

INSPECTION REPORT

EFFRA NURSERY SCHOOL

Brixton

LEA area: Lambeth

Unique reference number: 100551

Headteacher: Ann Hitchins

Reporting inspector: Anne Currie
25429

Dates of inspection: 27th – 30th March 2000

Inspection number: 191787

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-5 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	35 Effra Parade Brixton London
Postcode:	SW2 1PL
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Appropriate authority:	Lambeth Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Steve Glazier
Date of previous inspection:	19 th November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Anne Currie	Registered inspector	Mathematics Knowledge and understanding of the world Physical development	School's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Peter Dannheisser	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Wendy Thomas	Team inspector	Language and literacy Personal and social development Creative development SEN overview English as an additional language	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Effra Nursery School provides places for boys and girls from age three to five. There are 111 children on roll. Fifty-one children attend full-time and the rest attend part-time, either morning or afternoon sessions. The children come from a wide range of cultural heritages with twenty-eight different home languages spoken other than English. Yoruba, French, Bengali and Spanish are the most common. As a result a high percentage of children (45 percent) have English as an additional language with 23 children at an early stage of English language acquisition. There is a variety of social backgrounds. About 40 percent come from owner occupied housing and 60 percent come from rented accommodation on local council owned estates. Twenty-four languages are spoken within the school. Twenty-five (50 percent) of the full-time children are eligible for free school meals, which is a very high percentage.

Attainment on entry for the majority of children is below that found nationally and very low in personal and social development and speech and communication.

Twenty percent of the children are on the special needs register with one child with a statement of special educational needs. The main difficulties are with speech and communication. There is a high turnover of children with 20 leaving and starting at times other than the normal starting and leaving times.

The school is in an Education Action Zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school offers a satisfactory standard of education. Children are likely to reach the standards expected in mathematics, personal and social, physical and creative development by age five, but not in language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children make steady progress from a low starting point, especially in personal and social development as a result of the sound teaching they receive. The headteacher gives strong leadership and the school makes satisfactory use of the money it is given.

What the school does well

- There are good relationships between all adults and children in the school.
- Children are very well managed and the good behaviour policy is consistently implemented to give children very clear guidance.
- There is a wide range of interesting activities provided both inside and outside, which cover all the areas of learning.
- Staff guide children well to help them develop personally and socially.
- The school is well led and managed and all staff work together well as a team.
- Parents find the school open and approachable.

What could be improved

- Most children do not reach the standards expected in speaking and listening and early reading and writing skills.
- Planning to ensure that all children participate in appropriate activities for their individual needs, especially those with special educational needs, English as an additional language and those capable of higher attainment.
- Record keeping to ensure that all children take part in the full range of activities provided.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1996. Since then it has made satisfactory improvement.

It took some time for a permanent headteacher and deputy to be appointed following the last inspection and for a stable staff to be established and this slowed down the initial rate of progress. The strengths in the relationships staff had with children and with parents have been maintained. Planning has improved and there is more structure to the beginning and end of the day and lunchtimes, which has resulted in more security for children. The key worker system also gives children more regular contact with the same adults. There have been some improvement in the identification of children with special educational needs and the provision made for them. Children now have many opportunities to be independent and make their own choices. The school has the capacity to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about the achievements of children in relation to the desirable learning outcomes by the time they leave the school.

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

Most children, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, reach satisfactory standards in mathematics, personal and social, physical and creative development by the time they leave the school. They are likely to reach the outcomes expected nationally by age 5 in these areas. Most children do not reach the expected levels in language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. Many are reluctant to express their ideas and they do not speak in complete sentences.

Children make steady gains in their learning in all areas of learning. In personal and social development children make good gains as a result of the very clear, consistent guidance they are given and the well-planned opportunities provided.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most children are keen to come to school and they are interested in the activities provided.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. However some children, especially the younger ones still have not learnt to share and to take turns.
Personal development and relationships	Children develop satisfactory relationships with each other and they take advantage of the opportunities they are given to become independent.
Attendance	Attendance is not compulsory, but the school actively encourages parents to bring children regularly. Punctuality is unsatisfactory and this means that some children miss an important part of the session.

There are strengths in the relationships children develop with adults. They give children good support and help them to feel confident and secure.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory

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

Teaching was very good in 2 percent of lessons, good in 43 percent and satisfactory in 53 percent. Only one session was unsatisfactory. Sessions were taken by nursery nurses as well as teachers.

The teaching of mathematics and personal development is good. It is satisfactory for language and literacy.

Teaching is satisfactory overall for all children, but the work planned for children with special educational needs and English as an additional language, as well as the children capable of higher attainment, does not always meet their needs sufficiently. The majority of children have a low level of achievement in language and literacy, when they start school. Many have speech and language difficulties. They make satisfactory gains in learning. In knowledge and understanding of the world, children's learning is slowed by their inability to express their ideas clearly. Initially children's personal and social development is well below that found nationally and children make good gains in learning in this area as a result of the clear and consistent guidance they are given. Learning is satisfactory in mathematics and creative and physical development.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A good range of activities is provided, both inside and out. They cover all the recommended areas of learning. Staff do not ensure that all children take part in the full range of opportunities provided.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. There is good liaison with other agencies, such as speech therapists. Learning support assistants give effective assistance to individual children.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Children receive additional help according to their level of fluency in English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good for helping children relate to others. Satisfactory for encouraging children to wonder at the world around them. There are good opportunities for children to find out about different cultures and appreciate their own cultural backgrounds.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's approach to monitoring and guiding behaviour is very good. Staff do not ensure that all children take part in a range of activities that are well focused on their needs. There are good procedures to help children develop personally.

Parents are supportive of the work of the school and the school develops good links with them. There are good initiatives, such as the Family Literacy Project, which involves working with parents and their children. Parents applied for and received Millennium funds to extend the lending library, showing their commitment to the work of the school.

The school offers a good range of activities, but it does not ensure that all children undertake a sufficient variety to give them enough experience in all the recommended areas of learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. All staff work together well as a team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors do not have a statutory role, but they are becoming increasingly involved in the work of the school through initiatives such as training.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Teaching is monitored termly and targets set for individuals for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Funds made available to the school to support children with special needs are used well to provide individual support. Money for staff training is used to meet the needs of the school and individual staff. Satisfactory provision is made for children with English as an additional language.

The resources are good.

Accommodation is satisfactory. There is a good size outside area, which is being developed to provide a more stimulating environment.

The support provided by the local authority to enable the school to manage its budget efficiently is unsatisfactory. The school works closely with other nurseries in the Borough to compare costs.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• Their children are making good progress.• Behaviour is good.• The school is approachable and it is well led and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of work their children are expected to do at home.• The amount of information they receive about their child's progress.

Over half of the parents returned the questionnaires.

There is a suitable amount of homework for the ages of the children. Children take home library books once a week. There are workshops to make additional resources, such as games for parents to share with their children at home in the future. The inspection team agrees that there has been insufficient information for parents about the progress their children have made since September. The school has arranged to resume interviews with parents before the end of the Spring term.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The average age of the children is lower than at the time of the last inspection because of changes in the local authority's admissions policy for primary schools. The standards seen in the school reflect this and the fact that about 30 children are not much over three years old and because of the staggered admissions system, some have only been in school for a few weeks. There is very little provision in the area for mother and toddler groups. As a result, this is the first time that these children have left their family environment and mixed with a large number of other children. The attainment of the majority of the children when they enter the school is below that found nationally for children of their age and in language and literacy and personal and social development, it is often well below. Over 40 percent of children come from homes where English is an additional language, which is an increase of 50 percent since the time of the last inspection. Twenty-three are at an early stage of English language acquisition. Of the 20 percent with special educational needs, a very large proportion have speech and communication difficulties.
2. All children, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, make significant gains in their learning, when related to their prior achievement. The children capable of higher attainment do not always make as much progress as they could. Most do not reach the standards expected in language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world by the time they leave and they are unlikely to reach the standards expected nationally by age five. In the other areas of learning, mathematics, personal and social development and creative and physical development, children do reach the standards expected. Overall, this represents an apparent decline in standards since the last inspection. However, the higher percentage of children with English as an additional language and the lack of a clear statement of attainment on entry in the last report, make direct comparisons difficult.
3. Children make good gains in learning in personal and social development from a low starting point and this is the result of the emphasis placed on it by the school and the firm and consistent guidance given by all staff, including the dinner supervisors. The youngest and newest children often have difficulties relating to others, especially sharing and taking turns. However, they settle happily and gain confidence as a result of the good relationships they develop, especially with their key workers, the consistent guidance given and the well-organised sessions. They become increasingly independent, which is an improvement since the last inspection.
4. In language and literacy all children make steady gains in learning. With firm guidance they learn to listen to instructions and stories. They gradually extend their vocabularies as the result of the emphasis on first-hand experiences and the well-focused adult attention they receive. Children enjoy looking at books and most handle them carefully. Most older children recognise their name and they are beginning to write it, although the letters are often poorly formed and some use only capital letters. A few name individual letters. Many children happily record their ideas on paper and have a good awareness of different purposes for writing. However, by the time they leave the school the majority do not reach the standards expected. There is insufficient emphasis within planned focused activities aimed at raising the standards achieved by children, especially those capable of higher attainment in writing and early reading skills.
5. In mathematics, children gradually extend their skills and most reach the standards expected by the time they leave the school. The use of numeracy across all areas of learning, both indoors and outside, is well developed. Children learn to count to ten in a variety of situations and they extend their knowledge and use of words, which describe position. They recognise and name correctly simple two-dimensional shapes, such as circles, squares and triangles. The higher attaining children are becoming aware of larger numbers and they are beginning to show an understanding of adding and subtracting.
6. Children are curious about the world around them and they take advantage of the many and varied experiences they are given to make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding. Many have difficulty expressing their ideas and as a result, they are unlikely to reach the standards expected by age five. Very few children ask questions about the world around them. Most become confident in their use of the computers and tape recorders. They explore materials using their senses. For example, they play with sand, water and play dough. Trips in the local area, for example to the market, are used well to extend children's experiences.
7. Children extend their physical skills well. They develop appropriate skills in using pencils, scissors, glue, paintbrushes and malleable materials, such as play dough. Outside they confidently use the varied climbing apparatus and the wheeled toys. Children develop their creative skills through painting and collage work and their occasional use of

musical instruments. They take part in role-play, but need considerable adult input as many do not have sufficient experience of the language required and they do not readily choose this type of activity.

8. There is satisfactory support for children with English as an additional language. Staff are aware of their needs and help them to take part in the wide range of appropriate activities provided. They are making steady gains in their knowledge of English and are widening their vocabularies, but most are unlikely to reach the standards expected by age five in language and literacy and this also has an impact on their ability to express their ideas.
9. Children with special educational needs who have language difficulties are well supported as staff interact with them well. They also received trained support from speech therapists. Those children who receive additional one-to-one assistance are well supported to have access to the whole curriculum and to develop their personal and social skills. They are making steady progress towards the targets identified in their individual educational plans.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. A high percentage of parents answering the questionnaires, sent to them before the inspection, confirm that their children enjoy coming to school. The positive attitudes to school reported in the last inspection have been maintained. Staff believe that attendance levels have risen, but the school is not asked to keep attendance statistics by the local authority and as a result, does not do so. The last inspection noted that the long registration period meant that few children were recorded as having arrived late and this is still the case. Inspectors noted that several arrived towards the end of the registration period. Some, who arrived after that time, were still not registered as late. It is therefore not possible to put an exact figure on the number arriving late. Those that arrive late miss an important part of the session when they are given their options for activities and make their choices. The older children, especially also miss a considerable amount of early number and literacy work and their arrival can disturb others.
11. There are occasions when children are seen supporting others. This is especially the case in the outdoor area where children push and steer or ride shared large wheeled toys. The toys purchased by the school have been deliberately and successfully chosen to encourage children to co-operate. Class teachers help children to resolve problems in sharing or co-operation. For example, when two children wanted to use a container for collecting objects, they were persuaded to carry the container between them and to work together. Many of the planned activities are designed to encourage collaboration, such as the "Post Office" and sand and water play, but children, especially the younger ones, often play alongside each other rather than together.
12. Pupils' behaviour is generally satisfactory and for some of the older children it is good. This is reflected in the behaviour inside the school, in the outside play area and during lunch. However, a significant proportion of children, especially the younger ones, have yet to develop adequate social skills and to learn how to resolve disagreements by sharing and accepting that everyone cannot always get her or his own way. They find it difficult to relate to each other. Staff are very effective in using a consistent approach to minimising the disruption caused by children's difficulties in establishing relationships. For example, when two children argued in the playground, staff encouraged them to apologise and asked them to find other solutions. Relationships between staff and children are good and children know whom to go to if there is a problem. Nevertheless, many three year olds' relationships with other children need further development.
13. At story time most of the older children are attentive and enjoy participating. In successful sessions, children are asked open questions about the story, its characters and what is happening. They are eager to answer. Children are beginning to develop habits, which will stand them in good stead for primary school, such as putting their hands up when they want to speak. The younger children, especially those with English as an additional language, find it difficult to sit and listen at group time.
14. Children understand that occasionally they will be asked to go into the 'thinking area' of the classroom. This is not seen as a punishment, but an opportunity to calm down and to be undisturbed. Children are responding well to this and it is having a positive effect on their personal development.
15. Children learn to respect people and property. They spend a considerable time at the end of each session helping staff clear up. Although this sometimes takes a long time and means that their main activities are curtailed, children are given a good level of responsibility and most help enthusiastically. Children also take considerable pride in their work and are keen to show what they have done to staff and to visitors.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with 53 percent of the sessions observed graded as satisfactory, 43 percent good and 2 percent very good. Only one session was unsatisfactory. These figures include sessions taken by teachers and nursery nurses. There has been an improvement since the last inspection when 14 percent of sessions were unsatisfactory. The strength of the good relationships between adults and children mentioned in the last report has been maintained. It is an important factor in the progress children make, especially in their personal and social development. Teaching of mathematics is good and this helps children make steady gains in their learning. Staff use their good understanding of what is required to extend children's skills in a range of activities. For example, number rhymes are used in group times and staff take full advantage of opportunities to count with children, as well as discussing the shapes and sizes of the objects they are working with.
17. Staff are well aware of the need to develop children's language skills. They reinforce and extend vocabulary and engage children in conversations well, especially in small group or individual sessions. Staff help children make satisfactory progress from their often low starting points. They model correct speech patterns well, but, on occasions, do not insist on a verbal response so that opportunities are lost for children to practise their skills. Staff show a good understanding of the learning needs of young children, especially those who have English as an additional language. The emphasis on language development is also very appropriate for the large number of children with special educational needs related to speech and communication difficulties. Some staff take advantage of opportunities they have to talk about the sounds letters make and to develop early writing skills with some children. An example was seen outside when children were writing their own labels, but sometimes opportunities are lost to extend the skills of children who are capable of higher attainment, especially in early reading and writing. Staff know children well and they are beginning to target individual needs. The system is not yet fully developed to ensure that staff actively intervene so that children are included in appropriate activities across the whole curriculum to extend their learning, whilst at the same time allowing them the important opportunity to make their own choices.
18. There is a wide range of stimulating activities provided to give children appropriate first-hand experience, especially in their knowledge and understanding of the world, but also to extend their physical and creative skills. As a result, children make steady gains in their learning. Staff use open-ended questions to find out what children know and after children have had the opportunity to explore for themselves, staff introduce new learning. For example, when children had made circuits, using batteries and motors, they were introduced to the idea of putting patterned paper discs on to the motor to see what happened when they spun round. Review meetings are held at the end of the day to assess the impact of the opportunities provided and in this way, changes are made during the course of the week to ensure that activities are well matched to children's interests and the need to extend their learning. For example, the equipment in the water tray was changed and children were made aware of recycled materials, which they can use at the woodwork table, such as yoghurt pot lids to make wheels. The use of adult-led focus groups is successful in capturing children's interest and helping them to extend their learning, especially their vocabularies. However, staff do not ensure that sufficient children take part in these activities. In addition, there is insufficient tracking to find out what children do during the sessions and to guide their choices so that they access all areas of the curriculum. For example, when the focus is on work using computers, staff do not ensure that all children take part.
19. Staff manage children very well and have consistently high expectations of behaviour. The teaching for personal and social development is good and this enables children to make good progress in their learning, often from a low starting point. Staff reinforce the need to share, to take turns and to respect each other. Staff talk to children to make sure that they understand the impact of their actions and they demonstrate how to behave, for example by suggesting what to say to other children if they want to play with them or if they are annoying them. The school is well organised and children learn to help at tidy-up time. They develop responsible attitudes to the jobs they are given. Individual staff are good role models for children and they build up good relationships with them. Children know that their responses will be respected and as a result, they gain confidence. The recent introduction of key worker group times at the beginning and the end of the sessions is also helping to give children security. This has improved since the last inspection and is important because of the large number of young children, many not much over three years old and the proportion with some form of speech and communication difficulties. On occasions, the late arrival of a significant number of children detracts from the full impact of these sessions.
20. The teaching of children with English as an additional language is satisfactory, with 18 children targeted at a time, but because of the way the help is provided other children are also included. The teaching methods used by all staff, with a strong emphasis on practical activities, are appropriate for these children as well as the high proportion of English speaking children who need language reinforcement.
21. Children with special educational needs are well supported, with a good level of appropriate adult individual support available when needed. Learning support assistants develop good relationships with the children they work with. The speech therapist visits the school to work with individual children and staff have the valuable opportunity of joining in so that they learn how to support the children.

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

22. The school provides a rich, stimulating, broad and balanced curriculum, which is suitable for all the children and covers all the areas of learning recommended for children of this age. Staff are committed to promoting independent learning for all children through exploration and play, without prejudice and with respect for the needs, backgrounds and interests of every individual. These aims are generally fulfilled. The curriculum provides a wide range of experiences through play, talk and physical and intellectual activity that prepares children for transfer to infants' school. Since the last inspection the school has moved from a termly topic approach to a curriculum based on the six areas of learning for children under-five to ensure full coverage. There is a long-term plan, which covers the five terms that the majority of children spend in the school. This is then broken down into termly plans. Details for each activity are planned on a weekly basis in response to children's previous experiences. Staff meet together at the end of each day to evaluate sessions and amend planning if necessary. In practice, although a wide range of activities is organised for each of the areas of learning, the organisation of the day means that children are given a great deal of individual choice in the activities they take part in. Whilst this encourages independence and responsibility, it does result in an imbalance of activities for many children and those capable of higher attainment are not always appropriately challenged. Staff work on specific activities each day, but do not sufficiently target children for these. This means that there is no rigorous method of ensuring that all children experience the broad and rich curriculum on offer.
23. The long-term learning intentions and the teaching and learning policy cover all the areas of learning for children under-five. Both of the two indoor areas provide opportunities for reading and writing, exploring number and a range of creative activities. One of the rooms has a home corner and the other has a music area. Children spend the beginning and end of each session in groups with their key worker. At all other times they have virtually free choice of activities. In practice, many children choose either to play outside or in the room where their group is based. This is another reason why not all children experience the full range of activities on offer. During the inspection only a very small number of children were observed playing in the home corner and only a few visited the music area.
24. Each of the rooms has a computer. The outdoor area provides a large sandpit and climbing frames. There is adequate space for children to use wheeled toys and to play with bats, balls and other outdoor toys to develop their physical skills. Parents are helping to develop the grounds so that they provide additional opportunities, such as a garden.
25. The school enriches the curriculum with a range of visits; for example, parents and children on the Family Literacy Project recently visited Godstone Farm. Photographs of the visit are made into attractive books, which are greatly enjoyed by the children and give them the valuable opportunity to talk about past events. The school works effectively with parents on a Family Literacy Project led by a nursery nurse. A new initiative is the Millennium Library. This is a community-based project, which will provide a range of materials for parents to borrow and use at home with their children. Workshops have begun for parents and carers to make resources. These have proved very popular. The resources will be kept in the new parents' room once the planned building works are completed and they will enhance children's learning at home.
26. The school has an appropriate policy for children with special educational needs, which meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. At present one child has a statement of special educational need and two others are being considered for this provision. Of the other children on the register of special educational needs, all but two are identified as having speech and communication difficulties and these all receive support from the speech and language therapy service. The service provides individual education plans for most of these children with specific speech and language targets.
27. The policy of encouraging children to make their own choice of activity for most of the session means that all staff need to be fully aware of the individual targets for all of these children. This relates to children with English as an additional language, as well as those with special needs. During the inspection, a number of children who were identified as having speech and communication needs were observed choosing non-verbal activities for much of the time, for example, playing with wheeled toys for a sustained period without significant input from an adult. The school must consider the balance of independent and adult-led activities for these children in order to ensure that their specific needs are met.

28. The school makes very good provision for children's moral and social development, with adults acting as very good role models giving very consistent support and guidance. Appropriate adult-led activities are planned, such as the acting out of the story of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears", which encourage children to relate to each other socially. The provision for cultural development is good. As well as learning about festivals of other cultures, such as the Chinese New Year, children are encouraged to value their own cultural traditions. The home languages of the children are used around the school, for example, on number lines. In addition, children learn a song in Yoruba. There are satisfactory opportunities for extending children's spiritual awareness, but it occurs incidentally and is not included in planning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29. All staff contribute to the provision of a caring school in which the personal needs of the children are met. The standards reported in the previous inspection have been maintained. Children's personal, social and emotional development is well monitored and clear records are kept for each child. The school records serious incidents and tracks the behaviour of pupils having particular difficulties. Individual portfolios of work are kept, which provide a clear record of the child's activities as he or she moves through the school.
30. There is a positive atmosphere in the school and both teaching and non-teaching staff know the children well. The key worker system has effectively given children the routines and personal contact they need to help them feel secure and happy in this busy and often noisy environment. This has improved one of the issues mentioned in the previous inspection. The key workers track the progress of individual children over time and identify those who might need additional help. However, in many sessions it was not obvious that the individual needs of children were being recognised. It was clear that, by making their own choices of activities, children could successfully avoid extending their experience in the direction suggested by their targets. For example, children who were finding social activity difficult were seen to choose solitary activities. On occasion, a member of staff would seek to persuade targeted individuals to take part in a specific activity, but this appeared to be unusual. Staff record observations of children working in their group, which are given to the key worker to be included in the individual child's records. Although some children were sometimes asked at the end of a session what activities they had been engaged in, this did not provide reliable evidence and the school has no other means of consistently tracking the activities undertaken by an individual throughout his or her time in the school.
31. There have been improvements in the identification of children with special educational needs and the provision made for them since the last inspection. Learning support assistants work very effectively to help individual children and they make a significant contribution to their learning and to their personal and social development. The special educational needs co-ordinator meets with each learning support assistant on a weekly basis to review children's progress. In the light of these meetings, plans are drawn up and updated weekly. Individual education plans are detailed and include clear, achievable targets against which it is possible to judge children's progress. Although notes of children's needs are kept in each class base, there is insufficient evidence that all staff are sufficiently aware of the specific needs of all the children on the stages of the Code of Practice to encourage them to take part in activities that will meet their learning needs. For example, the practice of allowing them completely free choice of activities for much of the time does not ensure that their speech and communication needs are met effectively. Additional valuable advice and input is received from educational psychologists and especially from speech therapists, who visit the school on a regular basis every other term. In the intervening term, the service holds an advice clinic, which parents and key workers are encouraged to attend. The advice given is recorded in children's files and available to all staff. However, there is no reference to these additional needs in the review of records written for parents at the end of term. Those children who need additional English language input are helped by the specialist teacher as well as by all staff.
32. Parents are reminded of the importance of punctuality and good attendance and the school reports that it has improved attendance by asking parents to keep their children at home for a day if they have repeated unauthorised absences. A similar procedure has helped encourage more parents to bring their children to school on time. However, the policy is not rigorously implemented. Several children arrive well after the 15-minute registration period and are not marked in the registers as late. There is no positive reinforcement of punctuality. The school is well aware of child protection procedures and named staff work closely with the educational welfare service if necessary.
33. The school has very successfully implemented a positive behaviour policy. All staff consistently apply it. If serious behavioural problems occur, the school addresses the problem with the child's parents. Children's ability to be calm, participate well and respect others is well demonstrated by the older children who stay for lunch. They are well supervised, enjoy the communal atmosphere of lunchtimes and behave very well. The arrangement of groups of

children always sitting with the same meal supervisor has been very successful. Children are rewarded by praise. However, no stickers or certificates are awarded for effort, achievement or attendance and punctuality.

34. The premises are clean and well cared for. Two members of staff are qualified in first aid and others are experienced and aware of requirements. There is no formal health and safety audit or risk analysis undertaken on a regular basis. A number of health and safety matters came to light during the inspection, some of which had been raised at the time of the last inspection. In addition, there are no procedures to ensure that portable electrical equipment is inspected or that fire alarms are regularly tested.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. The school develops an effective partnership with parents and involves them well in the work of the school. Home visits are made before most children start school to ensure that good links are established at an early stage. Parents agree that the school actively encourages them to contribute to their child's education. They have opportunities to visit their children and are encouraged to take an active part in school activities but few parents help in class, or around the school. However, many parents join in to make visits possible, for example to a local park and the Young Vic. Many parents also contribute regularly to the school fund.
36. Despite the difficulty of ensuring continuity amongst the constantly changing parent body, there is an active Friends' Association, which organises events such as summer and winter fairs. These raise useful funds, which have purchased additional resources for the school. The 'Friends' make a positive contribution to the community. Parents make posters and raise money from local shops. They came into school during Black History Week to help provide food and costumes. The school tries, with some success, to encourage parents to come to meetings, despite the fact that many parents have considerable family and work commitments and are not able to take part as much as they would wish. When the call goes out for a parent to help at lunchtime, it is usually answered.
37. There are regular meetings about the progress of children with special needs and parents are closely involved in the reviews of their child's individual education plan. The quality of information for parents is good. Parents are kept well informed about school activities through the friendly newsletters. Some separate information about the planned curriculum is given to parents and it is also prominently displayed in school. There are occasional meetings explaining the work of the school, for example on writing. Parents feel they are made welcome. Interpreters are occasionally provided on home visits and for meetings, but documents are generally not translated and the school feels that this is rarely required.
38. The main termly verbal reports for parents cover all learning areas and these describe individual progress and targets for the following term, which are agreed with the school. However, because of a change in the timing of these meetings, from the beginning to the end of the term, there had not been one since the start of the autumn term. As a result, a significant minority of parents, especially those who do not bring their children to school themselves, justifiably felt ill informed about their children's progress. During the inspection staff were observed telling parents and carers how the children were progressing. Valuable Family Literacy sessions are run for some parents by a nursery nurse in the neighbouring primary school and there are plans for these to continue when the school's own parents' room is built later this year. The interest shown by parents in the work of the school is shown by the fact that parents obtained funding from the community for their 'Millennium Library' project. They are involved in workshops to produce resources for the library, which parents will be able to borrow and use with their children at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39. At the time of the last inspection there was an acting headteacher and the management roles of the deputy and other teaching staff were not well defined. It took some time for these issues to be successfully resolved and as a result, progress towards improving the school was initially slow. The new headteacher and deputy have been working together now for over two years and they provide good, strong leadership. Staff work together very well as a team and they have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Staff get to know the children well in their key worker groups and there is a clear commitment to extending their skills as well as their personal and social development. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, with the most significant changes coming in the last year. Recent initiatives, such as the introduction of target setting, the consistent implementation of the new behaviour policy and the assessment arrangements, all mean that the school is well placed to continue to improve.

40. Governors do not have a statutory role in running the school, but they are becoming more involved. This process has been helped by a recent training course run by the local authority, which helped to clarify the role of the governing body in nursery schools. The chair of governors is responsible for producing the annual report to parents and he has a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the problems it faces, such as its uncertain future. The recent innovation, of linking governors to members of staff, has begun to give more governors an insight into how the school works.

41. All staff have termly meetings to assess their performance and these lead to the identification of future training needs and the setting of targets for improvement. The headteacher, the deputy and the special educational needs co-ordinator are all involved in this process. They have received training, which was funded through the Education Action Zone. The school has begun to work towards the Investors in People Award, showing the importance it places on staff development and training. The additional funding made available for staff training is used effectively to provide training courses for individuals, as well as the whole staff and staff also have the valuable opportunity to visit other nurseries to observe the

practice there. Teaching, by both teachers and nursery nurses, is monitored by the headteacher and the deputy. The mathematics co-ordinator has also monitored teaching as a result of the school's recent focus on raising standards in mathematics. This has had a positive effect, with staff now taking advantage of various opportunities throughout the day to reinforce skills, especially in counting and basic vocabulary.

42. The school has a one-year school improvement plan, which sets out relevant priorities for development. It has well-defined success criteria by which its impact can be judged and the cost implications are clearly set out. The short time-span reflects the recent uncertainty over the school's future as the local authority re-examines its provision of nursery education within the Borough. The headteacher has decided that this situation could continue for some time and as a result, she is looking to extend the new plan to cover three years. Funds have been obtained to build a parents' room to extend links with parents, which the school sees as fundamental to its work.

43. Additional funds are made available to the school for the provision of support for children with English as an additional language. This money pays for a member of staff to be employed for three days a week. The support provided is adequate. The school shares funds with other nurseries in the authority for the provision of additional support for children with special educational needs. The money is used to provide learning support assistants for specific children and this system is effective.

44. The school is now fully staffed with appropriately trained teachers, nursery nurses and learning support assistants who meet the needs of the children well, especially those with special educational needs. The deputy head has received mentoring training and with her help, the school plays an important part in training student teachers. The support provided by the school to these students is good.

45. Accommodation is satisfactory. The large outside area offers ample space and it is well equipped to extend children's physical development. A parent has recently started to work with the school to improve the appearance of the area, which is currently quite bleak. The school now has a delegated budget, which it did not have at the time of the last inspection. As a result, it has been able to use some of the money to refurbish the interior of the building and make it bright and attractive. Resources are good and they are thoughtfully stored around the school to allow children easy access to what they need and to help them tidy up at the end of sessions.

46. The school received its first delegated budget in 1998/89, with no training provided by the local authority and no system in place to assist the school with its financial planning. Office staff have worked hard and been on courses, which the school has arranged. As a result, they have devised their own computer programs to ensure that clear records are kept, but they do not always receive accurate and up-to-date information, for example on staffing costs. At the time of the inspection, the school still did not have an accurate audited figure showing the amount of money carried forward from that first year, even though they were nearing the end of the following financial year. This is very unsatisfactory and makes financial planning extremely difficult.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. To improve the quality of education provided the headteacher and staff should, with the support of the governing body

- Raise attainment in language and literacy by:-

- a. improving the opportunities for children to extend their speaking and listening skills and insisting on children giving a verbal response to questions;
- b. increasing the amount of adult input into role play activities;
- c. providing more opportunities for all children, but especially the higher attaining children to extend their early reading and writing skills.

(See paragraphs 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 17, 19, 23, 48, 53, 54, 55, 56, 68, 75)

- Refine assessment and monitoring procedures to ensure that:-
 - a. all children take part in a wide range of activities covering all the recommended areas of learning;
 - b. clear assessment information is gathered and used to set specific targets for individual children;
 - c. all children, but especially those with special educational needs, those capable of higher attainment and those with English as an additional language, are regularly focussed on and supported in undertaking work which is well suited to their individual needs.

(See paragraphs 4, 18, 22, 23, 26, 27, 30, 31, 51, 52, 56, 62, 70, 72, 73, 80)

In addition to the key issues mentioned above, the following less important weaknesses should be addressed:

- Carrying out a regular health and safety check of the building.
(See paragraph 34)
- Take further steps to improve children's punctuality and ensure that they do not miss an important part of the school day.
(See paragraphs 10, 32)
- Work with the local authority to improve the budget information available to the school.
(See paragraph 46)

THE PROVISION FOR AND STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

48. The provision for children with English as an additional language is satisfactory. At the time of the inspection there were 42 children for whom English is an additional language. Twenty-eight different languages are represented other than English. The children range in fluency from those who are at the very early stages of learning English to those who are reasonably fluent. Of these children, five are also identified as having speech and communication difficulties. Most of these children are not likely to reach the standards expected by age five in language and literacy, despite making steady gains in learning. Their limited language skills also affect their attainment in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world, as they cannot express their ideas clearly.
49. All staff recognise the need to promote language development for all children and most of the activities provided are also appropriate for children learning English as an additional language. The school has a part-time teacher for English as an additional language whose post is funded through the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant. She has worked with colleagues to prioritise the needs of the children and at present 18 children are targeted for specific support in English. The specialist teacher works mainly with these children. She keeps an ongoing checklist of children's progress in English. She also makes regular observations of children as they choose their activities. These observations contribute to children's general records and inform future planning.
50. The school has a good range of resources to support English teaching. The teachers makes good use of photographs in notices and for making books featuring the children. This engages their interest and helps their learning. Children's home languages are celebrated and the school has a good range of displays, books and notices in other languages.
51. The specialist teacher works with the targeted children at set times in their key worker groups. However, at other times the children have the same free choice of activities. This means that the teacher has to follow the children and try to adapt their choice of activity to match their language learning targets, which makes the task unnecessarily complex. It

also means that, unless the target children choose the same activity at the same time, it is difficult for the teacher to make the best use of her time by working in small groups with children who have similar targets.

52. The teacher assesses children's language development on entry and this checklist of attainment is updated in the light of staff observations during children's time in the school. Assessment records are not yet systematically used to set learning targets and to ensure that children undertake sufficient suitable activities to extend their learning.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

39

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	43	53	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

Nursery

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

81 FTE

Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals

25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

Nursery

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

1

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

23

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

50

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

20

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

20

Attendance

Attendance is not a statutory requirement.

The local authority does not ask the school to keep detailed records of authorised and unauthorised attendance.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.8

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	250

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.1
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/9
	£
Total income	330,679
Total expenditure	306,306
Expenditure per pupil (FTE)	3,829
Balance brought forward from previous year	0 *
Balance carried forward to next year	24,373

*1998/9 was the first year that the school had a fully delegated budget so there was no carry forward from the previous year.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

101

Number of questionnaires returned

52

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	15	0	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	56	33	2	2	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	46	0	2	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	30	10	13	23
The teaching is good.	50	35	2	4	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	31	16	12	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	24	2	4	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	38	49	7	2	4
The school works closely with parents.	50	33	8	4	6
The school is well led and managed.	51	43	0	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	29	6	4	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	38	10	2	16

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

AREAS OF LEARNING

Language and literacy

53. The majority of children enter the school with speaking and listening skills that are well below levels expected of children of their age. A high proportion of children have English as an additional language and 28 home languages, other than English, are represented. Of the present children on roll, over 15 percent are identified as having speech and communication difficulties and are receiving support from the speech and language therapy service.
54. By the time they are five, the majority of children are unlikely to attain the outcomes set out in national guidance in all areas of language and literacy. This indicates an apparent decline in standards since the last inspection. However, the higher percentage of children with English as an additional language and the lack of a clear statement of attainment on entry in the last report, make direct comparisons difficult. Children listen attentively to their key workers in-group sessions. They enjoy listening to stories and songs and know a number of rhymes by heart. Some of the youngest children were very new to school and on occasions, find it difficult to settle and listen to a story at the end of a session. The key workers manage this sensitively and respond well to children's needs. Key workers are concerned to develop children's spoken language and extend their vocabulary. They use a good range of stories with repeated sequences and children enjoy joining in with the familiar parts of stories such as "The Three Billy Goats Gruff", or "The Elephant and the Bad Baby". In all group sessions, adults model language well for children and help them to express their ideas orally. Staff have identified and use key vocabulary to support children's language development. During the inspection, staff were encouraging children to use positional language. This was effectively reinforced in outside activities. Staff used labels on the climbing apparatus and wheeled carts, encouraging children to move up, down, under and over the apparatus talking about what they were doing. In the free choice sessions many children opt for activities, which do not involve talking. They enjoy playing outside. In their indoor play many children are happily engaged in activities but do not talk to adults or each other. They speak to their key worker and other nursery staff, but often rely on nods or gestures to make their needs known. A small number of children are confident and articulate and they will speak happily to visitors, but the majority are reluctant to talk about their activities.
55. Children enjoy listening to stories and sharing books with an adult. A small number of children choose to look at books by themselves and more children visit the book corners if an adult is leading an activity there. Children know that print conveys meaning and many of them know how books work. Adults talk to them about authors and illustrators being the people who write the book or draw the pictures. Children regularly take books home to share with their parents and carers. The majority of children recognize their names and use their name cards to register their presence at the start of sessions. Most find the right peg to hang up their coats. Several children enjoy "writing" and adults provide a good range of activities to support the development of written skills. Some older children are writing letter strings and some write their names independently. There are, however, insufficient planned opportunities for all children to write with an adult. One child became quite frustrated when, having written a string of letters and finding that she had not made words, she said "but I want it to say something". No member of staff was available at this point to intervene and support the child in her enthusiasm for writing. Whilst nursery staff cannot be expected to be available to support all children in their independent activities at all times, this illustrates that there is a need for more targeted activities to support children and to address the needs of higher attaining children.
56. The teaching of language and literacy is good in group sessions and in adult-led opportunities. Staff work hard to promote children's language and literacy skills and have a secure understanding of the learning needs of young children. In both classrooms staff provide a good range of opportunities for children to share books and to use a range of writing materials. The outdoor activities include chalkboards and other opportunities for children to write and draw. Songs are used well to reinforce early literacy skills of phonics and rhyming. Some children make good progress in their speaking skills when they are encouraged to respond to open questions, which require extended answers rather than single words. However, this strategy is not consistently adopted and on too many occasions staff accept single word or non-verbal responses from children. In their planning, staff have considered the key vocabulary that children need and this is used to good effect in teaching sessions. Staff have begun to make regular observations of children during adult-led activities. These are not yet used sufficiently to inform the planning process, or to ensure that targets set for children are effectively implemented.

Mathematics

57. Children's attainment in mathematics is satisfactory. Most are on course to reach the standards expected by age five and two or three higher attainers already achieve them. Children make steady progress in their learning as they progress through the school, both in their understanding of mathematics and in the vocabulary they use. Children with special educational needs make similar progress to others. The practical nature of the planned activities and the reinforcement of vocabulary, help children with English as an additional language to make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
58. The standards seen are slightly lower than those reported in the last inspection. However, many of the children are now much younger than they were at the time of the last inspection and there is a higher percentage of children with English as an additional language.
59. By the time they leave, most children are familiar with a number of counting and action rhymes such as "Five Little Ducks", "Five Currant Buns" and "Ten Green Bottles". These reinforce number sequence and the concept of one less. As well as teaching the actions that go with the songs, staff also use wall displays to give visual impact and they get the children to act out the songs. For example, after the children made "currant buns" out of play dough, they bought the buns from each other using real pennies. Children learn to sort items by a variety of criteria, such as colour and size and they make patterns using beads. Older children learn to recognise and write numerals from zero to ten and they sequence them correctly. The outside area is used well to reinforce positional language, such as over, under, in front and behind. Good links are made to literacy when children are given labels, which they attach, in the correct position, for example at the 'top' and the 'bottom' of the slide.
60. Children enjoy mathematical work, which is integrated into many of their activities. They are keen to learn and with adult help, they share and take turns when using the equipment, for example a program on the computer.
61. The development of mathematics is a current focus in the school improvement plan. The headteacher and the co-ordinator have been involved in monitoring teaching and looking at the activities provided. This input has succeeded in raising the awareness of staff and teaching is good. Strengths in teaching are seen in the way in which staff reinforce children's language development and also extend their skills in a variety of ways throughout each session. For example, in group time children are encouraged to count how many children are present. Also when children are playing with cars they are asked questions such as "which is the biggest" and "how many red ones are there?" A variety of visual aids, many made by staff, are on display and are used to reinforce learning. This is especially useful for children with English as an additional language, children with speech difficulties and lower attainers. For example, number lines are clearly visible, some using different languages. In one area children extend their knowledge of different shapes by correctly matching them to a display on the wall. The wide range of mathematical experiences are easily adapted to children's ages and previous attainment. Staff show that they know the children well by matching the work to their needs. They also evaluate the learning activities they provide and make changes each day. For example, towards the end of the week the sorting activity was extended by the provision of paper and pencils so that children could be encouraged to record what they did.
62. Key workers build up records for individual children, which show what they understand and can do. Targets are set for individual children but they are not yet used systematically enough to ensure that all children undertake a suitable range of experiences.

Personal and social development

63. Children's personal and social development is well promoted. Since the last inspection, a new behaviour policy has been introduced. This is consistently applied and is having a beneficial effect on children's learning. All adults have good relationships with children and support them well. When they enter the school, the attainment of most children in this area is well below levels expected for children of this area. Children make very good progress and most are likely to attain the standards expected by the time they are five.
64. At the time of the inspection some of the younger children had been admitted very recently. They have settled well in a short time. Most children are familiar with routines and move about the nursery confidently. The newly revised key worker system is having a positive effect on this. Most children make decisions about which activities

they will choose. Children are interested in their activities and generally settle well and persevere. Staff provide good opportunities for children to participate in activities, which promote their personal and social development. Adults support children well in playing games where they need to take turns or share toys. Many children do not find this

easy and staff take care to develop their co-operative skills. Most children know that they must wear overalls when painting or playing at the water tray and put on hats to play in the sandpit. Children sustain interest and concentration in their tasks well when working individually. They know where things are kept and most willingly help to tidy away resources at the end of sessions.

65. Most children have positive attitudes to learning. They are happy to come to school and most confidently leave their parents and carers. They respond very well to the example set by staff and in-group sessions most children are polite and helpful. The new behaviour policy is having a very positive effect. Most children know what the rules are for various activities and respond very well to the consistent and patient approach of staff. In their group sessions they listen attentively and respond to instructions very well. The effects of the consistent approach to behaviour are more apparent with the older children who have had more experience of it.
66. Teaching of personal and social development is good. Staff are consistent in using the same good strategies and methods. They have good knowledge of the children's backgrounds and effectively engage children and their parents and carers in conversation at the start and end of sessions by referring to events in their lives. For example, in a group session, one of the staff referred to the recent death of a child's grandmother. She spoke sensitively of the funeral, which she had attended and talked to the children about the child's feelings of sadness and how they could all help him. Such occasions promoted children's confidence and supported them in feeling valued. This also develops their self-esteem. Staff are good at noticing and encouraging appropriate behaviour. For example, children are praised for behaving well in-group time and for helping to tidy up quickly. They are especially praised for helping other children and being kind to each other. There are clear routines, which children learn. These help them to feel secure and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
67. The organization of resources and activities promote the development of children's independence skills well. Children are confident in collecting the resources they need for different activities and putting them back in the right places at the end of sessions.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68. The children are given a broad range of appropriate experiences, which stimulate their interest and extend their learning. However, the language skills of many of the children are not well developed and as a result, they have difficulties expressing their ideas. Although some children are likely to reach the standards expected by age five, the majority will not as the emphasis is on their ability to talk about the world around them. This is especially true of children with special educational needs related to speech and communication and children who speak English as an additional language. This appears to show a decline since the last inspection. However, the higher percentage of children with English as an additional language and the lack of a clear statement about attainment on entry in the last report, make direct comparisons difficult.
69. Children are keen to take part in the wide range of activities organised for them and they are curious about what is going on, but they do not ask questions. They investigate everyday materials such as water and sand. Children make bubbles using different items and they watch water running through a variety of pipes and tubes. They cook cakes and they are encouraged to look closely at the ingredients they use and to describe them. Children become aware of what plants need to grow when they plant seeds and allow potatoes to sprout. They experiment with batteries to make circuits to make propellers work and they experience a sense of achievement when they succeed. Children persevere when they have difficulties attaching the crocodile clips. With adult guidance they feel the movement of air when they put their hands above the spinning propeller and they are interested to watch how patterns on discs change as they are spun round on the motors.
70. Many children develop satisfactory skills and learn to operate the computers confidently. A few are very competent and exceed the standards expected. These children often dominate the computers and need adult support to help them share and take turns. They use the mouse accurately to select items, such as the programs they want and to operate them. They print their work and exit programs when they have finished. There is a member of staff responsible for the computers and this works well as it ensures that the machines are used, kept in working order and have programs suitable for the children to use. No records are kept of individual children's experiences and this leads to weaknesses in the assessment records. Use of the computer is an adult-led focused activity from time to

time, but even then staff do not ensure that every child takes part. Computer programs are used well to support work in other subjects, such as number recognition and counting and drawing pictures.

71. Children are encouraged to be independent and use the tape recorders to listen to music and stories. They are shown how the digital camera works and it is used well to make resources to extend learning. For example, photographs were taken of children making a pattern by alternately standing and sitting in a line and these were mounted in a group area for discussion the next day.
72. Teaching is satisfactory overall and on occasions it is good. There is no one member of staff responsible for this area of learning, but the headteacher monitors planning to ensure that it is appropriately covered and that a wide range of opportunities is provided. The activities are very practical giving good first-hand experiences. Good use is made of visits to places in the locality, for example, the nearby wildlife garden and the market to extend knowledge. Staff take advantage of opportunities to extend children's language skills, for example when they work alongside them whilst they make models using the construction kits or play with the zoo. They continually reinforce appropriate vocabulary such as the names of the zoo animals and their characteristics as well as modelling good, clear sentence structures. Staff talk to children about their families and help them become aware of the past by talking about events they remember, such as a visit to the local market. Records are built up from observations for individual children during their time in the school, but insufficient attention is paid to ensuring that all children experience the full range of activities, as they are left to make their own choices for most of the session.

Creative development

73. By the time they transfer to primary school, many children attain the nationally expected outcomes for children of their age. They enjoy their activities and use a wide range of materials with confidence. They display appropriate skills in painting, drawing and creating their own models using recycled materials or construction toys. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. For some children, however, the way in which sessions are organised means that they can choose not to participate in activities, which help them to develop their imagination.
74. In one classroom there is a music area where a variety of percussion instruments, including some from other cultural traditions, are freely available. Children enjoy listening to taped songs and playing the instruments provided. In group sessions they enjoy listening to songs and performing actions but very few join in with singing. Children enjoy painting and drawing and making collage pictures with a variety of materials. One child, when asked about his activities responded "I've been glittering".
75. Teaching is satisfactory. Staff talk to children about what they are doing and help them to develop their ideas. There are opportunities for imaginative play but children do not take enough advantage of them. One of the classrooms has a "home corner", but during the inspection very few pupils were observed playing in this. There was also a "post office", but this was not a focused activity in the inspection week and only a small number of children were observed playing in this area.

Physical development

76. Children attain satisfactory standards and most are expected to reach the standards expected by age five and a few have already reached them. Most children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are also meeting these expectations. The standards reported in the last inspection have been maintained.
77. Teaching is satisfactory and the development of children's physical skills is successfully promoted through well-planned activities, especially those that make good use of the spacious and well resourced outside area. Adults intervene to encourage and extend imaginative play and the development of skills. There is a good range of sit-and-ride toys, which were especially chosen to encourage children to play together and to share, for example carts so that children can give each other rides. Children manoeuvre the toys well and show good co-ordination and awareness of space as they move around. The climbing apparatus is arranged well to promote the development of climbing and balancing skills and to build up children's confidence. Children use it effectively. Staff join in with children as they play with the bats and balls and help them develop their skills. Useful links are made with other subjects, such as mathematics and early reading skills when children are encouraged to use labels to identify different positions, such as the front and back of the cart.
78. Inside there are good opportunities for children to develop their physical skills. There is a wide range of full-size tools to use at the work bench, such as hammers, screwdrivers, saws and a drill. Some children use these very well and they hammer in nails with accuracy, showing good hand-eye co-ordination. Children use their imaginations well. For example, one boy nailed plastic lids from yoghurt pots on to the side of a piece of wood to make a car with

wheels. Most children handle toys and equipment appropriately for their age. They roll out dough and cut out a variety of shapes and they manipulate small pieces of construction equipment well. Children learn to hold pencils correctly and they use glue spreaders and paint brushes effectively.

79. Children respond very positively to physical activities and many are keen to go outside as soon as they are allowed. They undertake the activities with obvious enjoyment and this has a positive impact on their learning. During activities inside, many children play alongside others, but when outside, for example, using the wheeled toys, children were observed talking to each other. These activities make a positive contribution to children's social development. Staff help children to share and take turns and they are consistent in their approach to behaviour, continually reinforcing what is expected.
80. Observations are made for individual children, which build up a useful record of their skills, but they are not used sufficiently to ensure that all children take part in the full range of physical activities.