

INSPECTION REPORT

DITTON NURSERY SCHOOL

DUNDALK ROAD WIDNES CHESHIRE

LEA area: HALTON

Unique reference number: 110957

Headteacher: MRS MILDRED WILLIAMSON

**Reporting inspector: Michael Hewlett
1569**

Dates of inspection: 17/01/00 – 19/01/00

Inspection number: 191875

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	NURSERY
School category:	COMMUNITY
Age range of pupils:	3-4
Gender of pupils:	MIXED
School address:	DUNDALK ROAD WIDNES CHESHIRE
Postcode:	WA8 8DF
Telephone number:	0151 424 4687
Fax number:	AS ABOVE
Appropriate authority:	HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
Name of chair of governors:	MRS CATHERINE BURKE
Date of previous inspection:	22.1.97 – 24.1.97

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
MICHAEL HEWLETT	Registered inspector	Language and Literacy	How high are standards?
		Mathematics	How well are pupils taught?
		Knowledge and understanding of the world	How well is the school led and managed?
		English as an additional language	What should the school do to improve further?
JANE HUGHES	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
JUNE HUNTER	Team inspector	Physical development	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Creative development	
		Personal and social development	
		Special educational needs	
		Equal opportunities	

The inspection contractor was:

MICHAEL HEWLETT
Thatchways
Elworth Avenue
Widnes
Cheshire WA8 9JW

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

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

1. Ditton is an average sized nursery school with 85 children on roll of whom 45 are boys and 40 girls. They all attend part time. They are taught by two teachers, including the headteacher, who work full time. In addition, there are two full time nursery nurses and a part time classroom support assistant. No children have statements of special educational need but four are identified by the school as requiring additional support. None of the current intake come from homes where English is not the first language. Most of the children come from the immediate area of the school. They live in a mixture of owner occupied and rented accommodation of different types.

2. The school uses its own baseline screening test to check children's attainment when they arrive in nursery. The evidence suggests that, although an increasing number are arriving with delay in their linguistic and personal and social skills, children's overall attainment is average when they start nursery. Targets for the future are identified within the school development plan. They include updating the curriculum for creative and physical development as well as ensuring that the outdoor area is put to better use.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

3. Ditton Nursery is a good school with a number of very good features. Children achieve standards which are above average in all areas of learning. The quality of the teaching is good, often very good and relationships are excellent. The headteacher, governors, staff and parents work closely together to achieve high standards. The school gives good value for money.

4. What the school does well

- Helps children achieve standards which are above average
- Teaching is good, often very good
- Promotes excellent relationships and provides a high standard of care
- Children behave very well and have a very good attitude to school
- There is very effective leadership and management
- Makes good provision for children who have special educational needs

5. What could be improved

- Children are sometimes given too much support by adults
- Learning opportunities are missed during snack time
- Monitoring of teaching and learning

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

6. The school was last inspected in January 1997. Since then it has made good progress in many areas. Standards have been maintained during the intervening years and levels of attainment for the more able children have been raised. This is due to better curriculum organisation and because more time is spent checking on the teaching and learning. More work is still needed in this area so that the lessons learnt from the monitoring are used to improve what happens in the classroom. The school environment, particularly the security of the main entrance and the outside play areas, has benefited from the extra spending which has been well used.

7. The school development plan is much better. It covers a longer timescale, has good links with finance and more people make a contribution. Governors and staff are now actively involved in all aspects of development planning.

8. Provision for information and communication technology was criticised during the last inspection but the problems have been addressed. The computers are more modern, children show good levels of confidence and the teaching is better.

9. Parents now receive detailed feedback on their children's progress during the year as well as comprehensive written reports as they leave.

10. The school has set clear and realistic targets for the future and is well placed to make further improvements.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:		Key
Language and literacy	[B]	well above average A
Mathematics	[B]	above average B
Personal and social development	[B]	average C
Other areas of the curriculum	[B]	below average D
		well below average E

12. There are national standards for children by five years of age. The majority of children are likely to reach these early learning goals in all curriculum areas. Many will exceed them. Standards achieved by higher attaining children are especially good. This is because the school has organised a programme of work for them which is both interesting and demanding.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children show very good attitudes. They enjoy school and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Standards of behaviour are very good in all areas of the school.
Personal development and relationships	Children make good progress in their personal development. Relationships between all members of the school community are excellent.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are good. Children are brought to school on time.

13. Children's attitudes to their learning and their standards of behaviour in school are very good. This helps them to make good progress in their learning. Relationships are excellent due to the care and concern shown by staff.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

14. The quality of the teaching is good overall. Nearly half the lessons observed were judged to be very good and just over one in ten were satisfactory. None of the teaching was unsatisfactory. The quality of this teaching is seen in all areas of learning. All staff are well prepared and enthusiastic. They set high standards for the children to achieve and lessons move at a brisk pace. The work they plan is interesting and varied. Occasionally, they offer children too much help when they are doing their work and this limits their independence.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good range of stimulating learning activities both indoors and out. Children of all abilities are well catered for.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Children's individual learning needs are being well met.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	NA
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision is made for all aspects of children's personal development. The school's arrangements are equally good in all four areas.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school makes very good provision for children's welfare, safety and well being. Staff are friendly and approachable and ensure children experience a very positive start to school life.

15. The school has created an effective partnership with parents. Good links are made with families before children start nursery and parents are kept well informed about progress made. Children's individual performance is carefully tracked by staff so that no time is wasted.

16. The curriculum offered covers all areas of learning and all statutory requirements are met. Children are well cared for. The school has been made more secure through extra fencing and other security measures which were introduced following the last inspection.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school is very effective. The headteacher and staff have created an excellent ethos within a school which is committed to improvement. It has recognised that the monitoring of teaching and children's learning should be better.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors play an active part in the life and work of the school. They fulfil all their statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good systems are in place which provide detailed opportunities for self review. The school makes good use of data it collects when children arrive in nursery to monitor individual performance. Not enough use is made of this individual data to check on the overall progress made by the whole year group. It makes it difficult to compare performance from one year to the next.
The strategic use of resources	Very good use is made of the available resources. The school does not have a delegated budget but is beginning to apply the principles of best value in any financial decisions made.

17. There are suitable numbers of well qualified and experienced staff to teach the children. Accommodation is good, both indoors and out, and the curriculum is well resourced. The leadership and management of the school are very effective and are well placed to make further improvements.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
Children like school and behave well. Staff are approachable and friendly. The school is well led and managed. The teaching is good.	Some parents would welcome more information about their children's achievements.

18. The inspection judgements support the parents' positive views. The school provides good levels of information to parents before children arrive in nursery. Arrangements for keeping parents informed about their children's progress are good. There are regular consultation evenings where their progress can be discussed and parents receive written end of year reports.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

19. Children arrive in school with levels of attainment which are broadly average. By the time they are five, they are likely to reach standards which are above the national average. All children learn well during their time in nursery and they make good progress as a result. Standards are higher than when the school was last inspected because now, they are consistently high across all the areas of learning. Higher attainers are reaching higher standards now that their needs, and those of children with special educational needs, are more carefully considered in teachers' planning and in the way that they are taught. For example, individual plans are produced which set out detailed targets for children with special needs to achieve, and work set for higher attainers is much more demanding.

20. Standards are above average in language and literacy and in mathematics. These areas of learning are given a suitably high priority within the school and staff make sure that they are introduced into all the other subject areas so that children are able to practise the skills they have learnt.

21. Good use is made of data collected on individual children as they arrive in nursery. It allows the staff to track their progress and make sure they are achieving at suitable levels. Not enough use is made of this data to measure the achievement of the whole year group so that year by year comparisons can be made.

22. By the age of five, children's attainment in personal and social skills is likely to be above the expected standard. This is similar to that found during the school's first inspection. Children become confident and are keen to try new activities. All share all resources fairly and take turns. At story time, they listen well and co-operate with teachers and other staff. Children enjoy answering questions and talking to each other and to all adults. Most are independent and they make choices for themselves throughout the day. Most of the children are beginning to understand the difference between right and wrong and carefully remind others of the school rules. They are beginning to understand how to behave with consideration for the feelings of others by saying they are sorry, spontaneously, and trying to make amends.

23. Improving children's language and literacy skills is given a very high priority within the nursery. Most are attentive and respond positively when asked to do something as, for example, when they pass on a message or remind classmates to tidy up. At group time, they listen patiently to the contributions made by their friends and take their turn. Their ability to listen and concentrate for such extended periods is a particular strength. Most are able to express themselves confidently as when, for example, they talk about some of the activities they have enjoyed during the sessions or describe how they have built a model. Children handle books well and they share them with others, often retelling their favourite stories. They are able to explain how books convey a meaning and some can already recognise some simple words in text.

24. Numeracy skills are regularly practised with many of the children able to count to ten, often using number rhymes and songs to improve their learning. A few can count much higher than this and can apply their knowledge in practical situations. For example, they can calculate how many of their classmates should be allowed into the home corner. On another occasion, a group used their knowledge of shape and pattern to find similar shapes around the nursery and then record their findings. They have a good understanding of mathematical language and are able to talk about position, shape, size and quantity.

25. Children's attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world is likely to be above the national standard by the time they are five. Most are confident when they talk about the features of the nursery and when they discuss their family and friends. They can recognise some elements of time passing such as the ages of their brothers and sisters or household objects which are older than them. They use tools safely and know how to design and construct models. Teachers plan activities which ensure that children are introduced to simple scientific processes. They look at a range of materials and talk about what they have seen, picking out similarities and differences. Some can compare the properties of different materials. For example, one group spent part of a session joining different materials. By the end of the activity, they were able to explain that glue is able to join paper and card successfully but is less effective when using heavy wood. They then applied this knowledge when making their own models of aeroplanes, selecting a hammer and nails to pin the materials. Children's attainment in information technology is good. They are confident when they use the computers and many know how to use the programmes independently. This shows an improvement from when the school was last inspected.

26. In their physical development, children's attainment is good and they are likely to achieve standards which are above the national average by the time they are five years old. Children show good levels of co-ordination and control as they play outside, running, jumping, skipping and hopping. They demonstrate an awareness of others, for example, as they pedal and steer outdoor vehicles along many different routes and pathways. Most children can throw large balls into a net. Indoors, children handle construction kits, paintbrushes, tools and other materials with increasing precision.

27. Children's overall attainment in creative development is likely to be above the national standards by the time they are five. This is in line with the attainments recorded in the previous inspection report. Children are able to make choices in the use of materials, resources and equipment. They are successful in painting, drawing and collage and use a range of tools with care and skill. Children sing tunefully and use their imagination well in role play activities as, for example, when re-enacting a visit to the library.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

28. Children's attitudes, values and personal development are all very good and are strengths of the school. Adults make a major contribution to these positive attitudes through their provision of extremely interesting learning activities which keep children's attention. Levels of attendance are good and this helps children to make a good rate of progress. Parents report that their children like school.

29. Most children arrive in school smiling and eager to join their friends. A few of the very newest intake are tearful on arrival but participate happily once their parents have departed

and they are settled at an activity. Children are familiar with the start of day routines and come into nursery in an orderly manner, hanging up their coats, self registering and saying goodbye to parents. They are very keen to participate in the range of interesting activities set up by staff and they use their time well throughout the session. They are enthusiastic about the tasks and are keen to describe to visitors what they are doing. One little boy explained carefully that his painting was “... for my mummy - it’s a pattern of green circles and that’s a yellow wiggly worm”. Most children are very responsive to teachers and listen carefully to what is said. During an initial introduction by a student about an exciting treasure hunt activity in the sand tray, one boy used knowledge from home and enquired with great concern “Have you got a metal detector?” Many are ready to contribute to discussions and will “help” teachers to solve problems, as for example, when working out which items are heavier or lighter during a balancing activity. Children are happy to work alongside their peers and to share resources. During a collage activity, one group shared glue and scissors and independently accessed their own resources from a bank at the side of the sticking table. Children’s attitudes have improved still further since the last inspection when they were judged to be good.

30. Children behave very well in all areas of the nursery and this ensures a friendly and positive learning environment in which children feel secure and learn very well. Some already help their friends to put on hats and gloves and show them how to roll pastry or weigh bears. Children are beginning to understand the impact that their behaviour has on others. For example, they know to leave the bathroom tidy so that others can use it safely. When outdoor play groups swap over midway through the session, most children understand to walk up one side of the ramp in single file so that they do not bump into the others coming down. Standards of behaviour are equally as good as at the time of the last inspection.

31. Children are very keen to take responsibility for different aspects of their own personal development and carry these out well. For example, they self register without fuss and are very sensible when choosing their own snacktime foods from the selection on offer. However, at times they are not able to extend this independence as adults occasionally oversupport the children. For example, at snack time, children do not register their own name when “reporting for snack” or select their own drink. Children are very familiar with the daily routines. They respond very quickly to the various signals such as music which tell them when activities are ending. Children enjoy close and very positive relationships with the staff who know them and often their families, very well. Relationships are excellent throughout the school. Standards of personal development are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection.

32. Most children are brought to school on time and attend regularly. Children’s regular attendance has a positive impact on their attainment and learning. Although attendance is non statutory for this age group, the headteacher asks parents to ask permission from the school before taking their children away on holiday during term time. This reflects the importance placed upon good attendance by the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

33. Overall, the teaching in the school is good with almost half the lessons seen judged to be very good. One in ten lessons were satisfactory and none was unsatisfactory. This is better than when the school was last inspected, when fewer lessons were very good. Staff have responded to the weaknesses pointed out at that time. Tasks set for the children are well organised and no time is wasted. Planning is more detailed and the learning outcomes for each lesson are clearly stated. Children know what they are expected to achieve and they are given suitable explanations. Higher attaining children are well catered for. They are set work which is interesting but also demanding. They learn faster and make better progress because of this.

34. All staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children. They are successful in introducing the national strategies in language and literacy to nursery age children. For example, during some lessons, staff use resources such as big books to explain how books are organised and used to pass on information through pictures and text. By skilful questioning and sensitive support, staff teach the children how to predict what might be happening next in the story and then relate their ideas to personal experiences which children share during the group activities. In the best lessons such as these, children stay actively involved and learn quickly.

35. Most lessons move at a brisk pace but they cater for children of all levels of prior attainment. An example of this was seen during a matching and sorting activity when a group of children was working with large jigsaws. Some found the task very challenging at first and the adult's attention focussed on these, offering advice and suggestions but making sure that each child was able to make a contribution. She knew all group members well. Some higher attainers found the work quite easy and so the adult replaced the jigsaws with much more complicated ones and then gave these children her attention as they discussed strategies for completing them. Children of all ability levels made very good progress during this activity; they concentrated for long periods and were able to think for themselves. The high quality of the teaching on occasions such as this ensured that each group member had acquired new knowledge and could explain how their work could be improved.

36. Throughout the day, teachers work hard to ensure that no time is wasted. They set high standards in what they expect children to achieve and the children respond accordingly by moving sensibly between activities, tidying up when asked to and completing tasks before moving on.

37. The good teaching is found in all the areas of children's learning. This degree of consistency improves children's learning opportunities because it means there is always a wide range of interesting and worthwhile activities available for them to choose from. This aspect of the teaching has improved since the last inspection when some of the work in mathematics was less successful.

38. It is only on a few occasions, the quality of the teaching does not meet these high standards set by the staff. For example, there are some times when learning opportunities are missed by the adults working with children. During snack time they do not always engage children in conversation and a valuable chance to improve their language skills and personal development is not taken. Similarly, there are some occasions when the very good levels of

independence demanded of the children are reduced because adults give them too much support when it is not really needed. Examples of this were observed during a baking activity, when children watched more than participated and in art work when children's names were written on the paper when they might have done it for themselves. The amount children learn and their levels of independence are therefore reduced.

39. The way in which all adults manage children in the nursery is a particular strength. They insist on consistently high standards of behaviour and children are very clear about these high expectations as they are constantly reinforced throughout the school day. A high standard is set at the very start of the session, when the headteacher gathers the whole school together for an introduction to the day's activities. She sets a very positive tone through her cheerful greeting and the background music which children listen to. She asks them questions about how loudly or softly the music is playing and this helps them to become focused and to concentrate on what she is asking. All staff participate in this session and make the activities sound exciting. During the session, children are gently reminded to tidy away resources and are encouraged to increase some aspects of their independence by taking care of their own personal needs. When children resist following specific instructions, staff persevere with their requests and children are usually co-operative. For example, during a bulb planting activity outside, one little girl did not want to use the small trowel, she wanted the large one. The teacher kindly said "No, use the small one - it's easier for you." Still meeting resistance, the teacher continued firmly "No. I don't want you to use the big one, use this small green one, you'll find it easier to dig with this one", and the child readily complied. Very consistent approaches to behaviour management such as this, ensure children feel secure in a very positive and familiar learning environment. It also means that teaching can be effective and children learn consistently well.

40. Staff regularly monitor the work that children undertake and use these assessments to improve their teaching. For example, they noted a reluctance on the part of one child to become involved in outdoor play. He was persuaded to take part with an adult working with him to boost his confidence until he was prepared to join in the activities with the other children. When the monitoring of children's work and progress is used successfully in this way, it has a positive effect on the quality of the learning. This is because it enables staff to adjust the emphasis of some of their work to match individual children's needs.

41. Staff make good use of the available resources to support their teaching. For example, the outside play area, which has been successfully redeveloped, is now used to teach a number of curriculum areas. Children using the garden were taught about bulbs and what they needed to grow successfully and those riding their bikes around the track were encouraged to identify the different mathematical shapes made by the pathways.

42. Information and communications technology is used by teachers to improve the curriculum much more effectively than when the school was last inspected. Staff are much more confident than before and the computers are newer, supporting a much better range of software for nursery age children.

43. Staff make very good use of their links with parents to extend children's learning at home. Children and parents are encouraged to borrow books from the school library to initiate a love of books among the children. Staff work closely with any parent who has specific concerns

about what their child should be attempting at home. Such instances of partnership between the school and local families are impressive and contribute to improving standards.

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

Learning Opportunities.

44. The school has made very good progress in addressing the curriculum issues raised by the previous inspection and maintaining the strengths which were identified.

45. Curriculum provision has been improved by linking it more directly to what each child needs. The breath, balance and relevance of the school curriculum are good. The well planned curriculum is soundly based on all areas of learning in the national Early Learning Goals with appropriate emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy. It prepares the children well for the next stage of their education in a reception class of a primary school.

46. The school has good quality written policies for all areas of the curriculum and the recently written schemes of work for literacy and numeracy underpin and assist the planning for these areas of learning.

47. Both teachers and nursery nurses actively develop the curriculum. They are involved in all stages of the planning, ensuring all adults fully understand what is required of them. The planning effectively supports the teaching and children's learning. For example, it focuses on what teachers want children to learn from an activity and the skills they should be helped to acquire. A high priority is given to the teaching of early reading, writing and mathematical skills and these areas are planned carefully so that they are successfully included throughout all the activities children undertake.

48. The nursery school provides a good balance of activities that are directed by teachers, such as story time or singing in a large group and opportunities for children to choose their own tasks from the wide range of stimulating learning activities both indoors and out. An example was the role play area set out as 'Ditton Library' where children chose books, wrote on library cards and recorded the loan on the till.

49. The daily evaluation of children's learning is used well. Issues raised from this are quickly addressed. An example was the evaluation of the writing area. Staff became aware of the limited take up of the activity and decided to relocate it to a more prominent position.

50. Arrangements for assessing children's knowledge and ability before entry to the nursery are not always reliable. Most parents fill in a booklet highlighting their child's skills but some booklets lack sufficient detail for this information to be used as a reliable baseline on entry. Arrangements for assessing children's progress within the nursery are effective. An assessment is undertaken during the child's first term and their progress is measured against this over time and carefully recorded. This is successful as it ensures that the needs of the different groups are met and that the strengths and weaknesses of individual children are supported well.

51. The curriculum provides a broad range of worthwhile opportunities which meet the interests and needs of all children. The curriculum is equally accessible to all children and there

is a good culture of fairness and equality which pervades every aspect of school life. For example, care is taken to ensure that new children who are still a little unsure are involved in all activities and have equal turns on the large tricycles and vehicles. Resources which are popular, such as the computers, are monitored to make sure that all children have equal access.

52. The school has reviewed its provision for the more able children since the last inspection and now provides a good range of more challenging activities. For example, during a weighing task, the more able children were asked to balance greater numbers of objects. They were asked thought provoking questions, such as, “ Do you think this will balance if I take something off each pan?” The level of challenge was appropriate for their age and prior attainment.

53. The provision for children with special educational needs is good. Children have individual education plans with well specified targets. Staff support these children well by including them in all activities. For example, the adult working with a group of children making a graph of suitable and unsuitable material to make a teddy bear, adapted her questions to match the different levels of the children’s use of language. She gave sensitive support and encouragement as they tried out their new vocabulary.

54. Since the last inspection there have been considerable improvements in the provision for information and communications technology and its use in the curriculum. Two modern computers are now in place and staff are confident when using the wide range of software that supports the curriculum in many areas of learning.

55. The school encourages children to extend the language and literacy curriculum at home by building on the skill development taught in the nursery. All children take books home on a regular basis and the development of their early learning skills is consolidated well by sharing these at home with parents.

56. The school curriculum is enhanced by members of the community who are invited into the school to share their lifestyles and skills with the children. For example, firemen, police personnel and a nurse all come into school to support and extend the planned topic in the curriculum ‘People Who Help Us.’

57. The school has well established, close links with most of the primary schools to which the children will transfer. However, the nursery school feeds eleven different primary schools throughout the area. An invitation to visit the children in the nursery is sent to each school and there is a better response from some schools than others. The nursery school sends a comprehensive record for each child to the transfer school.

Personal development.

58. The nursery makes good provision for the personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its children. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection.

59. Provision for children’s spiritual development is good. Staff promote this aspect as often as possible through a variety of planned opportunities. For example, children are beginning to

gain an insight into some Christian festivals through the story of the birth of Jesus and by celebrating Easter. Children are encouraged to think of others at Christmas time and they sing carols at the community centre and at a residential home for old people.

60. The curriculum provides opportunities for the children to experience a sense of wonder at the natural world. They plant primulas, bulbs and heather in the school garden and look each day to see if they have grown. Teachers use spontaneous moments well to develop a sense of awe and amazement in the children. For example, children transplanting crocus bulbs looked with interest and wonder at the long roots that had started to grow. She gave them sufficient time to marvel at this before they replanted the bulbs. Following a topic on 'Winter', children learn to nurture and care for the wild birds that visit the playground each day by putting out food and water. This responsibility is taken very seriously and children check the water dish and food each day when playing outdoors.

61. Provision for moral development is good. There is a welcoming atmosphere in the nursery and children work and play well together. They learn about sharing and caring and are keen to help if someone needs it. For example, children playing in the water tray noticed a new child anxiously watching the activity. They gave her a band to wear and included her in the task of making bubbles. Staff are good role models for the children and treat everyone with respect. Children respond well to this and learn how to treat one another accordingly. The staff are consistent in the way they teach the principles of right and wrong. Children are taught what is acceptable and what is unacceptable behaviour through discussion and in the every day life of the nursery. Whenever children make a misjudgement, they are gently made to consider how they should have acted and make amends. For example, a child who started to knock down another child's building was quietly taken to one side and asked how he could put the wrong right. He elected to help him build it up again. Well established, basic routines and school rules are understood by most children and are accepted as being fair, for example, why it is necessary to walk in the nursery and when it is necessary to wait in a line and not push before going out side.

62. The provision for social development is good. The children are friendly and relate positively to all familiar adults in the nursery. They care for one another, reflecting the good models provided by the staff. For example, many children showed concern for a child who looked as though his nose was bleeding. They all tried to comfort him. All were relieved when it was discovered that it was paint, not blood. All staff expect children to co-operate as members of both large groups and small groups and work together successfully. Staff promote good manners and role play is used effectively to show children how to behave in other situations. For example, children working in 'Ditton Library' asked for books politely and thanked the librarian. Children are encouraged to be independent. They are expected to clear away all activities at group time and to put on their own coats, hats and scarves before going outdoors. However, there are times when the provision for social development is less well promoted. This occasionally happens in some activities such as baking and snack time when children are given too much help by adults and opportunities to develop independence are missed.

63. Provision for cultural development is good. The school enriches the children's knowledge and experience of their own and other cultural traditions through planned experiences and activities. Children learn traditional nursery rhymes, sing ring games such as 'Here we go round the Mulberry Bush' and listen to traditional stories. Theatre groups come to school to

extend children's knowledge of their own culture, acting traditional stories such as, 'The Three Little Pigs' and 'Cinderella'. The children's knowledge of their own traditions is further developed by an elderly lady visitor to the school who talks to the children about the traditional toys and games she played when she was a girl.

64. Children are encouraged to learn about the culture of others. Special days, such as the festivals of Diwali and the Chinese New Year are celebrated. Children learn about Diwali, make divas from clay and add them to the display. These curriculum experiences are further developed by the visit of an Indian dancer, who introduces the children to her traditional music and style of dance. The school has a large collection of appropriate, good quality resources to support this aspect of development. The planned curriculum activities have a very positive impact on the children's cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

65. The school has very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare and children benefit from these very high levels of pastoral care. The school monitors children's academic performance and personal development very effectively and staff and most parents said they have a very clear understanding of what children can do and what they achieve during their time at the nursery. There are very good standards of educational and personal support and guidance for children and the school cares very effectively for its children in every aspect of its provision.

66. The headteacher and all adults in the nursery work very effectively as a team to safeguard children's welfare and promote their development. Staff are familiar with child protection procedures and all aspects of health and safety are very carefully considered. Appropriate links are maintained with outside agencies who provide additional support for individual children on request. A good induction programme ensures that staff establish effective relationships with parents. Great emphasis is placed on the importance of effective pastoral care for all children in the school and this helps them to settle quickly at the start of the year and take the maximum advantage of their nursery place. Health and safety procedures are well documented and first aid arrangements are very well organised with a good proportion of staff being suitably qualified. Any individual dietary or medical needs are known to all staff. The school promotes the importance of regular attendance to parents and encourages them to bring children to school on time. The behaviour code is simple and is very consistently followed by all adults working with children. Appropriate arrangements are in place to deal with instances of oppressive behaviour. Parents are made aware of the school's high expectations through the prospectus and regular newsletters it produces.

67. The arrangements for assessing and recording children's attainment and progress are good. They ensure children's individual needs are met and that an appropriate range of activities is provided to ensure a constant rate of progress is achieved by children. Initial records of children's attainment are completed when they begin nursery. Children's attainment is monitored continually throughout the year and a full picture is maintained of each individual's academic achievement and personal development. Staff are careful to track children's take up of work, as some have strong preferences for particular tasks. Adults are careful to ensure each child has equal access to a broad range of activities. Children's profiles contain detailed information gained from this regular monitoring and assessment and this information is used to compile the end of year reports to parents and the receiving primary

schools. Samples of children's work are also collected throughout the year to provide examples of their attainment and progress.

68. The school uses its assessment information very well to guide its planning and staff provide children with a broad and balanced curriculum. The school holds regular monitoring meetings to moderate children's work and decide how best to support their learning, particularly in language and literacy, and numeracy. This results in children being offered a variety of planned experiences, depending on their individual needs.

69. The school provides very effective support and advice for all its children as a result of the good monitoring of their academic progress, together with the very good monitoring of their personal development, behaviour and attendance. This area has improved since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

70. Parents have very positive views of the school, as expressed in questionnaire responses, at the pre-inspection parents' meeting and to inspectors during the course of the inspection. The school establishes good links with parents who are well informed about school life and the progress their children make. The impact of parental involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory and makes a sound contribution to children's learning.

71. The vast majority of parents are very satisfied with what the school provides and achieves. They feel the school is well led and managed and provides a stimulating learning environment with high expectations of children's behaviour and effort.

72. The school produces a detailed prospectus which clearly sets out its aims and expectations for children. Half termly newsletters provide up to date information about school events and issues important to parents, along with some curricular information. Plans are in place to improve the curriculum information further. Parents are encouraged to work in school with children in a number of different roles. Prospective parent helpers meet with the headteacher and discuss what they would like to do. Currently, nine parents help regularly with a range of activities from snacktime to computer skills. Although there is no specific documentation for parent helpers, they work closely with nursery staff who ensure children gain as much as possible from this additional support. However, during some snacktimes, staff did not encourage adults to talk to the children and opportunities were missed to improve their personal and social development. Parent governors are invited to visit the school regularly and one accompanies children on educational visits. Staff provide training on any aspect of the curriculum for the governing body and this helps them to become more familiar with children's learning and the activities they undertake.

73. Parents' and carers' involvement with the work of the school is satisfactory. Initial meetings with parents provide staff with information about their children and what they can do when they start nursery. The school provides opportunities for regular discussion with parents who have concerns or queries. Curriculum evenings are organised so that parents can experience the areas of learning for themselves and understand better what their children learn at nursery. A parents' meeting is held during the spring term at which parents and staff discuss children's personal development and academic progress. Detailed written reports on all the areas of learning are sent to parents during the summer term and a copy is also given to

the receiving primary school. These contain good evaluative judgements about what children can do. Parents are also encouraged to help children learn a number of songs at home in time for the Christmas concert and to participate regularly in the library lending scheme.

74. The school has improved the opportunities it offers for sharing information with parents on their children's attainment and development since the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

75. The headteacher provides good leadership. Working with colleagues and governors, she has set a clear educational direction for the school and has established an excellent ethos. This has been achieved through strong teamwork and the way in which all staff are able to contribute to the decision making process. For example, the school development plan, which was criticised during the last inspection, now has contributions from all partners within the school and this helps to make it a much more useful document. It sets out detailed targets for improvement over a longer timescale than before and decides on clear priorities. These are suitable and realistic. For example, targets have been linked to national priorities such as the literacy and numeracy initiatives. The plan also has much closer links with finance so that action plans are carefully costed. This is an improvement.

76. The school's aims and values are regularly reviewed and are evident in its life and work. Good examples of these aims, delivered into practice, are found in the high expectations of good behaviour set by all staff and the impressive working atmosphere.

77. The contribution of the governing body is good. It takes a full part in the life of the school and individual governors have taken on responsibility for certain areas such as numeracy and literacy. Governors are well informed and operate very effectively on behalf of the school. They fulfil all their statutory responsibilities.

78. The school is involved in a process of self review. It receives a good level of support from the local education authority link adviser who checks on progress towards meeting agreed targets. For example, arrangements for inducting children into school were changed and the success of the initiative was evaluated by both the headteacher and the link officer. Good use is made of information collected from parents when children start school. It enables staff to offer extra support to those children who require it and monitor the progress they make during the year. Not enough use is made of the data to check on the progress of the overall year group or to compare the performance of different year groups.

79. Systems for monitoring the planning and teaching have improved considerably since the last inspection. All staff are involved in appraising teaching performance and there is a commitment to improving the quality of the teaching and children's learning but more work needs to be done in this area. At present, the systems are informal with no procedures in place to ensure that agreements made or lessons learnt are put into practice. The school has recognised this as an area for further improvement.

80. Communication systems used within the school are good. New technology is used to good effect. For example, finance systems are computerised and electronic mail is regularly used. The school operates very efficiently, with responsibility for the administration shared between

the school secretary and the headteacher. The most recent audit report of the school found systems to be secure.

81. The school does not have a delegated budget and most financial resources are allocated by the local authority. Nevertheless, it is beginning to apply the principles of best value in a number of areas. For example, there is wide consultation undertaken when financial decisions are being made and the deployment of staff in different areas is regularly reviewed to ensure they have maximum impact on children's learning.

82. There are suitable numbers of well qualified and experienced staff to teach the children. Resources are good for each area of learning and they are well used and thoughtfully organised. This helps children to become more independent as, when for example, they help themselves to art materials or jigsaws.

83. The accommodation, both indoors and out, is good and has improved since the last inspection. The areas for learning are better organised and more accessible to children. Outside play areas now offer a very good range of activities which can support the full curriculum. An example of this is the way in which simple science observations are undertaken in the garden area and counting skills are improved as children count the laps they complete around the pathways.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Improve the systems for monitoring the teaching and children's learning. This will involve:
 - Headteacher and staff agreeing criteria to be used when children's learning and teaching is observed
 - Sharing the good practice(The school has already identified this as an area that it wishes to improve)
(paragraphs 6, 79, 89)

- (2) Ensure that the levels of support that adults give to children are consistent throughout the school and that learning opportunities are not missed. This will involve:
 - Making better use of snack time as an opportunity to improve children's personal and social development as well as increasing their levels of independence.
 - Checking that adults do not give too much support especially during practical activities such as painting and baking.*(paragraphs 14, 38, 62, 72, 89)*

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- (1) Measure the attainment and progress of the whole year group so that year by year comparisons can be made and the school's performance evaluated.
(paragraphs 21, 78)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

33

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

31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	48	38	14			

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)

43

Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals

Na

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

Nursery

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

0

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

4

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

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

7

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

3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	N/A

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	N/A

Attendance in nursery is non statutory. Nevertheless, attendance levels are good and the school is successful in encouraging regular attendance.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	82

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	98/99
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	£
Total income	21525
Total expenditure	16107
Expenditure per pupil	212
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	5418

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	66
Number of questionnaires returned	23

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	87	13	[]	[]	[]
My child is making good progress in school.	74	22	4	[]	[]
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	26	4	[]	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	30	4	[]	7
The teaching is good.	78	17	4	[]	[]
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	22	13	[]	[]
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	17	[]	4	[]
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	26	4	[]	4
The school works closely with parents.	70	26	[]	4	[]
The school is well led and managed.	87	7	4	[]	[]
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	74	26	[]	[]	[]
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	65	13	4	4	[]

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Personal and social development

84. By the age of five, children's attainment in personal and social skills is likely to be above the expected standard. This is similar to that found during the school's first inspection.

85. Children become confident and are keen to try new activities as they settle into the nursery. They work together well when constructing large jigsaws or building tall structures to enable the 'teddy bear' to reach the 'attic.' All share all resources fairly. They take turns sensibly with the large balls and wheeled vehicles outdoors, allowing the youngest children the first choice of tricycles and the dolls' pram. When sharing popular activities, for example, working with the computers or listening centres, they respect the rights of other children and willingly give them a fair turn. At story time, they listen well and co-operate with adults. Children enjoy each others' company and happily include their friends and others in all activities. For example, children playing in the 'library' invited a watching child to come and join them, giving her the key role of librarian.

86. Most children are independent. They make choices for themselves throughout the day, taking the initiative to select activities to follow their interests. They put on aprons as a matter of course when playing with water or painting. They know the school routine and help to tidy up. Even the youngest children replace equipment in the right place on request. All children are responsible for their own coats and belongings and very well established routines ensure that few need help with the toilet or to wash and dry their hands. They behave very well and treat one another with care, and respect books and equipment. They are beginning to understand the difference between right and wrong and carefully remind others of the school rules. For example, children going out to play reminded another child to walk when going to get his coat and then led him to the right place in the line of children. They are beginning to understand how to behave with consideration for the feelings of others by saying they are sorry, spontaneously, and by trying to make amends.

87. The quality of the teaching is good overall. In 43 per cent of lessons it is very good, in 15 per cent of lessons it is good and the rest is never less than satisfactory.

88. Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn. They have excellent relationships with the children and understand their needs. They consistently encourage consideration for others, praising children enthusiastically for playing together successfully and co-operating with others. All are patient and kind with the children, especially those who are new and still a little unsure, giving them plenty of time to answer questions and develop confidence. This is particularly evident in group time, when adults give ready praise and encouragement as children try out their ideas and recall interesting things they have done in the nursery. Adults are aware of children with special educational needs and ensure they all work successfully and make good progress. The excellent relationship between all adults and the children helps them develop confidence and build on the many experiences in the nursery. For example, when children were working in a small group at a colour sorting activity, the

adult adapted her questions and tasks to suit every child's needs in the group. Staff have high expectations of good behaviour, gently reinforce simple school rules and take every opportunity to increase children's personal skills. For example, a child who wanted to turn all the pages of the 'Big Book' at group time was carefully reminded that others would like to have a turn.

89. However, there are some inconsistencies in the development of children's independence. Although children are given personal responsibility for their own learning and for clearing away activities, there are occasions when children receive too much help from adults. This happens at snack time when children sit down at the table and are given their plates and cups by adults instead of being allowed to carry them to the table themselves. On other occasions, adults write children's names on their work as a matter of course. These opportunities to develop children's independence are missed.

90. Good planning, organisation and the range of stimulating activities all combine successfully to give the children opportunities to develop social and personal skills.

Language and Literacy

91. Children enter nursery with language skills that are average. By the time they are five, most children's attainment in language and literacy is likely to be above the expected standard. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection although a higher percentage of children are arriving in school unable to speak clearly.

92. This area of the curriculum is given a suitably high priority within the nursery and good opportunities are provided to develop and practise the four elements of language -- speaking, listening, reading and writing.

93. Children listen well. In most groups, they listen attentively to stories, to their classmates' contributions or to the instructions that they have been given. Their ability to listen and respond, given the normal distractions of nursery life, is particularly impressive. When they come together for group time at the start of each day, these skills are reinforced and practised. For example, they listen carefully as the adult describes what activities they will be undertaking during the session and they respond well when asked a question. Their ability to listen so well is due to the consistent approach used by all staff and it makes a positive contribution to the standards they achieve.

94. Children speak confidently and they take an active part in imaginative play and this is a very successful feature of the school's provision. They are able to adopt roles, express themselves imaginatively and this contributes to the above average standards in this area of learning. For example, as some children pretend to work in a library created in their home corner, they sort out books, talk to visitors and handle enquiries on their imaginary telephone. Their language skills improve on these occasions, especially when the adult working with them is able offer good ideas on how the role play should develop. This helps to keep the activities purposeful and increase children's confidence.

95. Children enjoy using books and they know how to handle them carefully. The school provides an interesting and stimulating literary environment which encourages children to enjoy and value books. They understand from their own attempts at writing that the words and

pictures in the book convey a meaning to the reader. Most children can recognise their own names and a few can identify some of the letters of their name in writing and displays around the nursery. Most are able to talk about books they have enjoyed listening to and can retell their favourite stories. They are able to select their own books at the end of each session and take books home.

96. Children are confident when making marks. Writing is featured across the curriculum and children are keen to talk about its many purposes often including writing in their imaginative play. One group, for example, wrote out lists to remind them which books their library customers wanted. They knew that the marks they made conveyed a meaning to the reader and were able to compare their 'writing' with examples seen in displays of work around the nursery, talking about the similarities and differences.

97. Most children respond positively to the school's provision in language and literacy. They concentrate well and stay on a task until it has been completed.

98. Children learn very well. This is primarily because of the high expectations set by staff for the children. They know the children well and set them work which is at the right level and suitably demanding. Children are able to follow their own interests but staff organise them in such a way that children build on what they already know and they have regular opportunities to consolidate their learning. An example of this was seen during group time when children repeated familiar rhymes with the teacher. Once again, this helps to build their confidence.

99. The small number of children who are identified as having special educational needs receive additional support and have detailed programmes of work. These set targets for future improvement which are known to all staff.

100. The quality of the teaching is very good overall. Two thirds of lessons observed were very good and the remaining third was good. Teachers' planning has improved since the last inspection. It sets out more clearly what the teacher expects children to achieve during an activity and this supports the teachers' work. The planning also sets out work for children of different levels of prior attainment. Staff are enthusiastic and keep children's interest, making sure their work proceeds at a brisk pace. They ensure no time is wasted and a result of the teaching is the way in which all children, regardless of gender or prior attainment, learn well and make good progress.

Mathematics

101. By the age of five, children's attainment in mathematics is likely to be above the expected standard. This is an improvement on the standards found during the last inspection and the provision for higher attaining children is now much better. As with literacy, numeracy is given a high priority throughout the school and many children are able to apply their mathematical knowledge in other curriculum areas. For example, they can work out how many laps of the pathway they might complete on their bikes and how many should be allowed into the role play area. Many of the children can count to ten and some can count much higher than this. Some of the higher attainers are able to find the correct answers to number operations which involve simple addition and subtraction. They can use their knowledge of number rhymes and counting games to reinforce this learning. The school has been successful in introducing elements of the national numeracy strategy, for example, regular mental arithmetic sessions.

102. Most are able to sort objects and put them in order using colour or shape to separate them. They are good at making comparisons and can recognise bigger and smaller objects around the nursery. For example, during a practical weighing activity most of the group members were able to predict which materials would weigh more and how many blocks would be needed to make the scales balance.

103. All children, including those with special educational needs, learn well and they make good progress in their mathematics. Staff know their individual needs and requirements and make sure they are given regular opportunities to build on and consolidate what they have learnt before. Children's records indicate that the progress they make is consistently good throughout their time in nursery.

104. Children behave extremely well and are keen to succeed. They have consistently positive attitudes towards their work and concentrate very well. Their keenness and co-operation is a significant factor in making sure that levels of attainment are high.

105. The quality of teaching in mathematics is very good in a third of lessons. In one third, it is good and the rest is satisfactory. In the most successful lessons, adults make good use of everyday opportunities to reinforce mathematical skills. For example, a teacher working with a group of children looked at the patterns and shapes created by the jigsaws they were working with. They were able to understand how they could recreate their own designs by using different shapes. The adult introduced mathematical language slowly and sensitively, making sure each group member was able to answer questions at their own level. They were then able to apply their new found knowledge in practical situations, recognising shapes around the nursery. They learn more quickly when they are given opportunities such as these.

106. Planning is better than when the school was last inspected and the work teachers arrange for higher attaining children has benefited from a complete review. Teachers are enthusiastic and skilled in teaching children of this age. They regularly monitor how effective their teaching has been by checking on what children have learnt by the end of an activity. This enables them to plan the next phase of work more accurately and to keep children's learning moving at a brisk pace.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

107. Children's attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world is judged to be above the expected level by the time they are five. The standards are higher than those achieved during the last inspection, especially in information and communications technology where children had little involvement and found difficulty in using the keyboard.

108. Staff provide many opportunities for children to talk confidently about their family, friends and the world around them. For example, they use big books well to stimulate interest. Following one lesson, children could talk about how things have changed and what kinds of objects people might put in the attic. They are developing a good understanding of the passage of time and recognise objects which are old and new. Most can talk about some aspects of their local community. They understand how people help each other and the valuable roles that can be played in society.

109. Children are beginning to understand simple scientific processes. They learn to observe carefully and describe accurately what they see. They can talk about the similarities and differences between materials with which they are working. For example, most know that the play dough they are rolling will change, becoming softer and more workable, the longer they roll it. Similarly, when they plant bulbs in the nursery garden they can talk about why they need to be in soil and how water is needed if they are to grow. They make accurate observations and are keen to share their knowledge with their classmates.

110. The majority are able to select tools independently and handle them safely. They know how different materials can be joined and show good skills when, for example, they use hammers and nails to make an aeroplane.

111. Children show particularly good levels of concentration during such activities and are well behaved and positive in all that they do. In one example, some children spent a long time planning what they should do before they constructed their model. They compared their plan with that of their classmates, modified what they were going to do and then made the necessary changes before beginning construction.

112. Children are now much more confident in their use of information and communications technology. When working at the computer, they know how to use the mouse and enjoy working on the programs available. They demonstrate high levels of independence. This aspect shows a big improvement from when the school was last inspected and this is due in large measure to the increase in staff confidence and better equipment.

113. All children, including those with special educational needs, learn well and make good progress due to the high standards set for them and the good organisation that is evident within this area of learning.

114. A broad and balanced curriculum, which is appropriate to the interests of the children, helps to consolidate and then build on their previous experiences.

115. The quality of teaching is very good in half the lessons observed. A quarter are good and the rest are satisfactory. Staff plan the curriculum in much more detail than when the school was last inspected and this has helped to improve the teaching because the intended outcome of each activity is clearly set out before it starts. Classrooms are well organised, children behave well and staff make sure that the work proceeds at a brisk pace. Children stay actively involved in practical lessons, concentrating for long periods and this helps them to learn more quickly. There is a consistency of approach which means that children know what is expected of them. In one particularly successful lesson, where children were engaged in a practical activity, the calm, insistent manner of the teacher ensured the children knew exactly what to do. She diffused a potentially difficult situation when a child who was upset could have disrupted the lesson. The way in which the incident was handled and the quality of her questioning technique ensured that the rest of the group stayed actively involved and continued to learn. One of the reasons for the success of the teaching is because staff regularly evaluate how effective they have been. They check that children have understood the work and use this information to plan the next stage.

Physical development

116. In their physical development, children's attainment is good and they are likely to achieve standards which are above those expected nationally of children by the time they are five years old.

117. Children move around the school, both indoors and out, with confidence and care. They demonstrate both good co-ordination and an awareness of others, for example, during outdoor play activities as they pedal and steer a wide variety of tricycles and wheeled vehicles along many different routes and pathways. They can pedal at speed, slowing them down to avoid another child's vehicle. The variety of inclines on some of the routes enables children to make good progress in these skills. Children enjoy using the space outside and show good levels of co-ordination and control as they run, jump, skip and hop when playing 'Follow My Leader', for example. Most children have early games skills and can throw large balls into a net.

118. Indoors, children use all the play equipment with increasing control and confidence. Children handle construction kits, paintbrushes and tools and other materials such as dough and pastry with increasing precision. They use scissors carefully to cut strips of material and use hammers and nails with some accuracy to make models of aeroplanes as part of a topic.

119. The quality of teaching is very good in 50 per cent of lessons, with the rest good. All the staff have a very good understanding of the early learning goals for physical education and challenge the children to a wide range of exciting opportunities, both indoors and out. Children are eager and keen to try all the new activities. For example, children using woodwork tools worked with great enthusiasm and vigour for a sustained length of time to make model planes. Staff teach the children to handle and use tools properly. They will, for example, adjust pencil and paintbrush grips to ensure bad habits do not go uncorrected. All adults have excellent relationships with the children that allow them to set high expectations for behaviour and help individuals gain confidence. For example, in a throwing and aiming activity, children were encouraged to wait patiently for their turn and then throw the ball from a variety of starting points. This ensured all the children achieved some success. Challenging questions are put to the children, such as, "How can we make the routes for the tricycles safe?" Children considered many options and then decided to slow down and stop at the junctions. The children made good progress in this activity. Children's progress and development are regularly observed by all members of staff who have clearly agreed rules for the assessment of physical skills. Their records are used effectively to ensure progression in all skills.

120. The school has worked hard in redeveloping the outdoor area since the last inspection. It is now challenging and exciting and provides many opportunities to develop and practise physical skills. This resource has improved the skill development and attainment for all children.

Creative development

121. Children's overall attainment in creative development is likely to be above the national standard by the time they are five. This is in line with the attainments recorded in the previous inspection report.

122. Children are introduced to a variety of activities and experiences to develop creative skills. They have opportunities to explore and experiment with pencils, paint and felt pens. Some children use them with a good measure of skill to produce observational drawings of old fashioned bears which are of a good standard. Children use paint expressively when painting at an easel and bold, expressive paintings in primary colours of family members and pets are displayed around the room. Children study the work of different artists and there is evidence of children using cubes to print a picture in the style of Vasarely.

123. Children are developing well in representing what they can feel and see. For example, they enjoyed the tactile experience of a variety of fur material and shiny paper when making a graph about appropriate material to make a teddy bear. They can recognise and discuss roughness and smoothness in these materials.

124. Children select and experiment with a wide variety of attractive paper, tinsel and material and are able to use glue appropriately to make a collage. The work on display around the nursery, such as collage, printing and weaving, gives good examples of children using a wide range of techniques in order to express their ideas and feelings. These experiences help children to learn about line, texture, shape and pattern.

125. Children enjoy making models. They use a variety of media with confidence, such as construction kits to make models of fire engines and other vehicles. They mould, squeeze and roll pastry and use cutters carefully to make star biscuits.

126. Children can use their imaginations to act out their ideas in different settings. For example, children in the role play area of 'Ditton Library' act out their roles as the librarian enforcing quietness, and customers who want to talk. They develop their vocabulary and creative thoughts well.

127. Children sing well. Singing is tuneful and they have a retentive memory for a wide repertoire of songs, rhymes and action songs. Children often sing spontaneously as they work. A wide variety of music is played to signal clearing away time or large group time and children listen carefully and can express preferences, for example, between quick or slow music. Other music sessions were not seen during the days of the inspection, but are timetabled weekly, when planned activities include making music with percussion instruments and providing opportunities to dance and move to music.

128. The teaching is good in 60 per cent of lessons and in 40 per cent of the lessons it is very good. Adults have a good knowledge of the skills and creative experiences relevant to children of this age. They plan carefully, ensuring a good balance of activities between those directed by the teachers and those chosen by the child. Targets for learning are clearly met. All staff enjoy teaching creative skills. Their enthusiastic approach transmits to the children who work with great enjoyment and pleasure. When working at the woodwork bench, for example, the children selected pieces of wood and chose the right size of nail. They then hammered with

great zeal and concentration. Adults are very supportive during creative activities, encouraging children to experiment and patiently helping them to develop their ideas further. For example, children working on observational paintings of the teddy bear were encouraged and praised as they recorded what they observed. In all creative activities, adults encourage children to be independent and make appropriate choices. For example, children at the collage table were encouraged to choose attractive material and coloured paper and then make choices about useful tools. They were encouraged to concentrate and finish the task and this helped to develop good attitudes to learning.