

INSPECTION REPORT

**Hart Hill Nursery School
Luton
Bedfordshire
Unique Reference Number: 109418**

Headteacher: Mrs C Cole

**Reporting inspector: Mrs Jan Sullivan
OFSTED No. 3205**

Dates of inspection: 11 – 13 October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706953

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
Type of control:	LEA Nursery School
Age range of pupils:	3 -5
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Whitecroft Road Luton Bedfordshire LU2 0JS
Telephone number:	01582-731701
Appropriate authority:	Luton
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Barker
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs Jan Sullivan, Rgl	Special educational needs, Section 11	Attainment and progress; Teaching; Leadership and management; Staffing, accommodation and learning resources; Efficiency of the school
Mr Michael O'Malley, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Attendance; Support, guidance & pupils' welfare; Partnership with parents and community
Mrs Sue Moxon, Team Inspector	Equal opportunities	The curriculum and assessment; Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Areas of learning for children under five

[this table should list all team members and also indicate, in the subject column, the team member with responsibility for under fives, special educational needs, equal opportunities and English as a second language]

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

At this time of year, all children make good progress in all areas of learning and very good progress is made in their personal and social development. As the year progresses and children are ready to develop the more formal skills of literacy and numeracy their progress is slower, but is never less than satisfactory.

The quality of teaching by teachers and nursery nurses is consistently good for children engaged in adult structured tasks and lessons. Very good support is offered to teachers and children by nursery nurses.

Very good relationships between children and adults underpin all the work of the nursery.

Very good provision is made for children's moral and social development and this helps to promote very good levels of behaviour, confidence, independence and positive attitudes to learning.

Good provision is made for children with special educational needs by teachers who demonstrate an insight into their individual needs and who work hard to ensure that they are able to take an active role in all aspects of nursery life.

The ethos of the school promotes well a warm and caring environment in which all children are valued and partnership with parents is good. This helps to ensure good attendance.

School resources, which include staffing, accommodation and equipment for learning, meet well the needs and interests of these young children, and are used to good effect in all classrooms.

Where the school has weaknesses

Curriculum co-ordinators are not used most effectively to promote curriculum development or to support the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility.

There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching, curriculum provision and development planning by senior managers.

Development planning processes are underdeveloped with targets for improvement not geared closely enough to raising attainment.

Long term curriculum planning is not satisfactory and adversely affects the pace of progress, particularly for the older children.

For all the children, other than those with special needs, records of attainment are not yet sufficiently detailed or used most effectively to set improvement targets for children of different abilities.

The school has many strengths, but also some significant weaknesses. Overall, the strengths outweigh the weaknesses. The quality of the day to day learning opportunities experienced by the children is a strength of the school. However, the systems which monitor, evaluate and secure this quality over the longer term are not fully established and do not sufficiently support the teaching staff in making a full contribution to the school improvement processes.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

Since the previous inspection report in November 1996 progress on the key issues has been sound.

The school has recently introduced many new curriculum planning and assessment strategies to ensure consistency across all classes in the school and better provision for higher attainers. Whilst most of these changes are too new to have had much impact on standards of attainment and progress over the longer term, they provide a useful context for moving the school forward.

The school has also appointed a new deputy headteacher and curriculum co-ordinator roles and responsibilities have been reviewed. In these circumstances the school is able to demonstrate well a capacity to improve and to build further upon its many strengths.

Standards

It is likely that, in due course, the children will comfortably attain national standards for five year olds in all areas of learning and many are likely to exceed this standard in personal and social development.

Attainment is very good in personal and social development as a result of the very good teacher-child relationships and excellent pupil management procedures. Attainment is good in creative and physical development where the provision through free play opportunities is of a particularly good standard.

Attainment is satisfactory in language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Day-to-day progress in all areas of learning is good and it is very good in personal and social development. The longer term progress of all children, other than those with special needs, is likely to be less assured in the absence of structured schemes for learning and detailed records of the children to guide the teachers' planning.

*There are six areas of learning nationally required in the curriculum for children under five: personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Each area of learning contains desirable learning outcomes as defined by the School's Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) in "Nursery Education: Desirable Learning Outcomes for Pupils Entering Compulsory Education" (1996). These set out the national expectations for children's attainment as they enter compulsory education at the age of five.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in areas of learning

Personal and social development	Very good
Language and literacy	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Good
Physical development	Good – Very good learning opportunities provided through outdoor play
Creative development	Good

Overall, teaching is mostly good. This is especially the case where teaching staff are engaged in structured activities with small groups of children. Qualified teachers and nursery nurses work well as a team, sharing roles and responsibilities. Where teaching is judged satisfactory rather than good, teaching staff are not always intervening sufficiently in free play activities to fully challenge the children's learning. This was most noticeable when opportunities were lost for teachers to extend the children's literacy and numeracy skills. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Of the 29 lessons or part lessons seen, over half were good, of which three were very good.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good. Children work and play with consideration and respect for the teaching staff and each other.
Attendance	Good. Children and their parents feel welcome and valued at school and this helps to promote good attendance.
Ethos*	Sound. The school has a positive ethos, which prioritises the children's well being. All involved in the nursery are caring and considerate of the children's needs and interests.

Leadership and management	Sound leadership and poor management. The headteacher's clear educational vision for the school is shared with staff and governors. The school successfully achieves its aims, but there is too little emphasis upon a commitment to high achievement in the school's aims and policy documents. There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Development planning is too rarely associated with the improvement of attainment and progress.
Curriculum	The curriculum is well provided for through a good mix of teacher-directed tasks and free play opportunities. Provision for children with English as an additional language is sound and this support helps these children to access fully the nursery curriculum.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	At least good. Moral and social development are very good. Through shared, good quality free play opportunities, learn how to behave kindly and generously towards each other.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good. The experienced and well-qualified staff are eager to develop their own professionalism and responsibilities. They make good use of learning resources and accommodation.
Value for money	Good. The school sets clear financial targets, although these are not closely linked to gains in the children's standards of attainment and progress. Extra funding for those children with severe complex learning difficulties assists in promoting good quality education for all pupils.
Children with special educational needs	They make good progress through good quality free-choice and free-play activities. They receive full access to the breadth of the curriculum. Teachers know these children well and accommodate their individual needs with understanding.

**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

- They are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school
- They find it easy to approach the school with problems or questions to do with their children
- The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on children
- The school achieves a high standard of good behaviour
- Their children like school
- The way the school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons.

What some parents are not happy about

The response from the questionnaires was overwhelmingly positive.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to develop further the school's many strengths and to improve standards of attainment and progress through effective curriculum planning, better use of children's assessments and helpful school management systems, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

Secure curriculum continuity and progression by;

- I. identifying more precise learning objectives in daily and weekly curriculum plans
- II. monitoring closely these learning objectives to track achievements of individual children
- III. using children's records to help set learning targets for individuals so that these can be used to plan teacher-directed tasks and to promote appropriate teacher intervention in free play activities. (refer to paragraphs 8,9,10,24,26,27,35 and 36).

Review the of the school development plan so that it more effectively promotes high standards of attainment and children's progress by:

- IV. prioritising the development of curriculum policies and associated guidance to support staff in planning for the children's progress in knowledge, skills and understanding for all areas of the curriculum.
- V. setting realistic long-term targets for school improvement (linked to a 3 year cycle) so that they provide an easily accessible overview of priorities and time scales which can be routinely monitored and evaluated in terms of their impact upon standards of attainment and children's progress.
- VI. fully supporting and involving curriculum co-ordinators and governors in development planning in their areas of responsibility. (refer to paragraphs 31,53,54,55,56,72 and 75).

Establish management systems and strategies which promote and sustain good quality teaching and curriculum provision by:

- VII. developing further curriculum co-ordinator roles and responsibilities
- VIII. establishing quality assurance systems, which systematically monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
- IX. developing strategies to track patterns of children's attainment and progress over time and to use these to inform school effectiveness evaluations. (refer to paragraphs 53,56 and 59).

· INTRODUCTION

· Characteristics of the school

- 1 Hart Hill Nursery School is a purpose built nursery and the largest in Luton, offering 90 full- time equivalent places for children aged three and four years old. Currently 98 boys and 82 girls are registered at the nursery for either five morning or afternoon sessions each week. At the beginning of the term before their fifth birthday children are offered a full-time place when they can attend both morning and afternoon sessions on all five days of each week. There are no full-time children attending the

nursery at the time of the inspection. Most usually, children start nursery during the term of their third birthday and following their fourth birthday transfer to reception classes in local schools.

- 2 Occasionally parents choose for their children to remain at the nursery for longer and there are five returning children who are four years old this term. Overall, attainment on entry is broadly average. However, there are seven children with special needs, two of whom are undergoing statutory assessments. For the past two years, Luton LEA has encouraged the nursery to admit children with severe and complex special needs.
- 3 The school has specialist support and some facilities to meet the needs of special educational needs children who are fully integrated into normal school routines and timetables.
- 4 The school employs five full time teachers and seven full time nursery nurses. The school building is set in well established spacious grounds and has three classroom areas, each with its own cloakroom and bathroom and each staffed by a qualified teacher and two nursery nurses. Additional nursery nurse support is provided for children with particular English language needs. Children attend the school from a large area of Luton and are drawn from many backgrounds. Twenty-nine children on register receive funding to support English as an additional language and there are three children for whom English is not their first language. The residential area immediately around the school is mostly council owned. There is substantial unemployment in this area with many single parents or reconstituted families. Approximately 16 per cent of the school population have a cultural background other than white British. There is a good mix of boys and girls in all classes in the school. The school is popular with local families and is frequently oversubscribed. When there is competition for places, priority is given to children with special needs and the oldest children first.

- 5 The school aims to promote children's enjoyment in learning through play, talk, real and first hand experience. The school aims to provide a learning environment in which:
- X. the children and their families feel secure and valued.
 - XI. all staff are caring, understanding of the needs of young children, are highly qualified and experienced.
 - XII. The classrooms and outside areas are carefully planned to provide for a broad range of interesting educational opportunities to promote the statutory six areas of learning.
- 6 Priorities identified for the next two years reflect:
- XIII. an increase in accommodation and integration of children with severe and complex special needs
 - XIV. closer team work between the different nursery classes in all aspects of curriculum planning, delivery and assessment.
 - XV. the development of the Luton LEA baseline assessment framework as a pilot programme
- 7 Changes since the last inspection have led to more curriculum consistency between different classes in the school as a result of more co-operative planning between teachers. The needs of the higher attainers are also being better addressed through their timetabled access to group sessions which target their needs and ensure they are appropriately challenged.

- **Key indicators**

- **Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:	Authorised	School	%
	Absence	National comparative data	Not available
	Unauthorised	School	N/A
	Absence	National comparative data	Not available
			N/A

- **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	10
	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**

- 8 Children enter the nursery with a wide range of attainment. Approximately five per cent of children are identified as having special needs as part of the Luton special needs project for children with severe and complex learning difficulties. With so many children having only just started the nursery, it is anticipated that additional children will be identified with less significant special needs. Attainment on entry varies from one year to another influenced by the percentage of children admitted as part of the Luton special needs project. Overall, attainment on entry is broadly average and children make good progress in their nursery sessions. Progress over the school year is less assured in the absence of detailed curriculum plans and children's assessments. However, most children are well on course to attain the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all areas of learning by the time they are five. The school places high emphasis on personal and social development and some children are already attaining some aspects of the national standards expected for five year olds in this area. Almost all children will leave the nursery at the end of the year, when they are four, but some will only just be four and will still have a full school year in a reception class before they reach statutory school age.
- 9 The nursery provides a warm, friendly and supportive learning environment in which all children are valued. This helps to motivate children to learn, builds confidence and promotes progress, especially at this early stage in the year. Good progress is also supported by good quality teaching in adult-directed activities. However, children are not always fully challenged to learn new information and skills in free play activities which sometimes lack sufficient teacher intervention. This impacts most noticeably on the pace of progress for the older children and in their development of the skills for literacy and numeracy. Progress is rarely less than satisfactory and the satisfactory, and sometimes good, attainment and progress noted in the previous inspection report is maintained for most pupils.
- 10 Children with special educational needs are well provided for in a nursery environment which respects all children and which provides ready access to good quality learning opportunities through play. Their individual learning plans are regularly updated and discussed by teaching staff and the special needs co-ordinator. This ensures all teaching staff know well the specific learning needs and interests of these children and know how to effectively support them to enable all children with special educational needs to join in all activities and experience success. Ready access to specific support provided by the special needs co-ordinator to complement these routine learning experiences also helps to promote good progress for these children. The older and higher attaining children also have access to some good quality learning experiences through both teacher-directed tasks and free play. However, it is more often the case that the higher attaining and older children are not fully challenged in their thinking in familiar, free play activities which lack sufficient teacher intervention. In these circumstances the good pace of progress can sometimes be slower for these children. In response to the previous inspection report, the school now occasionally groups the older and higher attaining children to provide differentiated activities and challenges, especially at times like storytime. This helps to promote a good pace of progress, but these opportunities

are not yet systematically available for all children in all classes to ensure consistency and a minimum entitlement.

- 11 Attainment in personal and social development is very good and this is one of the school's strengths. Some children are already meeting the national learning expectations for five year olds. Even at this early stage in the school year, they have settled very well into nursery life and have developed very good relationships with each other and teaching staff. They readily comply with nursery rules and routines and play well together. They have very positive attitudes to work and join in all activities with enthusiasm and commitment. Progress in this area of learning is very good.
- 12 In language and literacy the children are well on their way to achieving the national learning expectations by the time they reach five years of age. The teaching staff place high emphasis on the development of language and communication skills and this helps to ensure that children make satisfactory progress over time. Children listen carefully to adults and to other children in small and large group situations. Most are confident speakers and readily discuss their activities with each other and with interested adults. They enjoy taking part in large group presentations and adopting different roles during small group imaginative free play. They have a strong love of books, know about print and how to use books. They "read" the pictures and recognise their own names, with some higher attainers beginning to write their own names without assistance. They frequently make marks in order to "write" captions for their pictures and sometimes use recognised letters in their mark making. Print is all around them on displays, computer programmes and labels everywhere about the nursery and they respond with understanding and interest in written information.
- 13 In mathematical development most children are well on their way to achieving the national learning expectations for five year olds. They are making sound progress through daily exposure to quantity number, shape and size associated with good quality play resources and complemented by some more structured teacher-directed tasks. They use numbers with understanding in stories, singing rhymes and computer software programmes. Many of the older children can count to ten, recognise the value of numbers and do simple practical additions when counting out resources such as "and one more makes". They relate with understanding to numbers used in real life situations, such as the maximum number of children allowed to take part in a particular activity at any one time. They match and sort objects in games and free play, develop an understanding of shape and space in their construction and model making and experience capacity and volume through playing with sand and water.
- 14 Children are making good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and most are well on their way to achieving the national expectations by the time they reach the age of five. Children are keenly interested in the world around them. They learn about their local environment through real life experiences which include visits and visitors, such as a trip to the shops in the local village and a visit to school by the fire brigade. The nursery garden provides a good nature environment and children use this well to support their learning, such as collecting leaves and recording the weather. The nursery regularly celebrates different cultures, religions and festivals. During the inspection week children had just finished celebrating harvest festival during which time they had looked carefully at wheat and flour and had created an attractive harvest display. They know about important past events in their own lives and readily share in the significant events in the lives of others, for example a birthday. Children make models with boxes, paper, card and modelling dough. They use tools safely and confidently. When working with familiar software

programmes, they are beginning to use the computer independently and have good control of the computer 'mouse'. They understand how to use the recorder and headphones which are readily available in all classrooms.

- 15 The children's physical skills are well developed and children are well on their way to exceed the national expectations by the time they are five. The nursery ensures that children get plenty of opportunities to practice both fine muscle movements within the classroom and large motor skills in the playground on a daily basis. The children are very confident in their use of space, carefully pedalling bikes and trolleys around pathways in the playground, often at speed and with few accidents. They show confidence when running, jumping and climbing. They move about the nursery and the playground with control and an awareness of the actions of others.
- 16 They have developed fine muscle skills well using scissors, glue spreaders, writing and painting tools and show good precision and control when mixing flour and water to make playdough and when pouring water from one container to another. Children are making good progress in a wide range of physical skills through the good range of activities provided.
- 17 Children make good progress in creative development, particularly in imaginative play and are well on their way to exceed the national expectations by the time they are five. They confidently produce pictures on paper and scenarios using 'small world' resources, such as play people and bricks. They express their thoughts and feelings using a wide range of resources creatively. They are developing well skills using paintbrushes and pencils and some of the older and higher attaining children are able to create recognisable pictures with good detail, such as faces with hair and ears. Children take part enthusiastically in a wide range of creative activities which include music, singing, rhymes, listening and moving to taped music and exploring sound through access to a good variety of musical instruments.

Attitudes, behaviour

and personal development

- 18 The children have a very positive attitude to school, and behave very well. There are very good relationships between staff and children, and the children work and play together happily. The school meets its aims for high standards in personal development.
The children readily participate in a wide range of stimulating practical activities. They are enthusiastic and clearly enjoy themselves. They show good interest in what the adults say and do, and they are developing good listening skills.
- 19 The standards of behaviour are very high. In particular, noting the very young age of the children at this early stage in the year, there was no disruptive behaviour seen during the inspection. Parents are very confident that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children and that there are very good standards of behaviour.
- 20 Very good relationships have a positive effect on behaviour. The children show respect for themselves and each other. They are sensitive to each others' needs, such as helping each other with aprons and pushing each other on tricycles. They share ideas and resources, and some of the older children collaborate in play for sustained periods of time.
- 21 Children select activities, developing initiative and responsibility. They tidy up, get dressed and help themselves at snack time with increasing confidence and

independence.

- 22 The high standards in attitudes, behaviour and relationships noted at the last inspection have been maintained and this continues to be a strength of the school.

• **Attendance**

- 23 Attendance is good. The children arrive punctually and there is an orderly start to both morning and afternoon sessions.

•

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

• **Teaching**

- 24 The quality of teaching is mostly good. Of the 29 lessons or part lessons seen, well over half were good, of which three lessons were very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The good teaching reported from the previous inspection has been maintained. The quality of teaching tends towards satisfactory rather than good at times when teaching staff are supervising free play activities and levels of teacher intervention are insufficient to effectively promote learning or to generate challenge. This has a significant impact upon the children's attainment and progress in literacy and numeracy when opportunities for children to develop these skills are not fully extended through free play.
- 25 Qualified teachers and nursery nurses work together as a good team, sharing roles and responsibilities. The quality of support for the teachers and children provided by the nursery nurses is always very good. All teaching staff are committed to the welfare and well-being of the children and provide a high quality learning environment. They have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the ways young children learn and of the content of the nationally prescribed Desirable Learning Outcomes. They regularly attend training as a whole staff and this helps to promote consistency between the different classes and encourages a sharing of perspectives and expertise. This was a key issue in the previous inspection report, to which the school has responded appropriately.
- 26 All teaching staff sustain positive and supportive relationships with children and each other. The teaching teams provide good role models for children with everyone working co-operatively together within an environment of mutual trust and respect. All staff work hard to respond sensitively to the needs of the children and they do this very well. Positive and supportive adult and child relationships are a strength of the school. Within teacher-directed tasks teaching staff use questioning skillfully to engage the children's interest and to promote their learning. These skills are not always fully employed by teaching staff supervising children engaged in free play activities. When teaching is very good, as well as effectively carrying out the planned learning intentions, staff take every opportunity that arises to spontaneously engage children in conversation and to extend their knowledge and understanding.
- 27 The taught curriculum is based on long and medium term plans which ensure that the children receive a broad and balanced learning experience based on all the areas of learning. However, the teacher's day-to-day and weekly plans lack

definition and do not always make specific learning intentions clear. Day-to-day assessments of the children's achievements and weekly evaluations are used well by teaching staff but are mostly informal.

The organisation of the nursery sessions makes very good use of accommodation, both indoors and out. Staff use all the outdoor facilities very well. Teaching staff demonstrate excellent management of the children and very good teaching methods and class organisation. The teaching staff consistently sustain high expectations of the children's behaviour and this helps to promote a purposeful work ethos in all classrooms. Praise is used to good effect as children are rewarded for their efforts and are encouraged to try new experiences and resources.

- 28 Teaching staff encourage children to be confident about their ideas and allow children time to think and to contribute in their own ways and at their own pace. The quality of teaching received by the children with special needs and English as an additional language is good. They are well supported by class teachers who demonstrate care and consideration for their individual needs and abilities and they receive additional specialist support on a regular basis.

assessment **The curriculum and**

- 29 The curriculum provision is satisfactory overall. It offers a wide range of stimulating, relevant experiences across all the areas of learning both indoors and in the large and attractive outdoor environment. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated experiences planned for and provided across the school. The teachers from each of the three classes meet together to plan which aspects of the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning will be the focus for each half term. This good practice ensures consistency in provision across the classes. The school has made progress in this area since the last inspection when there was found to be no collaborative planning across the classes. Provision for language and literacy and mathematics is given an appropriate emphasis.
- 30 The provision for personal and social development is a strength of the school and is clearly reflected in the very good behaviour and attitudes of the children towards their learning and to each other.
- 31 The previous inspection report highlighted the lack of policies and schemes of work. There are now policies in place for language and literacy and mathematics. There is, however, still insufficient written guidance to support the teaching staff in providing for progression of knowledge, skills and understanding in all the areas of learning. In these circumstances, continuity and progression for individual children over time cannot be assured.
- 32 The curriculum is enriched by visits to places of interest, by celebrations and by visitors to the nursery. During the inspection, for example, the children were celebrating harvest and made visits to the local shops to buy fruit and vegetables. Good use is made of photography to record these events for the children to look at and recall their experiences.
- 33 All children have equal access to the full curriculum whatever their levels of attainment, background or language. Curriculum provision for children with special educational needs is good and fully supports the intentions in individual plans for learning. The requirements of the national Code of Practice are fully met. The extra support available for children with English as an additional language helps to

promote their positive attitudes to learning.

- 34 The school has made progress since the last inspection in the development of assessment procedures and these are now satisfactory. Teaching staff make home visits prior to the children starting school and detailed observations are made at this stage which are used effectively to inform planning once the child is in the nursery. Staff teams meet together regularly to discuss observations made during each week and these day-to-day assessments are used well to inform the planning for the following week.
- 35 Assessment procedures for tracking and recording children's progress over time are now in place but this is a very recent development and has not yet had time to be effective in practice. The need for detailed recording of what children know, understand and can do was a key issue in the previous inspection report, which still needs further attention.
- 36 Informal processes in all aspects of curriculum planning and assessment are mostly effective in ensuring provision of a good quality and consistency between classes in a general way but systems to secure teachers' planning and children's records lack detail and do not enable teachers to plan progressively for the needs and interests of individual children over the longer term.

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moral, social and cultural development

Pupils' spiritual,

- 37 Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The nursery makes very good provision for children's moral and social development and spiritual and cultural provision is good.
- 38 Children's spiritual development is fostered through opportunities for children to observe the natural and made environment and to appreciate the beauty of the world. The children are enabled to show a range of feelings such as wonder when observing a spider's web shining in the sunshine or the movement of their own and others' shadows. They are encouraged to experience joy through singing together and celebrating events such as birthdays. Staff discuss the children's own lives and experiences sensitively with them and also the lives and experiences of others.
- 39 The nursery is a very calm and well ordered community which very effectively promotes children's moral and social development. This is very good and is a strength of the school. Adults are very good role models and children are taught right from wrong in a caring and sensitive manner. Very good behaviour is promoted through an appropriate use of praise and the high expectations of the staff. Children are taught to care for the pets in the nursery and to value and respect each other. The teaching staff encourage children to take turns, to share resources, to use their initiative and take responsibility for themselves and their learning. Many opportunities are given for them to make choices and take decisions, to tidy away and to access their own resources for learning.
- 40 Good opportunities are made for children to develop cultural awareness. They learn about their own and different cultures through festivals and celebrations and through visits and visitors. Nursery resources, for example, books, dolls, dressing up clothes and good quality display materials, provide opportunities for children to learn to value the tidiness and diversity of a range of cultures.

· **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

- 41 The provision for support and guidance, and pupil's welfare is good. The promotion of children's wellbeing is a strength of the school. The children are secure in a caring and safe environment where everyone is valued. There are good arrangements for settling the children into the nursery but there is insufficient contact with the primary schools to help them transfer.
- 42 There are good procedures for monitoring progress and personal development. They start with home visits and include the systematic completion of reports, which are shared with parents. There is a good adult pupil ratio, and the teaching staff know the children very well.
- 43 The procedures for monitoring behaviour are good. Problems are readily identified and addressed. The teaching staff maintain high standards for behaviour through very good relationships, and by helping the children to consider the needs and feelings of others.
- 44 There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance. There is good guidance for parents. The teachers keep orderly records, and unexplained absence is followed up. Children with special educational needs and their parents are supported well by the specialist teacher who is not a class teacher and who is readily available to offer individual children, parents and teachers specialist support and advice.
- 45 The procedures for child protection are sound. Overall, the school gives satisfactory attention to matters of health and safety, but the arrangements for inspection and risk assessment are not carried out systematically. All staff conscientiously monitor health and safety issues in their own classrooms and around the school, and incidences are quickly reported and dealt with through these informal procedures.
- 46 Overall the school has maintained the high standards for support, guidance and pupils' welfare noted in the last inspection.

· **Partnership with parents and the community**

- 47 Overall the partnership with parents and the community makes a good contribution to the children's learning.
- 48 The quality of information for parents is good. Together the school booklets and governors report provide a satisfactory summary of the school's routines, events and developments. There are regular newsletters and the notice boards include information on school policies, activities and projects such as the Healthy Foods Award. There are good arrangements for keeping parents informed when their children start at the nursery, including a meeting and home visits.
- 49 Parents' involvement in their children's learning is good. They are kept well informed on progress through regular informal contact with the teaching staff, formal consultation meetings, and written reports. The children routinely take home

examples of their work. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school. They contribute generously to the school fund and they are invited to put their names down to help in class, on trips, and with projects.

Parents borrow books from the school library to read with their children and they send in photographs and other items of interest for the children to “show and tell” in class.

50 Curriculum information is posted by all the classrooms and there are open evenings for parents and other adults to see the work of the school. However, overall, the information on what is taught is not sufficiently detailed and this limits parents’ involvement with their children’s learning.

51 Links with the community enhance the work in school and make a satisfactory contribution to children’s learning. Visits are used to broaden the experience of the children. Every term each class takes a walk in the area to note seasonal changes. The children visit the local shops. They go further into town and catch the bus back. They listen to the nativity story in St. Anne’s Church. Visitors such as the dental hygienist, “animal outings” and musicians effectively extend the work done in the class.

· **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

· **Leadership and management**

52 The headteacher has a clear educational vision for the school and provides strong leadership in this respect. However, this vision is not yet fully shared by all staff and governors. Since the previous inspection report, teamwork has become more of a feature in school planning and evaluation processes and the school now has adopted a clear statement of aims which is made explicit in school documentation for parents. The school ethos ensures that these young children receive an enjoyable first learning experience and that their wellbeing is effectively provided for. All statutory requirements are met.

53 Teaching staff are frequently involved in the sharing of perspectives and the informal evaluation of the curriculum through regular, timetabled planning and review meetings. These procedures help to secure consistency between classes and all staff are actively involved. Curriculum plans are monitored by the headteacher to ensure breadth and balance but there is too little systematic monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. This makes it very difficult to track the impact of school improvement strategies upon children’s learning over the longer term from one year to the next and as different cohorts of children move through the school. Curriculum co-ordinator roles are underdeveloped and there are too few support structures to enable curriculum co-ordinators to manage their responsibilities most effectively. Appraisal and induction processes are inconsistently applied with staff training available mostly in response to whole school development issues. There is an imbalance between teacher training offered to support school development and teacher training offered to enhance an individual’s personal and professional development. There are too few opportunities for teaching staff to identify their own individual needs and interests and to access the appropriate training support.

54 The school has had to operate with a changing governing body over recent years. Whilst governors are conscientious in their roles, it is difficult for such a small school to sustain a governing body which is fully and actively involved in all aspects of

school provision and evaluation. Governors visit the school to observe the children and their teachers and to track provision, but this is mostly informally structured.

Established governors are fully aware of the content of the school development plan and of the previous inspection report. Most recently, not all governing body meetings have been quorate. The headteacher is working hard to involve all staff and governors in school developments and a questionnaire to teaching staff has recently enabled them to contribute their perspectives when considering whole school priorities.

- 55 The school development plan provides a useful working document which successfully identifies school needs and targets for development. It provides a first response to one of the key issues arising from the previous inspection report, but there is more to be done. Overall, development planning processes are underdeveloped. The school development plan does not yet cover a full three year cycle and many of the timescales for action in the previous OFSTED post-inspection action plan have lapsed without review. In response to key issues from the previous inspection, the school now has a school development plan which identifies targets for development and costs these appropriately. However, there are still a number of whole school documents in need of development.
- 56 The full range of curriculum policies and associated schemes for learning (written guidance to support teaching staff in their curriculum planning for progression) are not yet complete. Targets identified in the school development plan too rarely refer to measurable outcomes associated with improvements in the children's attainment and progress. There is no systematic evaluation of school development plan targets or actions.
- 57 Everyone involved in the nursery is aware of the importance of giving all children equal access and opportunity to take part in all areas of the curriculum. The headteacher, staff and governors have due regard for the Code of Practice and children with special educational needs are mostly well accommodated within the full range of nursery activities. Management of special educational needs provision is effective and ensures that children are identified early and their needs are communicated fully to all adults with whom they work. The school manages effectively provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language. Relationships with outside specialist support services can be unpredictable and unreliable, but the school is working hard to secure this provision.
- 58 The school meets well its stated aims. The very caring and positive ethos in the school ensures that all children feel happy and secure, but the school places too little emphasis upon a commitment to high achievement in school aims and policy documents. The school staff and governors have dealt effectively with many of the findings of the last inspection and have responded appropriately to targets identified in the post-inspection action plan.
Whilst there is still work to be completed on some of these targets, newly introduced management structures and roles place the school in a good position to develop further work already begun.

· **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

- 59 The school has a favourable number of qualified teaching staff, in response to the Luton special needs project. Whilst several of the nursery nurses are directly associated with this project, they operate fully as members of the class teaching

teams and contribute positively to the quality of education received by all the children.

All nursery nurses are well qualified and operate very effectively as part of the teaching team, supporting fully the teaching expertise of the qualified teachers. The school is committed to the continuing professional development of staff and there are many opportunities for teaching staff to share expertise with their colleagues through whole school training sessions and shared experiences. Appraisal processes are inconsistently applied and do not encourage staff to develop their own personal and professional interests. Teamwork approaches generate the need for well co-ordinated curriculum plans to ensure consistency. Most curriculum co-ordination roles are under-resourced and under-developed. Job descriptions lack specific details and recent changes to co-ordination roles and responsibilities have generated the need for a rigorous review. There are named curriculum co-ordinators for personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. The role of these co-ordinators in monitoring the quality of provision across the school is limited. There are no curriculum co-ordinators for physical or creative development. The school secretary, lunchtime supervisors and site supervisor make a very positive contribution to the smooth running of the school.

- 60 Accommodation is good and staff work hard to make effective use of all the space available. Staff use the parents' room as an extension to their staff room at lunch times and as a study area when it is not in use by parents. There is a very well designed and resourced outside play area and two of the three nursery classes also have covered veranda areas attached to their classrooms. There is direct access to the outside from all classrooms and this readily provides opportunities for children to engage in outside play as a natural extension to normal classroom activities. The organisation of the nursery is very good and space has been created for many different learning areas and activities. The organisation of the nursery is very good and space has been created for many different learning areas and activities. The nursery environment is bright, clean and well cared for. Displays are attractive and communicate children's activities and achievements. The grounds are well maintained and provide a safe and secure area for young children.
- 61 The site supervisor works hard to keep the environment in good condition, and nursery and site together provide a welcoming and comfortable working environment for children, staff and parents.

The efficiency of the school

- 62 The governors and staff make good use of the resources they control. They work hard to ensure the funds available to them are used to best advantage and regularly informally discuss their impact on nursery provision. Financial management is sound but financial planning is too rarely linked to outcomes reflected in improvements in the children's attainment and progress. Costings are clearly identified in the school development plan. Staff use the building and learning resources very well, especially the attractive and imaginatively developed outdoor environment. The way staff are deployed is good and all adults, including parent helpers and trainees are well used to contribute positively to the children's learning experience.
- 63 Financial control and school administration are sound. The school has recently received high levels of resourcing associated with the Luton special needs project, although only a small number of these children are currently on role.

These extra resources have a positive impact on provision for all children. Most parents regularly pay voluntary contributions to school budgets and this money purchases additional resources.

Overall, the school provides good value for money and is making good use of the extra resources available for children with special needs.

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

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

64 The children access the areas of learning in three classrooms and a shared outdoor area. Each classroom and the outdoor environment provides a wide range of good quality learning experiences to enable children to access all the areas of learning.

· **Personal and Social Development**

65 Personal and social development is very good and this is an area of strength of the nursery which receives high priority. The children achieve above age-related expectations in this area of learning and make very good progress. The majority of the children had been in school for a very short time when the inspection took place but they had settled well into the nursery, were familiar with the routines and were able to enjoy the varied and interesting learning experiences provided by the staff.

66 The children are able to work independently and also to co-operate well with other children. They concentrate for substantial lengths of time, demonstrating high levels of involvement and the ability to persevere in problem solving, for example how to cut different types of fruit. The children are able to take turns and to take care of each other, for example children who had been in school for one or two terms were willing to work with and support a child new to the nursery. The nursery provides a curriculum which encourages decision making and the development of responsibility which the children respond to positively. They are able to make choices, to access their own resources and to tidy away at the end of the sessions.

67 The quality of teaching is very good. The teaching staff respect and value the children showing sensitivity to individuals and their needs. They praise kind, considerate and generous behaviour at every opportunity so children know what is valued. A secure and stimulating environment has been created for the children enabling them to grow in confidence and self-esteem.

Language and Literacy

68 Children's attainment in language and literacy is in line with age-related expectations and they make satisfactory progress towards the desirable outcomes for five year olds. Children for whom English is an additional language also make satisfactory progress. Children who have special educational needs receive good support and make good progress.

69 The children listen alternatively to the teaching staff and are able to follow simple instructions. The majority can join in with familiar rhymes and songs and participate in small group discussions. They listen to stories with enjoyment.

- 70 The children are acquiring a love of books. They understand that pictures carry information and some children can retell a favourite story from the pictures. Many children are able to handle books correctly and enjoy sitting in the book corner turning the pages and 'reading' the story aloud. Each classroom has a well-resourced attractive book area which is inviting and encourages children to look at books at times during the day other than the group 'story time'.
- 71 Many children can recognise their names from their name cards and know the initial letter of their first name. Each classroom has a mark-making area where children are able to use a range of pens, pencils and paper. Some children can copywrite their names and many use pens and pencils with confidence.
- 72 The children respond well and show enjoyment in this area of learning. Teaching in language and literacy is satisfactory. The children are given a secure and enjoyable foundation in the development of speaking and listening, reading and writing. Teaching is of consistently high quality in planned adult-led activities and good resources are provided for child-initiated experiences. In some situations, however, where children are engaged in child-initiated activities the teaching staff take on a more supervisory role and there are some missed opportunities for focused adult intervention to challenge children to make further progress. A lack of long term curriculum guidance for teachers linked to the progressive development of knowledge, skills and understandings also means that some teacher-directed activities are not presented progressively and this impacts most noticeably upon progress over the longer term of the older children as they develop their reading and writing skills.

Mathematics

- 73 Children make sound progress over time in their mathematical development and most are in line to meet the recommended levels by the time they are five years old. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. During stories, singing rhymes and games children develop an awareness of numbers. They learn to count and develop an understanding of liquids and amounts through playing with sand and water. When making playdough they weigh and measure ingredients. On a visit to the shops (during the inspection) children counted vegetables and observed them being weighed and the cost calculated.
- 74 The children enjoy working on mathematical activities and concentrate well to solve problems.
- 75 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching staff challenge the children to solve problems and develop their ideas and understanding. Children are given good access to relevant experiences which accommodate number, shape and space in a range of stimulating contexts. Lesson plans, however, lack precise learning objectives and opportunities for mathematical development in child-initiated experiences are too infrequently taken up by the teaching staff. A lack of long term curriculum guidance for teachers are not always presented to children progressively and this impacts most noticeably upon the pace of progress over the longer term of children's developing numeracy skills.

· **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

- 76 The children make good progress in the knowledge and understanding of the world and they are in line to reach age-expectations by the time they are five.
- 77 In scientific enquiry the children are developing well investigative and observational skills. For example they are aware of the changes taking place as they mix ingredients to make playdough. The children are given good opportunities to acquire skills in the use of information technology and many can use a keyboard with confidence. Design and technology skills are developed through the use of range of construction equipment and opportunities to cut, join and build in a variety of 'work-shop' activities.
- 78 The children are developing early geographical skills by learning about the neighbourhood around the nursery and also further afield. They are beginning to be able to identify important features and places of interest in their local environment through experiences such as walks to the local shops. The children and staff have brought in photographs of themselves now and as babies to help the children to acquire an understanding of past and present. The children discuss the display of photographs with their parents and with the teaching staff.
- 79 The children enjoy their work and undertake tasks with good levels of concentration. They are able to select resources for themselves and share tools and equipment.
- 80 The quality of teaching is good. Teaching staff plan a broad range of experiences and provide interesting resources and activities to challenge the children including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The children are taught to handle tools and equipment with care. Good questioning skills and sensitive intervention enables children to develop skills and understanding. The lack of structured curriculum guidance for teachers linked to the progressive development of knowledge, skills and understandings is mostly compensated for by a wide range of good quality first-hand, practical experiences readily available to support the children's learning.

· **Physical Development**

- 81 Children's attainment in physical development is above age-related expectations and they make good progress towards the desirable outcomes for five year olds.
- 82 The attractive outdoor area provides good opportunities for the children to develop body control, co-ordination and confidence. Children show good control in directing balls at a target and they are confident in their use of space.
- 83 They pedal the wheeled toys around the track taking care not to bump into each other and showing skill in steering at speed and rapid stopping when the need arises. The large sandpit gives opportunities for digging and there is ample space for the development of skills such as running and jumping.
- 84 Children develop the skills of using tools such as scissors, glue spreaders and also writing and painting implements. They show good control in handling knives, rolling

pins and cutters. They handle construction kits carefully to make models and are able to put the pieces into interlocking puzzles. The children enter enthusiastically into physical activities with increasing confidence.

- 85 Teaching is good. The activities are well supported to develop children's confidence in physical challenges. Skills such as rolling a ball and aiming to knock down the skittles are taught well and the planning ensures that there are always plenty of teaching staff working both indoors and outdoors to meet the needs of the number of children who choose to work in each area. Staff ensure that children with special educational needs and children for whom English is an additional language have opportunities to take part fully in all physical activity.

· **Creative Development**

- 86 Good progress is made in creative development and most children are in line to exceed expectations by the time they are five. The children hear and participate in a range of well chosen stories to stimulate the imagination and they are able to make reflective responses. They develop skills using paint and other media expressing their ideas and feelings. They explore colour, shape and texture and join in singing games and rhymes with enjoyment. They are able to use percussion instruments and have opportunities to listen to music. The children are able to take on a role or character when playing in the role play area and demonstrate high levels of involvement.

- 87 The children undertake creative activity with enjoyment and sustained concentration. They display an increasing independence in their ability to choose their own materials, complete their work and tidy up the resources they have used.

- 88 The quality of teaching is good. The teaching staff encourage children to make choices, provide good quality accessible resources and use praise to motivate the children. All children take full part and have equal access and opportunities to enjoy all creative activities. Children with special educational needs have extra help where needed and care is taken to ensure that children with English as an additional language understand the tasks and the full range of opportunities.

· **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

· **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

- 89 The inspection team consisted of three inspectors who in a three day period, spent seven and a half inspector days in school. 13.66 hours were spent observing lessons or obtaining other direct information about children's attainment. Observations were made of 29 lessons or part lessons. Inspectors talked to children and observed them working and playing in the nursery to assess the extent of their knowledge and understanding of aspects of their learning. The arrival and departure of children was observed.

- 90 Care was taken, in the limited space of the nursery, not to allow the inspection to overburden the teaching staff or disturb the learning of the children.

- 91 Discussions were held with teaching and non-teaching staff and governors. This

involved inspectors in discussions with headteacher, teachers, nursery nurses and school support staff. Before and during the inspection inspectors analysed a full range of documentation provided by the school, scrutinised teachers' curriculum planning and a range of samples of the children's work.

Registers, teachers' records, children's individual records and reports were scrutinised. Individual education plans were inspected and arrangements for children with special needs discussed and observed in practice. Inspectors took note of the work on display in the school and the resources available at the accommodation and site.

- 92 Meetings were held with staff and governors before the inspection to explain and discuss the process. A meeting for parents was held prior to the inspection when parents gave their views and the team considered the 27 responses (16 per cent) to the parents' questionnaires. Parents were also seen during the inspection week as they brought their children to school or met them at the end of the day.

- **DATA AND INDICATORS**

- **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	180	0	7	0

- **Teachers and classes**

- **Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent): 5

Number of pupils per qualified teacher: 18

[Where applicable]

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

Total number of education support staff: 7

Total aggregate hours worked each week: 227.5

Average class size: 30

· **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998/99
	£
Total Income	14957
Total Expenditure	14957
Expenditure per pupil	166
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	0

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 180
 Number of questionnaires returned: 27

Responses (percentage of answers in each category)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	56	44	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	70	30	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	33	33	22	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	30	59	7	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	52	37	7	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	48	33	7	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	52	37	0	4	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	37	30	22	0	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	52	41	0	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	63	30	0	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	81	11	4	0	0

NB: Percentages of responses are rounded to nearest integer, summary may not = 100%

There were many instances where parents, in response to their questionnaires, left some questions unanswered.