The community is also generous in supporting the school's funds by making donations for specific events. There are very good links established with the local police and a policewoman is a regular visitor to the nursery. She helps children to gain a better understanding of road safety and alerts them to issues of their own safety through the 'stranger danger' project. The school also participates in national events such as 'Walk to School' week so that children begin to understand about environmental issues.
- 29 Good links are established with local primary schools. This enables children to move on to their next school with as little disturbance as possible to their education. Good information is passed on and the nursery staff make frequent visits to the primary schools and staff from the primary schools visit the nursery.
- 30 The school provides well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs of the children. This remains a strength that was identified in the previous inspection. There are many occasions when children have opportunities to appreciate the wonder of life. This is apparent when the frogspawn changes to tadpoles and when the first signs of growth are noted from the seeds. The children participate in activities to celebrate a range of religious festivals, such as Diwali, Eid and Christingle. The books that children read take account of the multi-cultural issues. The use of the book 'Handa's surprise' as a main focus is one such example. A parent came into school and talked to the children about the Eid festival and this helped children have an understanding about how different people celebrate different events.
- 31 The staff puts much emphasis on helping children understand what is and is not acceptable behaviour. They introduce signals during the day that helps children know that it is now time to move on to the next part of the day. For example, music is played at the beginning of the session to signal to children that it is time for them to gather into their colour groups. Most of the activities require children to be tolerant and sometimes patient. There are discreet systems in place to help children understand about taking turns. For example, the use of colour bands to signal how many are able to play in the launderette. The frequent walks to the local shops help children develop appropriate social skills. They know that there is an expectation that they will behave in an appropriate manner and they are quick to use 'please' and 'thank you'. Children play an active part in tidying up after themselves.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 32 Staff know the children well and show great concern for their happiness and well-being. There are good procedures for child protection. Procedures for accidents and emergencies are well documented and known by staff. Much time is given to promoting children's personal and social development, which covers aspects of personal health, hygiene and safety as well as concepts such as confidence and self-esteem. For example, children are given opportunities to talk about their own experiences in front of the whole group. Concern for the children's safety is paramount to staff. For example, when children are taken on a walk to a charity shop there is a ratio of one adult to two children.
- 33 There are good procedures to monitor and improve attendance. The attendance rate is good for a nursery with many children achieving full attendance for a whole term. The school

works well with the Education Welfare Officer, although there is rarely any need for intervention. The school also keep parents well informed about attendance issues.

- 34 Procedures to promote and monitor good behaviour are very good. There are consistently high expectations of how children should behave. Any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with very quickly, sensitively and effectively by staff in a manner that recognises the children's age and experience of being away from home. This results in staff being able to spend the maximum time on teaching and the minimum time on behaviour management. Staff are vigilant to bullying and the school rarely has to deal with any incidents which are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- 35 The school uses a satisfactory range of tests and assessments to gauge children's progress and identify levels of achievement. This has improved since the last inspection. Baseline assessments are carried out; each teacher keeps a note book to communicate with other members of staff; each child is assigned a key worker and a profile folder is kept on each child which contains samples of work showing the progress they are making. Teachers do not always make use of these records to inform and guide curricular planning. However the initial assessment record is insufficiently detailed to enable staff to measure progress effectively for individual strengths and weaknesses. This is particularly so for some of the higher attaining children.
- 36 Procedures for monitoring and supporting children's personal development are good. Staff know the children well and provide appropriate opportunities for them to gain in confidence, and social skills.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 37 Parents' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive. In most aspects parents are supportive of all that the school does and achieves.
- 38 The school has very good links with parents and involves them in all aspects of school life. They are welcomed into the nursery, they are effective fundraisers, and provide valuable help in the library, accompany trips, read stories, and help in the classrooms. Parents are also willing to demonstrate skills, talents or areas of expertise to the children. For example, one grandparent demonstrates knitting and a father, who works as a fire officer, has spoken to children about his work. All adult helpers in the school are given good guidance about the school's policies, aims and ethos and about such issues as confidentiality and impartiality. The school also involves parents as educators and is currently running a very successful numeracy course where parents attend and participate in lessons to see the way children are introduced to number and numeracy. This puts parents in a better position to help their children at home.
- 39 The quality of information provided for parents is good. Letters and newsletters are frequent, timely, informative and well presented. Folders containing all the school policy documents and other information about the school, as well as children's profiles containing samples of work are all kept on a table in the corridor where the information is easily and readily accessible to parents at any time. Information on the weekly topics is also displayed prominently for parents to see at a glance, as is an overview of all the Desired Learning Outcomes. Home visits undertaken by staff before a child is admitted ensures that parents are given useful information to help their child settle quickly into the school routine. The school does not provide regular detailed information about the whole curriculum.

- 40 Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning both at school and at home. For example parents participate enthusiastically in the book loan and story sack schemes. Some help with lessons and small group work during the day. Every parent signed and returned the home/school agreement and virtually every parent attends the meetings to learn about their child's progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 41 The school is well led and managed. The governors and headteacher work successfully in partnership to provide effective leadership for the school. The Head teacher provides sensitive, thoughtful and supportive leadership to the staff, the wider school community and the parents who find her approachable and helpful. The Chair of Governors has a long-standing association with the nursery and a commitment to its well-being. Provision for children with special educational needs is a strength of the nursery. Those nursery nurses who have a designated special educational needs role are effective. Children with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make good progress and are well integrated into all aspects of the life of the school. The headteacher who is also the school's special educational needs co-coordinator liaises effectively with governors, parents, staff and outside agencies to ensure the needs of these children are fully met. The staff carry out their curriculum responsibilities well and work together effectively as a team to ensure the curriculum provision is consistent for all children.
- 42 Teaching and curriculum development are appropriately checked, evaluated and supported. The headteacher in consultation with staff and governors provides clear direction for the work of the school. The governors are effective in carrying out their responsibilities. The school is successfully meeting its aims. The number, qualifications and experience of the teachers and support staff match the demands of the curriculum well. The nursery is welcoming and supportive to visitors and new members of staff. Nursery guidance and policies present clear educational direction. All members of staff have job descriptions and there is an appropriate policy for staff development. Arrangements for the professional development of all staff are good.
- 43 The purpose built accommodation allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. It is welcoming and attractive and has been extended since the last inspection. Displays of the children's work, photographs of educational outings and interest tables of seedlings, flowers, twigs and frogspawn, stimulate the children's interest. The outside area is particularly well set out for creative play and environmental investigation as well as physical development. The premises are well maintained. The school has excellent resources to meet its curriculum and range of children. The nursery makes very effective use of local resources such as the castle grounds and the local shops.
- 44 The Local Education Authority manages the overall budget. The school does not have a fully delegated budget. However the funds for staff training and resources are controlled by the school and are spent wisely on consumable items, and the professional development of the members of staff. The resources made available to the school are managed well. Routine financial procedures are thorough and the school fund account is appropriately audited and found to be correct. The school has met the recommendations of the last audit report. The school monitors the effectiveness of its work well on a day-to-day basis, at staff meetings and through more formal monitoring procedures such as monitoring teaching and learning and a self-review of strengths and weaknesses. Governors are kept very well informed of the work of the nursery through the Head teacher's comprehensive reports and through their involvement in the daily life of the nursery. Best value for money is sought on purchasing and spending is linked to the school priorities.

- 45 The development planning lays good emphasis upon teaching and learning with appropriate resourcing and professional development. The members of staff are effectively deployed. The nursery nurses concerned with special educational needs contribute well to the good progress made by these children. Resources for learning are well cared for. The children respect equipment and materials. Resources are carefully stored and as appropriate, are readily available to the staff and the children.
- 46 The aims, values and policies of the school are reflected in its work. There is a positive ethos in the nursery, supported by staff, governors and parents, which reflects the school's commitment to an effective learning environment, good relationships, and equality of opportunity for all the children. All statutory requirements are met. The school has addressed the key issues from the previous inspection. The nursery has built on its previous approach to assessment to ensure that information about individual attainment is recorded. It has successfully developed strategies to ensure that all children participate in all the activities that the nursery provides. However, the present systems of assessment are not sufficiently detailed to provide the staff with a fully effective tool for assessing and planning for the needs of all the children. Staff do not always use their assessments to plan their future work. The development of assessment is recognised by the school as an area for development. The school provides good quality nursery education and the children make satisfactory progress overall. It has made good progress since its last inspection and there is a commitment in the nursery to continuous self-evaluation and school improvement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 47 To improve this effective school further, the governors, headteacher and the staff should:
- (1) extend the learning of the more able pupils by;
 - (i) planning frequent and regular taught reading activities;
 - (ii) planning frequent and regular taught writing activities;(Paragraphs 3,8,16,62,63)
 - (2) Further develop the initial assessment record on entry to the nursery to provide an effective tool to measure strengths and weaknesses in children's progress by;
 - (i) assessing and recording the children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals on a day-to-day basis;
 - (ii) using the information gained from these assessments to plan future learning activities to meet the needs of all the pupils;(Paragraphs 35,46,65, 70)
 - (3) improve the quality of teaching by;
 - (i) planning and using questioning skills further to extend children's thinking and learning in the taught activities.
(Paragraphs 14,58,70)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	9	71	20	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	50	
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	71.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6
--------------------------------	---

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	98/99
	£
Total income	7,085
Total expenditure	6,451
Expenditure per pupil	0
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	500

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	100
Number of questionnaires returned	80

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	93	7	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	85	15	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	74	26	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	20	4	1	40
The teaching is good.	91	6	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	73	26	0	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	12	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	20	0	0	12
The school works closely with parents.	81	19	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	90	10	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	21	0	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	18	2	0	39

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR PUPILS IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

48 The majority of children attend one of the playgroups in the local area. They enter the nursery at 3 years of age with language and social skills that are above average. They leave the nursery to enter full time education in the year in which they will become 5. Most children make satisfactory progress in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. The children with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets. Those for whom English is an additional language make good progress in language and literacy. The attainment of most of the 4 year olds as they become ready to start school full time education is above average.

Personal and social development

49 Children's achievement in this area is satisfactory. When they start in the nursery many children have already established good skills in sharing and co-operating. During their time in school they successfully build on this solid foundation and are able to exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes they are expected to attain by the time they are 5 years old. This is very similar to the position identified during the previous inspection.

50 From the time they start school children grow in confidence and begin to show more independence and to take more responsibility for their own actions. For example, they start each session by coming into the nursery and moving to an activity of their own choice. At the signal of the music they know that they have to move to their colour groups. This routine is established very quickly and helps the children to settle to life in the nursery. It is very rare for there to be any disquiet when they have to leave their parents or carer.

51 As the session moves on they learn to stay with one activity for a prolonged period and there is very little 'flitting' between activities. When working directly under the supervision of an adult they show good concentration and are very attentive. This is seen when they gather at the beginning of the sessions for registration. They know how to respond and they do so in a cheery and interested way. They have already learnt who is in their group and recognise if anyone is away. At other times, when they are directed to an activity, they show good levels of interest and concentration. For example, a group of children working in the focused activity room (yellow room) are able to observe branches of trees showing the first signs of spring and draw them. The good quality of the drawings reflects the good concentration and perseverance taking place.

52 When allowed to choose an activity for themselves the children obey the simple rules that exist. For example, the bands used in some of the areas identify which children are playing in a certain area. The children know that only a few can participate in certain areas because of space. They quickly accept that if there isn't a band available then there is no room for them on that occasion. They cope well with this system and are very good at taking their turns.

53 During 'snack times' the children take turns in handing out milk or fruit for example, and are quick to respond with a polite remark when they receive them. At these times they discuss what they have done during the day and the 'snack time' is a quiet and reflective period for all.

- 54 There are many occasions when children gasp with delight and wonder at new discoveries around them. The frog spawn changing into tadpoles was one such example as was the interest shown in the growing of seeds.
- 55 Children handle equipment with great care and know that the resources they use are for sharing with others. They are particularly good at clearing up after themselves and they have great respect for books, handling them with care and knowing where to put them away after they have finished an activity. When outside they know what to do with the wheeled vehicles when they have finished with them and are very helpful in putting these in places that make it easier for adults to put them away.
- 56 The children's behaviour is consistently very good. There are very few incidents where children show anti-social tendencies and this makes a positive contribution to the way they settle to school life. Relationships at all levels are very good with particular care given to children with special educational needs. Children know that if they need help or attention there is an adult close at hand to help them.
- 57 The teaching of personal and social development is satisfactory. The planning system pays appropriate attention to developing children's personal and social skills. All the adults working in the nursery are consistent in their approach to issues related to children's personal and social development. For example, they are quick to reinforce the need for good manners, sharing and caring. There is much attention given to celebrating good work and this helps children to understand what is considered to be good and what is not. Staff and other adults are aware of the need to praise children when they act in a helpful or friendly manner.
- 58 Staff are quick to make links with the need to look after living things. For example, the tadpoles and seeds and they help to explain to children why it is important to do so. They are good role models in the way they respond and look after living things and expect the children to respond accordingly. Good care is taken to model new equipment and to explain how it should be handled. All staff work hard at creating a calm and happy environment for the children in their care and the children in turn respond positively. However, there are occasions when some of the questioning does not allow children to develop their own thinking. There are lost opportunities, for example during snack times, to reinforce some of the personal and social skills. Although the set routine during this time is largely appropriate there are limited opportunities allowing children to take turns in taking responsibility for the organisation of an activity of which most are capable. The lack of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning limits their progress, which is satisfactory rather than good even though pupils enter and leave with above average standards.

Language and literacy

- 59 There is a wide range of children's attainment on entry to the nursery. The majority of them have levels above those expected nationally in reading, writing and listening skills when compared to children of a similar age. Their achievement in this area of learning is satisfactory. Those with special educational needs make good progress towards their set targets. Those who have English as an additional language make good progress in their language and literacy. These children receive effective support. By the end of their nursery education, most children are on line to achieve above average standards for this area of learning. A few of the children are on course to achieve the learning outcomes and a few are expected to fall below them.
- 60 The school sets a high priority on the development of language and literacy. The majority of children enter school with speaking skills above that normally expected for children of this age and are on course to exceed them by the time they reach the age of five. Most children

make satisfactory progress in the nursery. Where children are involved in activities that are directed by a member of staff they make most progress in speaking skills, as they are encouraged to talk about their experiences. Staff then give children confidence in speaking by, for example, skilfully introducing new vocabulary for instance or extending children's understanding. For example, in a discussion about covering boxes with various types of paper, children's knowledge and understanding of the names and properties of paper are extended. They learned that some papers were softer or thicker than others and some were transparent such as cellophane. They then effectively compared papers and practised their knowledge and understanding of wrapping boxes and estimating the correct size of paper for their box. When the staff are not directly involved extending children's skills, children learn incidentally from one another as they talk together for instance, in their imaginative play activities. The quality of the play is of a high standard and encouraged by the school in all the planned activities. Staff are skilled at participating in play with children and intervening at appropriate times to move the discussion and children's thinking forward.

- 61 Children have good listening skills and most are able to listen for a long period of time and sustain concentration to a standard above what is normally expected for this age. They are responsive to staff and other adults and approach their activities enthusiastically. They particularly enjoy following the illustrations in a book of a story being told and concentrate well until the story has finished. The staff give a high priority to developing positive attitudes in the nursery. Children listen attentively in discussion or story time and value what others have to say. They are most sensitive to the needs of others and patiently wait to speak one at a time. They enjoy traditional stories, rhymes and songs such as Jack and the Beanstalk and most are able to successfully recall and retell the important points clearly and accurately.
- 62 Children's attainment in reading is above what is expected of this age. They make satisfactory progress and they are broadly on course to exceed the nationally expected standards by the time they are five. Resources for early reading and literacy are of excellent quality. The recent introduction of big books for reading paves the way for later learning promoted by the National Literacy Strategy. The children know that the print carries meaning and use picture cues to retell important events. Most are beginning to read some letters of the alphabet and recognise their names. Children and parents are encouraged to take a library book home each week and this supports the development of literacy skills. This arrangement is well supported by the majority of the parents. This home-school reading system encourages parents to share library books with their children at home and to make a written comment describing their children's response to the book. The children recall and share the stories they choose to take home with their friends in school. This makes a significant contribution to developing positive attitudes towards books and reading. Staff encourage children to learn their sounds and the names of the letters of the alphabet through games, stories and discussion. Most know some letters and the initial sounds of common words. A few of the children who are most able are ready to read but there are fewer planned opportunities for them to be taught word recognition skills. Given their choice of activities, children choose the creative, physical and role-play activities more frequently than the library or writing activities.
- 63 The majority of children achieve above average standards in writing. They make good progress and by the age of five the majority are on course to exceed the nationally expected standards. Most children are able to copy or write their names. A small minority is beginning to write some letters and words independently and a small minority is at the very early stages of making marks. Most are developing good pencil control. The curriculum is well planned for children to write for a variety of purposes and audience. For example, thank-you cards are written to the mothers who brought babies into school when the children discussed growing up. Letters are written with accounts of visits, for example to the local launderette. Books are made of well-known stories such as Jack and the Beanstalk. The higher attaining children are

writing words independently to accompany their stories. A few of these children are ready to begin writing simple phrases and sentences but there are few planned opportunities to encourage these children to extend their writing in this way.

- 64 Children have very good relationships with each other and adults. The children behave and work together well. They have very positive attitudes to learning and enjoy their activities. Books and games are treated with respect and handled with care.
- 65 The quality of teaching is good overall. All staff know the children well and praise and motivate them to learn. Activities and resources are always very well prepared and accessible to the children. Assessment systems for the assessment of children's attainment have improved since the last report. However, they are still not sufficiently detailed to provide an effective baseline for the monitoring of children's progress. Where the teaching is good staff take every opportunity to consolidate what the children know and then extend their speech with the introduction of new ideas and vocabulary. In story time, for example, children are effectively questioned on their understanding and feelings about the story and asked to predict what might happen next. Such questioning promotes understanding of the story and has a positive effect on children's thinking and motivation to talk. Where teaching is not as effective, for instance, in reading or writing activities, some of the questions demand a one word answer and are less effective in promoting children's understanding and thinking of ideas and vocabulary. There is also a lower expectation of the achievement of a few of the higher attaining children. The organisation and planning of the day provides too few opportunities to meet the needs of a few of the higher attaining children in reading and writing skills. Teachers' planning is insufficiently detailed to identify the learning objectives for these children who are capable and ready to achieve higher standards in reading and writing. The nursery nurses concerned with the pupils who have special educational needs make a significant contribution to the progress these children make.
- 66 There are excellent quality resources for the development of early literacy. All staff are familiar with the most effective ways to promote early learning in language and literacy. However, the staff have already recognised the need for further training in the National Literacy Strategy as a future priority.

Mathematics

- 67 On entry to the nursery the children's attainments is above that normally expected. The majority of children make satisfactory progress in mathematics and their achievement is satisfactory. By the time they leave the nursery most are on course to exceed the national outcomes for children of this age. From the wide range of attainment, it is expected that a small number are on course to achieve the national standards and a very small number will fall below them.
- 68 Children learn to count, sort and recognise numbers to ten and beyond and are developing mathematical vocabulary well. A range of counting experiences is planned across the curriculum and children enjoy reciting and singing some well-known number rhymes. Such activities effectively build a good understanding of number and lay a good foundation for the later learning through The National Numeracy Strategy. Most children recognise basic shapes of square, circle, rectangle and triangle. They are taught well to apply their knowledge to a wide range of activities such as recognising these shapes in patterns around them. Children make satisfactory progress in their early learning of measurement as they compare sizes and shapes of large bricks and planks in their construction work. The children enjoy using the sand and water trays to explore the capacity of different moulds and in pouring and filling different sized containers. Those with special educational needs and those who have English

as an additional language are supported well in their learning and make good progress toward their targets.

- 69 The children enjoy mathematics and have very good attitudes to their work and persevere for a good amount of time on their chosen tasks. They are independent in choosing their activities and when required are able to work effectively in small groups and are sensitive to those with special educational needs. For example, children were helpful and kind in assisting a child to reach the containers in the sand tray so he could fully participate in the activity.
- 70 The quality of teaching is good. The staff intervene effectively to promote speaking skills and mathematical thinking. Tasks are well planned and organised and where teaching is good, staff work hard to promote children's thinking and learning. For example, children printing circle patterns with red and green paint are questioned effectively to make comparisons about the sizes of the circles and the development of their pattern. During the discussion, vocabulary such as 'bigger than' and 'smaller than' is reinforced. At times, however, staff ask questions that demand a one-word answer and do not challenge children to solve problems and to answer at length. Staff plan mathematical activities into all areas of the curriculum and children benefit from frequent discussions and activities to develop their concepts in number, shape and measurement. For example during a baking activity, children were encouraged to measure ingredients to make biscuits. However, there are few planned opportunities for the higher attaining children to record their work. The staff who work with the children who have special educational needs support them effectively in their learning. The staff know the children well and keep up to date termly records, which are shared with parents. The school has improved its systems of assessment of children's work since the last report. However, the baseline assessment is insufficiently detailed to be a fully effective tool to plan future learning.
- 71 The range and quality of resources for the development of mathematics are excellent. They are stored for easy access so that the children and the staff can quickly get them out and help to put them away. The resources are well cared for and the children respect the materials and equipment.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 72 The majority of the children make good progress in gaining knowledge and understanding of the world and most are on course to exceed the national standards by the age of five. This area of learning is a strength of the school and children achieve well, particularly in information technology and early geographical skills. The regular and frequent visits to the local shops and places of interest and the visitors into school such as the road safety officers, extend the children's understanding of the wider world. These experiences provide a good foundation for historical, geographical, scientific and technological learning. The celebration of major festivals such as Eid, Diwali, Christmas and the Chinese New Year contributes effectively to the children's growing multi-cultural awareness. The children are beginning to be aware of the different ways people celebrate events. They have been involved in religious as well as local and national events. For example, the children participated in 'walking to school' week and they also know about Diwali as the festival of light as well as Christmas as a time for giving.
- 73 In their topic about growing, appropriate opportunities are planned for discussion. The children talk about their families and past and present events in their lives. They compare sizes of their baby clothes they have brought to school and recognize how much they have grown. The children are developing their knowledge and understanding of their environment, other people and features of the natural and man-made world.

- 74 The staff plan effectively for visits to the immediate locality. For example, on their return from a walk the effective questioning of the teacher prompted a detailed recall by the children of their journey. They work effectively together to draw a map of their walk. They learn successfully to represent their observations through symbols, which then helps them to recall their observations. Most understand that maps can be used to record location, which represents good achievement in this area of learning and in mathematical thinking.
- 75 The children are taught well to make their own choices of activities. They confidently make use of technology. They accurately control simple computer programs. For example, children use the mouse with good control to drag and drop pieces of a jigsaw into the correct position. They independently listen to alphabet rhymes and stories, following the story by looking at pictures. Their skill and independence in using the computer and listening centres is a strength.
- 76 Children enjoy learning. They use the equipment carefully are prepared to take turns fairly. The staff provide positive role models for good behaviour and attitudes to work. The children follow their example and are sensitive to others' needs such as helping one another into aprons as they begin activities or by taking turns at the computer, which makes a good contribution to their personal and social development.
- 77 The quality of teaching is good in this area of learning. A wide range of opportunities is provided for the children to explore the world around them and to ask questions. The nursery is a rich environment with attractive displays from all areas of learning, sited at the children's eye and hand levels so that they can investigate them. For instance, the children enjoy observing the seedlings growing that they have planted. As a result most achieve satisfactorily overall.
- 78 The curriculum balances well the scientific, technological, historical and geographical aspects of the curriculum. The planned work gives the children good opportunities to develop their feelings and excitement in new learning such as when they observe the new growth of seeds they have planted for the first time.

Physical development

- 79 Children make good progress in their physical development and achieve well. This ensures that they are on course to exceed the expected learning outcomes anticipated by the time they are five. When they start in the nursery the majority display skills that match that anticipated for their age. The good work carried out in this area helps the children to move beyond this stage quite soon after they start in the nursery. The provision for outdoor play is particularly good and helps to reinforce the good progress made by children. This good position has been maintained since the previous inspection.
- 80 When using the outside play area children show that they handle wheeled vehicles with ease. Many children show good control and can change speed as necessary. They manoeuvre the vehicles expertly and know how to use the roadway that is set out for them. They can stop their vehicles quickly as is demonstrated when children use the traffic lights on the roadway.
- 81 In another part of the outdoor area children use large climbing equipment very well as they scramble over and under the various apparatus. Children show good balance and control of their bodies. They use imagination when playing on the apparatus which in their eyes has become a space rocket or a truck. They have good awareness of others around them as they scramble over the equipment. This helps them to work together in an effective and safe manner. They can also negotiate the different distances between the set apparatus and are

confident enough to move from one side to the other without help. Many children remember the route they take and repeat the movement.

- 82 Children can kick a ball over a distance of 5 metres with good accuracy. The majority are able to pass the ball accurately to each other over this distance and the partner can often stop the rolling ball with their foot. The same children are confident catching a ball that is thrown to them. They do this with middle and small sized balls. The majority can throw a ball over a distance of a few metres and can run after and retrieve it.
- 83 During a dance and movement session children show good co-ordination as they march around to a well-known nursery rhyme. During this session as they become butterflies they move their bodies through high and low movement using streamers to add to the effect. When getting changed most have a very good attempt at putting on socks and shoes.
- 84 When working on tabletop activities, children are able to join two pieces of construction apparatus and make a model. They also cut and glue effectively without help and they create interesting collages. They use playdough to create many figures and use their hands well when making and manipulating the material. There are a number of children who can cut along a curved line with great accuracy and the same children know exactly how much glue to use in order to get different materials to stick together. One explained that the lighter the paper the less glue is required.
- 85 Children's behaviour is very good. In outside play situations they are able to take turns and if necessary wait for a vehicle to become available. They listen to instructions carefully especially when an adult introduces a new stimulus like traffic lights. All children are keen to play outside at their allotted times. The children know and respond well to the routines.
- 86 The teaching is good for this area of learning. It has a positive impact on children's learning and helps the children to achieve well. For example, the intervention of adults during outdoor play helps to increase the challenge for the higher attainers. In one example, the introduction of road works on the road and the later introduction of traffic lights made the activity much more interesting for the children. The adult in this case was very good at intervening just at the right time and had available a range of additional resources to bring greater realism to the play.
- 87 Similarly, during the dance session the adult gave very clear directions and enough opportunity for children to demonstrate their full range of physical skills. The children responded by curling, jumping, stretching and rolling. The link with the book *The very hungry caterpillar* added a further stimulus for the children as they use their skills to move into a more creative and imaginary world.
- 88 The school has put much emphasis on this part of the curriculum with a very good range of resources and a superb outdoor area. Care has been taken to design the outdoor facility to maximise opportunities for children to improve their skills. Each member of staff is fully aware of what they want to achieve and although assessments are informal the adults are able to pick up significant issues related to individual children.

Creative development

- 89 Children achieve well in this area of their learning and make good progress. They are well on course to exceed the expected learning outcomes for 5 years olds by the time they are ready to start the National curriculum. The school puts much emphasis on this area of learning with many activities calling upon children's use of imagination and creativity. This was also the position reflected in the previous inspection report.

- 90 There is a separate part of the main classroom that is dedicated to creative development. In this room there are many opportunities to extend children's creative skills through water, sand and malleable materials. Equally as important are the opportunities provided for children to engage in creative work associated with other activities. For example, the use of traffic lights and road works during outdoor play enables children to move into an imaginary world as they use wheeled vehicles.
- 91 Children are able to respond through movement to the story of 'The very hungry caterpillar' as they allow their movements to represent moving from a caterpillar to a butterfly. They are particularly good at listening to high and low sounds and making fast and slow movements.
- 92 During a creative session children show that they can cover boxes with different types of paper. During this time they use glue and scissors to create different shapes and features on the boxes. Similarly, during a painting session children demonstrate that they can mix colours and their pictures of people contain several features such as fingers and toes. Recently produced work associated with painting babies shows that they can mix paint to create a pink colour. The children observe well. The paintings have detailed features that display levels of skill beyond that expected for children of their age. The process of mixing paint helps them to understand that different shades will be achieved dependent on the amounts used. They use paintbrushes well to create a range of interesting pictures normally associated with their own family or with what is happening at school. The children also use a computer effectively to create interesting drawings. They are familiar with the program and show that they can carry on without direct adult supervision.
- 93 In the play area, a launderette has been set up. The good quality resources and the imaginative way the area has been organised have helped to develop children's creativity. Children using this area play different roles effectively. The play promotes equal opportunities for boys and girls and successfully promotes positive gender roles. One girl is organising the clothes into different colours, while a boy working in the same area is loading the machines with different piles of clothes that have been selected. The first child makes notes for herself about the time and cost involved. She selects the correct powder to be used and then uses the iron on clothes that have just been washed. Other children organise the clothes carefully into piles and distribute them to make-believe people. The whole process is fascinating to watch and one which gives children great scope for creativity.
- 94 Children's attitudes to learning are good. The dominant children are able to organise others as is seen in the laundry. Co-operative play is a feature of the whole nursery. Children rely on each playing different roles and there is a willingness on everyone's behalf to play different roles at different times. They respect the apparatus that they use and know about safety as is seen when they use scissors. Many children show a great deal of patience. This was illustrated when one child sat for a very long time trying to get the colour that she wanted when mixing. She eventually gets to the desired colour and only then does she proceed.
- 95 Teaching is good for this area of learning. There has been much effort put into the planning to enable so much of the activities to contain a creative element. The imagination and creative drive of the staff is one of the main features of the teaching. However, there is some reluctance to look for additional challenges for higher attaining children. There is very good use of resources, some made by the staff as can be seen in the launderette. The organisation of the creative room is very good and the way items have been set up to allow freedom of access for children is another strong feature.
- 96 There are occasions when the questioning of adults does challenge children sufficiently to think about their learning. Too frequently the questioning is either closed or not enough time

is allowed for children to respond. This is seen when children are sorting clothes and are being asked to consider whom they might have belonged to. However, by contrast adult intervention at key moments is helping the activities that the children are engaged in to become more challenging and interesting. This is seen at its best when children are involved in outdoor play.

- 97 The curriculum has been well organised with staff seizing on opportunities to extend children's creativity. There is a good range of resources available to enable staff to make the activities more interesting. The recording of children's progress is informal but does give adults a good picture of how well children achieve in this area.