

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Newtown Nursery School**  
Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique Reference Number: 103141

Headteacher: Mrs Margaret Fletcher

Reporting inspector: Mrs Margaret Heard  
16887

Dates of inspection: November 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706662

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

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## Information about the school

Type of school	Nursery
Type of control	Local Education Authority
Age range of pupils	3 to 4 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
School address	Newtown Nursery School Hockley Close Newtown Birmingham B19 2NS
Telephone number:	0121 359 2476
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Appropriate authority:	Birmingham LEA
Date of the previous inspection:	November 1996

**Information about the inspection team**

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs Margaret Heard Registered Inspector	Mathematics Personal and social development Knowledge and understanding of the world	Characteristics of the school Attainment and progress Quality of teaching Curriculum and assessment Leadership and management Efficiency Provision for children learning English as an additional language Equality of opportunity.
Mrs Janet Butler Lay inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Mrs Lillian Simmons	Language and literacy Creative learning Physical development	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing, learning resources and accommodation Special educational needs

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- All children, including those with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language, make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Their behaviour and their attitudes to learning are very good.
- The teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good.
- The school makes very good provision for the children's social and cultural development and fosters their moral and spiritual development well.
- The school gives high regard to the children's welfare and personal well-being.
- Staff teamwork is a significant strength. The headteacher gives very good leadership and manages the school very effectively.
- The children's learning is enriched through commendable links with the wider community.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. There are no significant weaknesses in the school.

**A few minor improvements are suggested in the main report and these will form the basis of the school's action plan, which will be sent to all parents and guardians of pupils at the school.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has successfully addressed the weaknesses pointed out in the last inspection in 1996. Good progress has been made in improving outdoor facilities. The teaching of physical skills is good. The 'Share-A-Story' scheme is working very well. It enables parents to play an important role in fostering their children's interest in books and in developing their early reading skills. The strengths identified in the last inspection have been maintained and the school continues to set appropriate priorities. The school has a very good capacity for continuing improvement.

### Standards

There are nationally recommended standards for children to reach by the age of five (The Desirable Learning Outcomes). The children make good progress during their year at the nursery school. Most children are likely to reach the desirable learning outcomes for personal and social development, physical and creative development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. In language and literacy, the children's listening skills are developing well, but a significant number of children are likely to need to continue to work towards these recommended learning goals after they reach the age of five. Although they make good, and sometimes very good progress, there is too much ground to make up during one year in the nursery school. In mathematics, most children are likely to be well on their way to meeting the prescribed learning goals by the time they are five years old. Their skill in using mathematical language to solve practical problems is less well advanced. This is because many children start school with limited experience of talking about numbers and measures, and in spite of effective teaching, there is not enough time for them to catch up.

### Quality of teaching

<b>Teaching in areas of learning</b>	
Personal and social development	Very good.
Language and literacy	Good overall, and sometimes very good.
Mathematics	Overall satisfactory, with some examples of good teaching.
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Good.
Physical development	Good.

Creative development	Good overall, and sometimes very good.
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Overall, the teaching seen during the inspection was never less than satisfactory and frequently good or better. In 78 per cent of the lessons, the teaching was good or better, and in 25 per cent of the lessons the teaching was very good or better. In music (creative area of learning) and in cooking (knowledge and understanding of the world), there was some excellent teaching. The nursery nurses and the teachers work together very effectively. They know the children very well, and ensure that their teaching matches the children's needs. As a result, the children make good progress.

*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. The children are developing self-control and learning to show consideration for others.
Attendance	Satisfactory.
Ethos*	Excellent. There is a strong commitment to fostering the children's self-esteem and enabling them to do their best. Relationships are very good.
Leadership and management	Very good. The school runs smoothly; the headteacher is a very effective leader. Staff teamwork is commendable.
Curriculum	Very good. The nursery provides a wealth of stimulating and purposeful activities. Assessment procedures and practice are good.
Children with special educational needs	There are good procedures for identifying children with special needs and for ensuring that the children are well supported and make good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The school is particularly successful in fostering the children's social and cultural development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good. The staff is very experienced in working with young children. A high priority is given to continued staff training and professional development. The accommodation and resources are used very effectively.
Value for money	Very good.

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

### The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
II. The school enables the children to achieve a high standard of work and behaviour. III. The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children. IV. They have a clear understanding of what is taught. V. They are well informed about the progress their children are making. VI. Their children like school. VII. The whole family is made to feel welcome and encouraged to play an active part in the school.	VIII. The cost of the mid-morning snacks is too  IX. The induction period when the children first start

In general, the parents are very supportive of the school and are very pleased with the education that it provides. The inspection team fully endorses this view. The issue about the high cost of the mid-morning snack arises because the title of the fund is confusing. The money collected to cover the cost of food, and voluntary donations from parents, to provide extra equipment, and to subsidise school visits, is part of the same fund. The school has been advised to separate these funds, and to continue

to provide regular information for parents about the ways in which the children are benefiting from the educational visits and additional resources. The induction arrangements are good. The children settle quickly and rapidly gain in confidence. The school is responsive to the particular needs of families and has made special arrangements by request, so long as this is deemed to be in the child's best interests.

### **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

There are no significant weaknesses in the school and no major key issues for action.

The headteacher and staff should continue to maintain the present high quality educational provision, by implementing the priorities set out in the school development plan. In addition, the following minor weaknesses should be addressed;

1. Continue to monitor the impact of the policy to improve punctuality and make sure that children who arrive late do not miss the vital introduction to the day's activities. (paragraph 58)
2. Provide more space in the classroom book corners so that the children can sit and browse through the books in comfort. (paragraph 97)
3. Separate the 'snack fund' and the parents' voluntary donations, so that the parents fully understand what they are helping to provide, and can be reassured that the mid-morning snack represents reasonable value for money. (paragraph 62)
4. Provide training for the mid-day supervisors and the play-leader on how to support the children's recreational play more effectively. (paragraph 74)



## INTRODUCTION

### Characteristics of the school

1. Newtown Nursery is a local authority school for children between the ages of three years and four years and eleven months. There are 60 full-time places. The current number of children on roll is 60, comprising 34 boys and 26 girls. The children are admitted in September following their third birthday. All children have a minimum of three terms of nursery education.
  2. The school is close to Birmingham City Centre and is situated in the district of Newtown. A programme of extensive renovation and urban renewal has recently been completed in the area. Unemployment in the area is well above the national average. The children who attend the nursery school come from a range of cultural, social and economic backgrounds, with many parents on income support or low income. Fifty-six per cent are known to be eligible for free school meals.
  3. About half of the children currently attending the school have been to playgroups or day nurseries prior to starting at Newtown Nursery. Five children are on the school's register of special educational need and there are no children with Statements of Special Need at the present time. The majority of the children are from ethnic minority groups and about half of the families have dual-heritage. Five children come from homes where English is not the first language and receive additional support through the local authority's Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). The school belongs to an Education Action Zone within the immediate community.
  4. When children first start at the nursery school, there is a wide variation in their general readiness and in their knowledge, skills and understanding. The attainment levels of many of the children are below what would generally be expected of three-year-olds nationally. This is particularly so in aspects of their personal and social development, language and literacy and early mathematics.
1. The school aims to :
    - provide an environment where the children and their families are valued;
    - enable all children to grow in self-confidence and self-esteem, to enjoy learning and to make new friends;
    - provide a broad, relevant and meaningful curriculum through structured play experiences, which prepares the children for the next stage in their education.
  1. The school's current priorities include : -
    - improving provision for information and communication technology (ICT);
    - completion of a long-term project to improve outdoor facilities;
    - supporting the needs of minority groups to enable all children to achieve their full potential;
    - providing educational workshops for parents.
  7. The inspection was undertaken mid-way through the Autumn term. The children had been in school for about eight weeks. One third of the families have older children who attended Newtown Nursery School during the last three years and are familiar with the routines and expectations.

## Key indicators

- **Attendance**

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

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- **Exclusions**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:	Fixed period	Number
	Permanent	0

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	26
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. When the children first start at Newtown Nursery School at the age of three, their attainment is below what would normally be expected of this age group. Many of the children have poorly developed oral language skills, well below the average for children of this age. They have had little experience of early mathematics. For example, only a few children can name colours, and their knowledge of numbers and their use in day-to-day life is very limited. A significant percentage of the children have poorly developed personal and social skills. During the year that they spend in the nursery, the children make good progress overall, and very good progress in their personal and social development, and in learning to listen and to carry out simple instructions.
9. Overall, attainment is satisfactory, and by the time they reach the age of five, the majority of the children will attain the Desirable Learning Outcomes for personal and social development, physical and creative development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Most children will be well on the way to meeting the recommended learning outcomes for mathematics, but some children will still need additional support in using mathematical language to solve simple problems. This is because they begin nursery at a low starting level and there is not enough time during the one year that the children spend in the nursery to fully make up the lost ground. In language and literacy, a small group of the children is likely to attain the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are five, but the majority will still need to continue working towards these goals. In spite of effective teaching and the good progress that the children make in acquiring language and literacy skills in the nursery school, there is not enough time for them to catch up.
1. The children with special needs are making good progress in working towards the targets in their individual education plans (IEPs). They are well supported and the staff keeps a close watch on their development. Similarly, the small group of children who are learning English as an additional language receive effective support, and make good gains in their learning. They receive some specialist teaching in a small group and this is beneficial in creating a secure setting for them.
11. Many children make rapid gains in their personal and social development during the first few weeks in the nursery, and the rate of progress over the whole year is very good. The children behave very well, respond positively to the adults and relate well to one another. They understand the need to share and to take turns, treating the equipment with care, and readily tidying up at the end of the sessions, making sure everything is back in its correct place. The children quickly settle to the routines and adhere to the simple rules of the nursery. They are secure and confident, develop high self-esteem and are not afraid to express their feelings.
12. Language and literacy are given a high priority across the curriculum. The children listen attentively to their teachers in small and large groups. They thoroughly enjoy joining in role-play, but their lack of well-developed expressive language skills sometimes holds them back from communicating fully with others. The children enjoy listening to stories and looking at books with an adult, but they do not readily choose to spend their time in this way. Many are able to recognise their own names and a few are making reasonable attempts to write their own names on their work. The children confidently experiment with writing, making their own marks and symbols on paper, and some children are beginning to make recognisable letter-shapes.

13. In mathematics, most children are well on the way to meeting the recommended national standards by the time they are five. They make good progress. They recite numbers confidently and are becoming more accurate in counting sets of objects. They match, sort and classify by colour, shape and size, and enjoy singing number songs and rhymes. They can make simple patterns using colours and shapes. Some children are beginning to make comparisons between the size and capacity of containers when they play with water, but for many children, their experience in using mathematical language to solve simple problems is at an early stage of development.
14. The children make good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world. Most children are likely to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are five years old. The children enjoy a broad range of interesting and exciting experiences to develop their curiosity and understanding of the wider world. They have a good understanding of babies and health care as they play in the home-corner, and they are grasping the significance of important rites of passage in human life, such as naming ceremonies, birthdays and starting school. The children construct simple models, explore a variety of man-made objects using magnets and observe changes to foods when cooking. They have a strong fascination with animals, fostered by educational visits and their own explorations of mini-beasts in the garden. Computers are used competently to practise matching skills, and to create their own pictures.
15. By the age of five, the majority of the children will attain standards in their physical development expected of five-year-olds nationally. In the outdoor sessions observed, the children moved around confidently on wheeled toys, steering them with appropriately developing control. Their fine manipulative skills are developing steadily as they gain mastery in handling small apparatus, such as brushes, pencils and modelling tools. Their progress during the year in the nursery is good.
16. In the creative area of learning, the children make good progress. Most children are likely to meet the desirable learning outcomes by the time they are five years old. They use their imagination through the good quality role-play provision, and make good use of puppets to support their expressive language development. They explore a wide variety of art and craft materials, gaining confidence in making choices and refining their drawing and painting skills. They enjoy singing and listening to music, and they take delight in playing the percussion instruments, and in creating their own music.

#### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

17. The parents value the way their children have become more sociable and amenable since attending Newtown Nursery and say that the children enjoy coming to school. This inspection confirmed that the standards of behaviour, attitudes to learning, relationships and personal development of the children continue to be a strength.
18. The children are very keen to learn, frequently showing fascination at new discoveries, like the fact that everyone has a birth certificate, which was the focus of a session about important events in their lives. They are full of enthusiasm for the range of activities on offer. They maintain concentration for long periods, are absorbed in their chosen activities, and persevere with quite challenging tasks, such as, mastering the different fastenings on baby clothes, and making models by fixing together plastic panels with nuts and bolts.
19. The children are making rapid progress in learning to do essential things for themselves, like putting on their own coats and clearing away plates and cutlery at lunch times. They make informed choices when selecting their own resources, for example choosing light materials to decorate kites so that they will successfully fly. They show pride in their work, particularly when they succeed in mastering new skills, such as copying numerals and weaving with paper.

21. The behaviour in the classrooms and at playtime is very good. Considering their short time in the nursery, and the very young age of some of the children, they conform well and help to create an orderly environment. They listen well, are learning to take turns and to share resources, and many are beginning to play together co-operatively. Some children are making good progress in managing minor disagreements and are beginning to amicably negotiate for turns when using wheeled toys outdoors, for example. For others, the supportive approach of the staff helps them to modify their behaviour successfully, as they learn about how to play fairly with one another.
1. Throughout the nursery, relationships are consistently very good. The children, who come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, play and work together harmoniously. The sense of care and value for all pervades the way the staff and the children relate to one another. The children are learning to understand and to appreciate the feelings, beliefs and values of others.
23. Overall, the children are on target to meet the recommended standards for their personal development. Many of them have made rapid progress in this area over a matter of a few weeks. They often offer to help, and they assist in clearing away after an activity. The children are learning to become independent in areas of personal hygiene. When given the responsibility of acting as monitors, they carry out their little duties, such as telling the cook when their group is ready to be served with pudding, with great pride. The children file their own work to take home, and are gradually encouraged to become selective in these decisions.
24. The children are generally confident, secure and happy in their recreational activities during outdoor play. For some children, underdeveloped language skills prevent them from entering fully into some social situations, although most are willing to try. Those who are learning English as an additional language are making swift gains in confidence and developing special friendships with others. The small group of children with identified special needs is closely supported and is making good progress in learning how to behave in the nursery and in coming to terms with what is expected of them.

### **Attendance**

25. Records of attendance continue to be satisfactory, with no serious concerns about persistent or regular absenteeism. Parents generally inform the school of reasons for absence and appreciate the need for regular attendance, as well as for good punctuality. They welcome the flexibility of the ten minutes before registration to allow for problems with transport, especially when other older children have to be taken to schools some distance away as a first priority.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **Teaching**

26. The quality of the teaching observed during the inspection was consistently good overall. In one in four of the lessons, the teaching was very good and occasionally excellent. In the other lessons seen, just over three-quarters of the teaching was good and the rest was sound.
27. A great strength of the school is the way that the staff works as a very well-organised and supportive team. The adults plan together to provide a wide range of stimulating activities that accurately match the children's needs and attainment levels. The staff has adapted very well to the recent organisational change of age-based class groupings. All the children are benefiting, because the system enables the small teams of staff in each room to adapt the organisation of the sessions, and the content and delivery of

the planned activities, to meet the different needs of the very young three year olds and the rising fours. At all times, the adults present good role models for the children. Relationships between the staff and the children are very good.

28. The teachers and the nursery nurses have a very well-developed understanding of the needs of these young children, and this is reflected in the very good design of the curriculum. The staff's knowledge of the areas of learning, and their expertise in planning suitable activities that will foster all aspects of the children's development, are strong features that underpin the good, and often very good teaching.
29. The quality of the lesson planning is very good. The adults know exactly what they want the children to learn and experience from each activity, and take considerable care to adapt their teaching to the needs of the different groups of children. They are well able to do this because they know the children well, and make effective use of assessment information when planning, and as they are teaching the children. For example, they often observe the children carefully, noting what they can do. When they pose questions of individuals, they use this knowledge to make greater demands on the children who already have a basic understanding of the task, in order to encourage them to think more deeply. For those children who are still unsure, for instance when naming colours or shapes, the adults begin by asking simple questions. They know the child will be able to manage these, and having quickly gained the child's confidence, they forge ahead as far as the child is able to go, praising effort and gently supporting the learning.
30. The preparation for each lesson is meticulous. The rooms are set out attractively and the activities invite the children's curiosity, so that they want to get involved as soon as they arrive. There is a well-established expectation that the children will spend an appropriate amount of time at one activity before moving on. The staff keenly reinforces this, by working directly with the children and by sensitive, but firm reminders and requests, when the children are choosing activities for themselves. As a result of these high expectations, the children concentrate very well and often become deeply absorbed in learning. One member of the staff in each room is the 'classroom manager' for a session. A key feature of this role is to join in the children's own play and to extend their learning. The adults perform this role very well. They use an appropriate mixture of direct teaching, for example showing the children how to fix together components of a construction kit, and offer gentle support for the less confident, so that they are encouraged to try out new activities. They also play alongside the children, opening up new possibilities. For example, children in the home corner were asked if they would mind doing some shopping, and then the teacher helped them to make a list.
31. The teaching time is used very effectively to provide opportunities for the children to work together in small and large groups, and to work directly with an adult. The nursery routines are very well established and good training is given when the children first start at the school. This has a positive effect and enables each part of the session to start promptly. The resources are all well organised and the children are taught to put everything back in its rightful place. The children are very well managed at all times.
32. During the inspection, there were a few occasions when the staff missed opportunities to develop the children's mathematical understanding, for example when the children were finding clothes to fit differently sized dolls. Sometimes, the story sessions specifically for the children who are learning English as an additional language go on for too long, so that some become restless. However, these weaknesses are far out-weighted by the good features of the teaching.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

33. The curriculum is very well designed and is a strength of the school. The children have access to a wealth of high quality learning experiences across all the

recommended areas of learning for the under-fives. The nationally agreed goals for three to five year olds (The Desirable Learning Outcomes) are carefully interwoven into the school's curriculum, and very good attention is given to every aspect of the children's development. The children's emotional well-being and their intellectual, physical and social needs are carefully fostered by the way that the curriculum is planned and taught. Good attention is given to laying firm foundations to begin the National Curriculum in primary schools.

34. The school is very successful in putting its curriculum aims into practice. Very good attention is given to promoting early literacy and numeracy skills. A strong emphasis is placed on valuing the unique qualities of each child, and fostering self-esteem. The planned activities are available to all pupils, and through careful monitoring, the staff ensures that each child accesses the full range of educational experiences that the school provides.
35. The nursery curriculum provides a very well balanced and broadly based learning programme throughout the year. The carefully chosen themes for topic work incorporate celebrations of major festivals from a variety of cultures and stimulating educational visits. For example, the theme 'Something Special' has a strong focus on the recent past, with the children bringing in photographs, clothing and toys they had as babies. Opportunities to observe a baby being bathed and fed, and to compare baby cereals and breakfast foods that the children now enjoy, adds to their developing understanding. This learning is used as the introduction to thinking more deeply about significant celebrations in people's lives, such as naming ceremonies and birthdays. The children are introduced to ways in which people celebrate Diwali and Christmas, extending their awareness beyond themselves.
36. The long-term curriculum plan includes high quality guidance on the ways in which the children will be introduced to more complex equipment and tasks during their time at the nursery school, and maps out precisely how the staff will build on the children's prior learning.
37. Weekly and daily plans are very good. They show exactly what the children will be learning from each activity and how this will be adapted for children with special needs, and for those who are learning English as an additional language. Good attention is paid to previous assessments of the children so that they are learning at the right level. All of the children are able to work directly with an adult and are given time to initiate their own play. This balance in provision is very effective. Careful checks are made by monitoring the children's choices, and on their participation in the adult-led activities. This ensures that each child accesses the full range of available activities. The provision for children with special educational needs, and for the small group which is learning English as an additional language, is good.
38. A particularly noteworthy feature of the daily planning is the attention given to ensuring that each activity is meaningful to the children. For example, following the visit of the baby, the children washed and dressed the dolls, fed and cared for them in the home corner, painted pictures of 'Baby Darnell' and made bibs and cards for him. They are immersed in carefully selected activities that help them to make sense of their learning.
39. In the previous inspection in 1996, a weakness was identified in the quality of the planning for outdoor activities. This has been fully addressed. The staff plans a progressive series of activities to develop the children's physical skills during the year. The high quality planning for the physical area of learning is having a noticeable impact on the progress that the children are making.
40. The organisation of the children into two age-related classes is a recent development. It is working effectively because the staff skilfully adapts the whole-school planning to meet the needs of each class, so that there is a good match. As a result, each

group of children is making good progress. The daily organisation of the sessions also includes time for a specially trained adult to work with the small group of children who are learning English as an additional language. This works well and provides a valuable opportunity for the children to revisit stories introduced to the whole class.

41. There are very good procedures for assessing the children's attainment, and for tracking their progress. The teachers and nursery nurses are skilled observers and make succinct and valuable notes about each child. This information is used well to plan the day's activities and to tailor the teaching to meet the needs of each individual child.
42. The parents are fully involved in building up a picture of their child's achievements and needs when they first start school. Detailed records show when the children acquire key skills and provide a clear picture of their progress in working towards the desirable outcomes. Samples of the children's work are succinctly annotated to show how well they are learning, and to highlight areas where they need further practice. The children file their own work and use photographic records to look back on their time at the nursery. In this way, the school makes effective use of assessment information to encourage the children to talk about their work and to share their achievements with others. The information passed on to primary schools provides a very clear indication of each child's strengths and areas for development.
43. The children with special educational needs are well supported because there are very secure systems in place for the early identification of any problems. The arrangement of 'family grouping' means that one member of the staff takes a personal interest in the child and forms a close relationship with the family. The children's individual education plans set clear targets, and each small step of progress is noted.
44. The school carries out a comprehensive assessment of oral language skills for the children who are learning English as an additional language, and for those with dual-heritage. This information is used very effectively to organise the teaching time for small groups of children with similar linguistic needs, and to track their progress.
1. The school has maintained the high quality of its assessment arrangements since the last inspection and this aspect of its work continues to be a significant strength.

#### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

46. The school has maintained the very effective provision for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which was reported in the last inspection. The provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is good, and for social and cultural development it is very good.
47. The teachers plan meaningful opportunities for spiritual development, by caring for the environment and appreciating the beauty of nature. The provision out of doors has been a focus for development, and the wild garden attracts insects, butterflies and birds that contribute to the study of minibests. The children's artwork illustrates the wonder and pleasure of their observations. The full programme of visits to a farm and the Cannon Hill Nature Centre, for example, extend the children's learning and provide stimulating first-hand experience and good opportunities for the children to express their feelings. The videotaped record of the children sharing the experience of watching and touching exotic animals brought into school by the "Animal Man" shows the range of emotional reactions which help to develop their spirituality. Stories, including some from the Bible, major religious festivals and objects of beauty are used to encourage quiet reflection. Spontaneous incidents are exploited well by the teachers to support and extend the carefully planned learning programme. Children finding a slug in the play area outside, and others watching water swirl down the plugholes and disappear into a drain, were encouraged to feel awe and wonder in response to their experiences of the natural world.



48. Moral development is fostered well. The children are gaining a clear idea of the difference between right and wrong by the everyday guidance they are given. Good professional support between all of the adults offers role models of a stable morality. Ideas of fairness and sharing are developed carefully and the children are encouraged to resolve minor disputes by amicable negotiation.
49. Socially, the children are self-controlled and self-reliant, and this aspect of their development is very good. They help each other as a matter of routine and the older ones rarely complain about each other or demand adult assistance to solve small differences. Activities that promote social cohesion are planned as part of the curriculum and there is strong emphasis on sharing, and showing courtesy towards others. The parents particularly appreciate this expectation of good manners and behaviour. The family organisation at lunchtimes is an important focal point for social training and reinforcing acceptable social behaviour. The well-chosen resources for imaginative play areas set up in the nursery are used effectively to further develop the children's social skills.
50. The home areas, shops, hospital, office and hairdressing salon all contribute in helping the children to co-operate with each other, to develop their speaking and communication skills and to identify with the different roles in society. During the inspection, visiting mothers with their babies were received with fascinated interest and baby bathing became a natural part of the children's role-play. The children's social development is extended into the community by close involvement with grandparents, senior citizens and many regular visitors to the school.
51. Cultural development is of a high quality and it is very well planned through the curriculum. A wide range of educational visits extends the children's experiences of many cultures. Artists from a steel band, painters, sculptors and musicians from the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra have worked with the children to share their talents. There are regular opportunities for the children to listen to music and to dress up in appropriate costumes from different cultures. The staff sensitively addresses issues of race and gender and there is an ambience of racial harmony. Different ethnic lifestyles are introduced and celebrated. The highly successful African-Caribbean project has raised the self-esteem of the pupils, and the school's work in fostering cultural awareness is having a positive effect on the school and the local community.

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

52. Since the last inspection the nursery school has continued to make very good provision for the children's welfare and guidance. At the time of the last inspection, the arrangements for lunch-time supervision were being reviewed. There are now more adults supervising the children, but the school needs to provide training for the lunch-time staff and the recently appointed play-leader, to enable them to purposefully support the children's own play.
53. The procedures for monitoring and guiding personal development are based on a regular, systematic approach to assessment, which begins with parental involvement during the child's induction into the nursery. A sensitive, flexible approach to settling in at the beginning of the year has been developed for the benefit of the child. Due consideration is given to parental requests within a fair and equitable framework.
54. The age-based classes enable the staff to provide carefully tailored guidance, allowing for a variety of approaches in teaching styles to suit the maturity of the children.
55. The arrangements for assessing and monitoring the children's progress in all the areas of learning are very good, and allow well for individual needs. All the staff know and understand the children well, and the family group system provides very effective support,

as well as ensuring close and detailed contact with families. There is a very strong emphasis on raising the children's self-esteem. The provision for the children with special educational needs, and for those learning English as an additional language, is good.

1. The children are well-prepared for the next stage of schooling, and a smooth transition is assisted by the passing-on of thorough assessment information to the receiving schools.
57. The measures to promote discipline and good behaviour are very effective. There is a culture of high expectations. Good behaviour is reinforced by praise, merit stickers and the good role models of the adults, who consistently demonstrate and reinforce good manners. The system of age-based classroom grouping has a positive impact on behaviour. The staff has been able to use different approaches best suited to the age range to help modify the behaviour of the younger children in the green room.
58. The school's procedures for promoting good attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. The parents understand and support the school's policy of providing a smooth, uninterrupted start to the day. However, for the children who arrive between 9.10am. and 9.25am, the policy of preventing access to the planning session requires careful monitoring to avoid a detrimental impact on some individuals. The school recognises this and negotiates special arrangements for families with unavoidable problems.
59. The welfare, health and safety of the children are a major priority for all the adults working in the nursery. Very good provision is made in this area. Child protection procedures are thorough, the headteacher is the designated person with responsibility for this area, and local area guidelines are followed. The children are taught about personal safety, both on a daily basis through good practice in the classroom, and through termly topics using the 'Kidscape' resources. All the staff have had first aid training which is updated regularly.

#### **Partnership with parents and the community**

60. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the already mutually supportive partnership with parents and the community, which has resulted in significant benefits for the children.
61. Communication with parents is generally effective, with some very good features, and very few areas where further clarification is necessary. The quality of the school brochure and the induction information is very good, well presented and easy to read. The school brochure now has a clear statement of aims and a well-illustrated behavioural code. It is supplemented by a series of workshop-style meetings, at which parents learn about the early years' curriculum and how to support their children's learning. Other information, including newsletters, verbal comments to parents when collecting their children, and the annual written reports of the children's progress, is of good quality.
62. Although the school accounts carefully for the spending of the voluntary snack fund money on refreshment and educational provision, the title of the fund is misleading and causes some confusion for parents.
63. The parents' involvement in their children's learning is generally good. The home-school library provision has been significantly improved by the introduction of the 'Share-a-Story' scheme. This has increased the opportunities for the parents to support their children. They read books together regularly at home and comment on their children's attitudes to books, and their interest in particular stories. As the year progresses, the parents make effective use of this information, alongside the training they receive from the staff on how to help with the development of early reading skills, to choose suitable books.
1. The parents also attend special events at the school and strongly support the school's aims. When special topics are advertised, the parents provide all the necessary resources to

enable their children to have a personal input into the curriculum. This was evident during the inspection when children showed their groups a toy or a photo that was special to them.

A parents' support group is co-ordinated through funding raised by the school to improve the level of confidence in educational prospects in the community. This initiative makes a very worthwhile contribution to family well being.

65. The enrichment of the curriculum through effective and wide-reaching community links is excellent. This is illustrated at several levels involving the community's appreciation of the nursery, the rich mixture of learning experiences enjoyed by the children, and the opportunities for the staff to interact with the commercial life of the city.
66. Through local advertising, the provision of 'Stay and Play' sessions, a pre-school playgroup and parent support workshops in the community building on the premises, the smooth introduction of local children to the nursery is assured. This is enhanced by the contact with senior citizens, made possible by the school's provision of a monthly luncheon club, efficiently managed and led by the deputy head.
67. A wide variety of visits and visitors provides the children with a multi-cultural, multi-faceted first-hand experience of many aspects of the world around them. Noteworthy examples from an exhaustive list include the Chinese New Year, Asian cookery for Diwali, African-Caribbean music and dance, hands-on sessions where children can handle unusual animals, and professional percussionist accompaniment to story time. These events are all in addition to the regular visits to local shops, libraries and garden centre. Good use is made of spontaneous happenings in the locality, such as watching heavy machinery at work on a building site.
68. The education and business partnership has provided work placements for all the staff in a variety of locations, many of which have resulted in enriching experiences for the children too. One of these has been the association with a local employment trust, which has worked alongside the children in aspects of woodworking and garden design. The trust is currently building the new climbing apparatus at the school.

## **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Leadership and management**

69. The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher values the skills and expertise of her staff and enables them to play a full part in the development and evaluation of the school's work. The staff teamwork is commendable and this success is under-pinned by the special talents of the headteacher, who perceptively identifies and builds on the strengths of her staff, and opens-up opportunities for their continuing professional development. The deputy head carries out his responsibilities well and makes a particularly effective contribution to the school's work in the community.
70. The staff successfully meets the wholly appropriate aims of the school, through hard work and a strong commitment to high standards. There is an excellent ethos. A warm, caring atmosphere and a culture where every family is valued and the children are encouraged to do their best, are characteristics of the school. The parents accurately describe the school as a place 'where everyone is welcome, and you never stop learning something new.'
71. In the last inspection, the school development plan was judged to be unwieldy. Considerable improvements have been made to its format and the plan is now a very useful management tool. The school's priorities are clearly determined in consultation with the management committee and with parents. There is an effective balance between the introduction of relevant new initiatives, and procedures to ensure that the school's

strengths are maintained. Each development is properly costed, and there is a clear plan of what needs to be done, who will lead the work, and how it will be monitored and evaluated.

The headteacher systematically analyses how well the school is doing at every level. The progress and achievement of the children are regularly checked and discussed with the staff. The teaching quality is frequently assessed, good practice is shared, and any weaknesses are given effective support to bring about improvement. The school demonstrates that it can sustain its strengths and effectively manage improvements.

72. The headteacher makes a significant contribution to the work of the local Education Action Zone. She makes strong representation on behalf on the under-fives and plays a key role in local projects. The school's involvement in raising the achievement of African-Caribbean pupils is having a very positive impact on the confidence and self-esteem of parents and their children. The school's own policies, aims and values are successfully implemented. There is a well-ordered and stimulating environment for learning for all of the children. They love coming to school and make good and sometimes very good progress in this well-organised nursery. The school makes a very good contribution to the overall quality of their life and development.

### **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

73. The teaching staff and the nursery nurses are all suitably trained and experienced. They work together very well as a team and each person's roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. This strength in teamwork, in which everyone plays a full part and supports each other in fulfilling the aims of the school, has an important beneficial effect on the standards achieved.

74. The teaching staff is well supported by the administrative assistant, caretaker and lunch-time staff, who make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school. All the teaching staff attend training courses regularly, including the school secretary, and their work has benefited from this aspect of staff development, both in relation to teaching and administration. However, the mid-day supervisors have not had any recent training in organising purposeful play activities. One of the part-time nursery nurses has gained a further qualification that allows her to teach nursery nursing students in college one day each week. This enhances her teaching role and benefits the whole nursery. Another nursery nurse runs an 'after school club' and organises a summer holiday play scheme, forming another useful link between the outside community and the nursery. The deputy headteacher plays a pivotal role in managing the Community Centre within the school grounds. There are satisfactory procedures for staff appraisal and for the induction of new staff and occasional teachers.

1. The standard of accommodation is good overall. Indoors, the larger teaching areas are functional although not over-spacious, and other areas such as, the library and staff room, are used well for group work, special needs tuition and activities such as music. There is sufficient storage facility and the school's resources are well ordered.

76. The displays of the children's work create an attractive learning environment. The spacious entrance hall is welcoming and captures the ethos of the school as a caring family community, catering for a variety of different cultures. The school library is spacious and comfortable, but the class reading areas are cramped and not sufficiently inviting as places to browse and relax. The covered soft play area is very useful for physical development. The outdoor areas are well designed and offer opportunities for relaxation, exercise and enjoyment. There is provision for a good range of learning activities with safety surfaces for climbing apparatus, a well-drained hard surface, usefully painted with directional lines and activities, a wild garden and well-guarded pond area. The log cabin is a particularly attractive and useful play facility, but the lack of a paved path from the playground restricts its use when the grass is wet.

77. The school is very well resourced for all the areas of learning. The equipment is appropriate to the age range, carefully organised and accessible to staff and children. Books are plentiful, in mainly good condition and well displayed. The story books with matching puppets add significantly to reading enjoyment and are promoting literacy. Information technology is well provided for with good resources including up-to-date computers, appropriate software, television, video and audio equipment. The children delight in using the digital camera to capture each other at work in the nursery. The resources are clearly labelled to help the children to return things to their rightful places when clearing away.

### **The efficiency of the school**

78. The school has a partially delegated budget. The staffing costs are held centrally by the local education authority. Financial planning is very good and there are secure procedures for financial control. The few minor recommendations in the recent audit report have been fully actioned.
79. The administrative arrangements run smoothly and there are very good organisational procedures and efficient routines. The administrative assistant makes a strong contribution to the school's ethos and general orderliness. She greets parents and visitors warmly, undertakes training in the welfare of young children and carries out her administrative duties efficiently and effectively.
80. The school makes very good use of the skills and expertise of all of the staff who are deployed very effectively. The learning resources are used imaginatively and purposefully to stimulate the children's curiosity and to encourage them to ask questions and to experiment independently of an adult. Every able space is used successfully as a teaching area. Of particular note is the well-stocked library that is used by groups of children and which also provides a loan service to families. The outside area has been thoughtfully and imaginatively developed to foster learning across the curriculum.
81. The management support group is well informed and makes a good contribution to the school's work by supporting new initiatives and improving community access to the facilities.
82. The children make consistently good progress in their learning and very good gains in their personal and social development. They start school with below average attainment and many have poorly developed oral language skills. By the time they move to primary school, most children have met, or are well on their way to meeting the Desirable Learning Outcomes. In view of their good progress, the very effective use made of the school's resources, staff and accommodation and the school's capacity to sustain its strengths and to manage improvement, it provides very good value for money.

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

### **75. AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

#### **Personal and social development**

83. The majority of the children are well on target to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they reach the age of five. They are making very good progress in this area of learning. Most children have made rapid gains in confidence during the short time that they have been at the school. They relate well to the teachers and to the nursery nurses, and they are beginning to establish friendships with their peers.
84. The children have made very good progress in settling in to school and in learning the routines. They show good levels of concentration and remain at their chosen

activities for quite considerable periods of time. Some children become deeply absorbed in their play, for example when bathing and dressing the dolls and when making patterns with wooden pegs. Most of the children will persevere in order to complete a task, such as fixing together pieces of plastic with nuts and bolts and completing jigsaw puzzles. Some of the children are determinedly independent when dressing for outdoor play and beam with pride when they manage the fastenings on their coats all by themselves.

85. The small group of children who are learning English as an additional language are making very good progress in their personal and social development. They feel secure in the nursery and are gaining in confidence. At the start of the inspection, some of the children were reluctant to join in the play outdoors. However, in the space of three days, their confidence had blossomed and they had enormous fun joining in an imaginary 'rocket-ride' with some of their peers.
86. The children with special educational needs are making good progress in their personal and social development. The staff is skilled at identifying the children's needs and give sensitive support and encouragement. The children's progress towards the targets in their individual education plans is very closely monitored and the plans are adapted quickly in response to any changes that the staff observes.
87. The children are eager to learn new things and have very good attitudes; they listen carefully to the adults and pay good attention to instructions. When a parent brought her baby into school, there was initially a hushed sense of wonderment. The children observed and listened intently as the parent explained and demonstrated feeding routines. Afterwards, the children broke into animated and excited chatter, eager to share the experience with each other.
88. Selecting equipment, making plans and choosing activities are well-established procedures that the children carry out confidently and sensibly. For example, they were discerning in their choice of collage materials when making kites, because they had experimented the previous day with their teacher, and discovered the importance of weight. As a result of this teaching, the children thought carefully and continued to experiment before making their choices.
89. Sharing and turn taking are developing well. This is because the adults reinforce these skills throughout the day and set clear expectations of social behaviour. Sometimes, the adults deliberately limit the range of resources to encourage the children to negotiate for a turn. This was particularly successful in an art activity where only one pair of scissors was available. Many children made polite requests to use the scissors, and some began to help one another with the cutting task.
90. The children are developing a secure understanding of right and wrong, because the staff constantly reinforces the same expectations. Carefully selected stories, linked to the theme 'Something Special', were used very effectively to elicit responses from the children, so that for instance, when a child in one of the stories treated her toys roughly, there were gasps of horror and expressions of disgust.
91. The children have lots of opportunities to express their feelings. They drew pictures showing how the mum and dad in the story felt when their children misbehaved; they mimed facial expressions and rehearsed what the parents might have said. In the home corner, they tenderly cuddled the dolls, and outdoors they carefully collected leaves and blades of grass to use as food in their imaginative play.
92. The development of the children's personal and social skills is given a very high priority in the nursery. The teaching is very good overall. Notable teaching strengths are the high expectations and consistent approach adopted by all of the staff. Underpinning this is a sense of warmth and sensitivity and good role modelling. The adults know the

children very well and make good use of this information to provide effective support for each child. The staff is always mindful of reinforcing good personal and social skills, whatever the learning activity and through every aspect of school life. Praise is used judiciously, so that the children understand the need to work hard at something in order to gain recognition. The cultural heritage of all the pupils is valued and celebrated. It is at the heart of the school's ethos, and nurtures the children's self-esteem.

### **Language and literacy**

93. When the children first begin at the nursery, only a small number is reasonably articulate. For the majority, their expressive language and articulation skills are well below average for this age group and many need additional support with language. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The group of children who enter the nursery with little understanding of English receive effective additional support and make good progress, particularly in their use of English.
94. In language and literacy the children's listening skills are developing appropriately, but a significant number of children are likely to need further experiences and teaching to enable them to reach the Desirable Learning Outcomes when they start statutory schooling. Although the majority of the children make good progress, and a few make very good progress, there is too much ground to make up during the year in the nursery, and many children need further consolidation and teaching before starting on the National Curriculum in the primary school.
95. The children learn to listen well in both small and larger groups. The good provision of resources for imaginative play helps to promote listening and speaking skills. Good quality dressing up clothes enhance role-play, and an excellent variety of puppets encourages the more reticent children to speak aloud and to act out their thoughts and feelings through an intermediary. The good range of play equipment stimulates the children's imagination. Sufficient changes are made to the indoor role-play provision to maintain children's interest and sustain their use. The children are not yet confident enough to perform for others in role-play, drama and puppetry, unless they are guided and well supported by an adult.
96. The nursery has made great efforts to extend the library provision. A key issue in the previous inspection report was that the school should provide a home-school library system, and this has been fully implemented. There is now a very good range of books available in the library and the "Share-a-story" scheme is well supported by parents, who share the books chosen by their children, and evaluate their enjoyment of them using 'stick-on faces' affixed to the child's reading record card. This lending scheme is successful in allowing the parents to support their children's progress in reading.
97. All of the children have a good attitude and enjoy listening to stories and sharing books. These are regular parts of the school day and the children are making good progress in choosing books and learning simple library skills. There is a colour coding system to classify books for information and for ease of access. Most children can distinguish between text and illustrations and some can interpret the pictures to try to work out the story sequence. The library area is spacious and inviting, but the classroom book areas are cramped and do not sufficiently tempt those children who need encouragement to read. Information technology is used well to encourage the development of early reading and writing skills. Many children are developing a growing knowledge of letters and their associated sounds, and can recognise their own names. A few children can recognise the names of others in their group. Although the children are interested in sharing books with adults and enjoy stories, especially those with puppets, they do not gravitate readily towards the areas where the books are displayed.
98. Writing opportunities are provided all around the school and early scribble

writing is encouraged through role-play and planned activities, such as making postcards. Many children understand that writing is a form of communication. They can hold a pencil adequately and make marks on paper confidently. Some children can form letter-like shapes, and recorded work from earlier years shows that some children learn to copy simple word formations with appropriate adult support and direct instruction.

99. The quality of teaching is mainly good and some is very good. The adults encourage the children to talk about their experiences and to listen carefully. They use stories well and provide planned, focused teaching that is raising attainment. The teachers have good subject knowledge and know their pupils very well. They use a good range of strategies to arouse interest and sustain the children's concentration. The pupils with special educational needs are given extra support and this is enabling them to make good progress. The teachers and the nursery nurses make effective use of assessment information to plan the children's next steps in learning.
100. The teachers are supported by the many parents who encourage their children to use the resources loaned by the school for reading at home. Some parents are participating in the certificated parental literacy course, held weekly in the on-site community centre, and this is helping participants to assist their child's progress in reading and writing.
101. The resources are of very good quality and are carefully selected to match the activities and needs of the children. Most are easily accessible to encourage the children's independence.

#### **75. Mathematics**

102. All groups of children are making good progress in mathematics. The majority of the children are well on the way to meeting the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time that they reach the age of five. When they first start at the nursery school, their skill in using mathematical language is not as advanced as could be expected for their age. They make good gains during the year, but records from last year show that a significant group of children still need additional experience in using mathematical language to solve simple problems, when they begin primary school.
103. Most children can recognise and name colours and simple two-dimensional shapes. They are beginning to sort and classify collections of objects and toys by their size, colour or shape. They match pictures, position jigsaw pieces correctly and set the table in the home corner by following picture clues. Some are beginning to recognise numerals and take a keen interest in drawing round templates and practising writing and painting numbers for themselves.
104. At the water-play table, the children fill and empty containers with a clear sense of purpose and are developing a sound understanding of important mathematical concepts, such as 'full to the top' or 'empty'. They compare how much water will fit into the different-sized bottles and pots, but are at an early stage of development in being able to use comparative vocabulary, like 'fuller than' or 'holds the most'.
105. The staff provides plenty of meaningful contexts to develop the children's skill in counting and to extend their understanding of the need for numbers. The children make swift progress in learning to recite numbers, because they help to count the number of children present at the start of each session, at family group times and at lunch-times. There is a well-balanced mixture of clearly focused teaching of numeracy skills in small groups and the effective use of spontaneous moments to count, add and subtract. The children greatly enjoy singing counting songs and taking part in number rhymes. On some occasions, such as at the dining table, or in the home corner, they rehearse these songs, taking delight in the repetition of simple phrases and correcting each other's counting.
106. The children enjoy learning and are well motivated. They have very good attitudes to



learning. They often show quiet determination when sorting, matching and making patterns using coloured wooden pegs. They concentrate hard and listen intently to the teacher's instructions when playing mathematical games.

107. The teaching is satisfactory overall and some examples of good teaching were observed. The adults have a good knowledge of mathematics and are clear about what they want the children to learn from each of the planned activities. They give clear instruction, taking care to use mathematical language accurately when explaining to the children. They make effective use of their considerable knowledge of the children when planning the group activities, and in the way that they carefully adapt their questions during the lessons. In these ways, the staff ensures that all of the children are learning at the right level. In a very well taught session, the nursery nurse had securely prepared her teaching input to support the children who were less confident in sorting and matching colours, and to provide new challenges for those who already had a good understanding. Following a brief introduction to recapitulate on what they knew, she invented a game where the children became the experts. Once she had gained their confidence, she skilfully made the instructions more complex to extend the higher attainers, and continued to ensure that the less confident children met with success and consolidated their learning.
108. In the lessons where the teaching is only satisfactory, opportunities to develop the children's understanding and use of mathematical vocabulary are missed. For example, in an activity where the children were set the task of finding clothing to fit differently sized dolls, too little attention was given to fostering their use of comparative language. In a whole class session to celebrate a child's birthday, there was the opportunity to talk about simple fractions, and to show the children how the cake needed to be cut to make sure that everyone could have a slice.
109. There is a very good range of high quality resources for mathematics. The storage is methodical and the games and activities, which the children can choose for themselves, are attractively laid out to entice their interest. At the start of the day, the staff demonstrates how to use sorting games, for example, and make good use of examples of the children's work to show how patterns can be made. This ensures that the children are taught how to use each piece of new equipment, stimulates their interest, and has a positive impact on developing their powers of concentration.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

110. In knowledge and understanding of the world, most children are likely to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes. The rich and varied range of opportunities that are provided for the children and the effective teaching ensure that they make good progress. The children with special needs and those who are learning English as an additional language are well supported and make good gains in their learning.
111. The children's environmental awareness and their appreciation of the needs of living things are developing well. They are fascinated by animals, and make detailed drawings of their observations on visits to the Birmingham Nature Centre and the Sea-life Centre. When they find small creatures in the nursery garden they watch them intently and care for their needs. The wealth of meaningful first-hand experiences provided for them is an intrinsic part of the curriculum and positively encourages the children to ask questions.
112. The children develop a good understanding of babies and health care as they play in the home corner. They are grasping the significance of important events in people's lives, such as naming ceremonies, and are beginning to build up a picture of the recent past in their own lives. They visit local shops and go out into the community when special events are taking place, such as recent building developments. Back in the nursery, they confidently use playmats and models to act out what they have seen and love joining in role-play as shopkeepers or hairdressers, for example. As a result of the good variation of

experiences, the children are developing a clear idea of the jobs that people do in the community.

113. The children's skills in using information technology are developing well. Many children are highly proficient in moving images on the computer screen using the mouse. Some children show quite remarkable control when making their own pictures and designs using a computer program, and they are becoming adept at changing the colours and altering the size of the paintbrush on the screen.
114. They construct simple models, using a variety of construction kits and recycled packaging. Models of insects are of a high standard and show close attention to detail. During the inspection, some children confidently explored a variety of man-made objects using magnets and were beginning to sort out in their own minds some of the reasons why certain objects were attracted to the magnets. A good range of scientific equipment is available and the children are carefully introduced to its use. Cooking is a regular occurrence. A small group of children making chocolate cakes was thoroughly absorbed in watching what happened to the mixture each time another ingredient was added. They talked animatedly, whilst others were content to observe from a distance, taking in the details in readiness for their turn to cook later in the week.
115. Groups of children tasted baby cereals and popular breakfast foods, making observations about the difference in texture and discussing the reasons why babies cannot cope with the same food that they eat themselves. They are developing a sound understanding of human development, a strong sense of curiosity and a will to experiment and to explore how things happen and why this is so.
116. The teaching in this area of learning is good. The adults provide interesting starting points to harness the children's curiosity and supplement the school's own equipment with real resources, such as feeding bottles, nappies, baby clothes and carry cots. In small and large group sessions, the adults provide clear information about current topics, encourage the children to ask questions and demonstrate how to use equipment. When the children are involved in play, the adults sensitively intervene to support the play, to provide additional information and ideas and to check on the children's knowledge and understanding.
117. The activities that are directed by an adult have a very clear focus; the staff provides succinct instruction and relevant information. Good use is made of technical vocabulary, such as 'creaming and sieving' in cookery sessions and reference to the roots, shoots and leaves of a variety of plants that the children were repotting.
118. When the children are working independently, the adults observe unobtrusively and join in at an appropriate moment, for example, to show the children how to change the colours on the computer screen using the mouse to make their own pictures. Good attention is given to ensuring that the children's cultural heritage is valued. For instance, a well-known song to teach the names of body parts was sung in both English and Punjabi. The Asian children smiled with pride and the others were keen to join in and were entranced by the sounds of a different language.

## **75. Creative development**

119. In the creative area of learning, the children start from a point which is below what would be expected of three-year-olds normally. All groups of children, including those with special needs and the small number who are learning English as an additional language, make good progress. Past work shows that the majority of the children achieve the expected outcomes in drawing and painting by the age of five. They paint, draw and model with growing confidence. The children in the older class achieve discernible form in their drawings and express their ideas in two and three dimensions. Activities such as painting, drawing, printing, and dough and clay are undertaken with both adult help and on the

children's own initiative.

120. The children learn to sing tunefully, clap simple rhythms and move expressively to music. They listen to music from many cultures and are introduced to classical compositions. They handle the excellent range of percussion instruments with satisfactory control and make their own shakers to accompany singing. They are developing a satisfactory repertoire of songs and action rhymes. Children are improving their cutting and sticking skills and can use small tools with appropriately developing control. A group making picture postcards chose their pictures, cut them out, stuck them to the postcard, "wrote" the message and fixed a postage stamp, all to their great satisfaction. Role-play is very popular out of doors and indoors, where facilities and the resources provided are very good. The children thoroughly enjoy their creative work.
121. The teaching is good overall, and in some of the lessons seen, the teaching was very good. The planning and preparation of the activities are thorough. The adults reinforce and teach skills in painting, printing and collage, and allow ample time and opportunity for their pupils to experiment for themselves. The development of warm and sensitive relationships helps to reassure the children so that they are confident to try out new ideas, and learn to play collaboratively with others. The children file their own work to take home, and other work is displayed carefully and skilfully around the nursery to enhance the learning environment. Although the majority of the children are in line to achieve the expected outcomes by the time they are five, their attainment in creative and imaginative play is presently restricted by their under-developed use of expressive language. Many children lack the ability to communicate and to express their ideas fully during the early months in school. In a particularly successful teaching session, the children playing with African dressing up clothes spontaneously enacted going to an African-Caribbean wedding. The play activity was extended very well and the skilled, unobtrusive guidance of the nursery nurse added relevance to the meaning of the play. The adult's sensitive encouragement developed the children's language appropriately.
122. The very good quality resources for all aspects of the creative area of learning add significantly to the children's enjoyment of learning.

75. **Physical development**

123. The children make good progress in their physical development and are well on target to achieve the expected outcomes by the age of five. They are improving their control of pencils, crayons, pens, brushes, scissors and modelling tools. They can complete an appropriate range of jigsaw puzzles, manipulate small toys and join construction materials with sound hand-eye co-ordination. The children persevere when positioning plastic cogs in place, moving them around carefully until they interlock. They thread paper strips with appropriate control and co-ordination, for example when weaving them into a bib-shaped paper for the baby care project.
124. In the covered play area and outdoors, there is plenty of space and a good range of activities provided for physical play and exploration. The children are developing skills in climbing, balancing, jumping and swinging which are appropriate to the age group. There is good access to a wide range of portable climbing equipment and a new, high quality climbing frame is under construction which will extend developmental possibilities even further. The provision of a wide range of wheeled toys, of good quality, provides regular practice and the children learn to control them with good steering and pedalling skills. The directional lines painted on the outdoor playground, and the zebra crossing, extend steering skills and allow scope for the development of traffic awareness and road safety. The use of trikes and carts for two or more people encourage co-operative and collaborative play. The covered area is well used for robust physical activity. The soft play equipment allows for the development of large motor skills in inclement weather. The children show a very good attitude through their enthusiasm and enjoyment in physical activity.

125. The teaching is good. There is effective planning for both indoor and covered area activities. The key issue for action in the last inspection, to ensure that the daily outdoor physical activities have clear learning objectives linked to curriculum planning, has been addressed fully. The children are given time to play and explore freely and are taught basic skills well, in small groups. The children are well supervised at all times.
126. Although some children have had only very limited access to space and the use of play facilities before starting at the nursery, the good progress they make allows them all to be well in line to attain the expected outcomes in physical development by the time they are five.

## **75. PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **75. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

127. The inspection team of three inspectors, one of whom was a lay inspector, was in school over a period of three days. (A total of seven inspector days). During this time, observations were made of 51 activities, both indoors and in the outdoor play areas. The inspection team spent a total of 29 hours observing classes, talking to the children and looking at their work. Discussions were held with the headteacher, the deputy and all other members of the staff, representatives from the local education authority, the Management Support Group and leaders of groups using the community room on the school site. A range of documentation and information supplied by the school was scrutinised. Twenty-three parents attended a pre-inspection meeting to share their views of the school with the registered inspector, and twenty five parents completed questionnaires expressing their opinions.

**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 Unit/School	60	0	5	34

**TEACHERS AND CLASSES**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	2.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24

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

Total number of education support staff	5.0
Total aggregate hours worked each week	104.0

Average class size:	30
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**FINANCIAL DATA**

Financial year:	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	6,029
Total expenditure	6,029
Expenditure per pupils	115.94
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	0

**PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:	51
Number of questionnaires returned:	25

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	52	48	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	56	44	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	24	48	16	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	40	60	0	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	60	36	0	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	48	52	0	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	32	56	0	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	32	48	12	0	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	44	48	0	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	60	40	0	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	76	24	0	0	0