

INSPECTION REPORT

IGHTENHILL NURSERY SCHOOL

Burnley

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119071

Headteacher: Miss Pauline Robinson

Reporting inspector: Michael Hewlett
1569

Dates of inspection: Wednesday 3rd May – Friday 5th May 2000

Inspection number: 192235

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:	3-4
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lionel Street Burnley Lancashire
Postcode:	BB12 6DY
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Appropriate authority:	Lancashire
Name of chair of governors:	Pat Jones
Date of previous inspection:	19.11.1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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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		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development 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	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ightenhill Nursery is an average sized school situated in the Lowerhouse ward of Burnley, Lancashire. There are 80 children on roll of whom 46 are girls and 34 are boys. They all attend part time. They are taught by two teachers, including the headteacher, who work full time. In addition, there is a part time teacher who works one half day each week. There are five nursery nurses. One works full time while the other four work part time. A communicator is also employed to work with children who have special educational needs. Only a small percentage of children (5%) have special educational needs. All children come from homes where English is the first language. Children's attainment on entry to school varies considerably but is average overall. An increasing number of children are arriving in school with some delay in their speech and in their personal and social development.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Ightenhill Nursery is an effective school. Standards are in line and children make steady progress during their time in school. They enjoy coming, work hard and their behaviour is very good. The quality of the teaching is good overall and this supports the children's learning and contributes to the progress they make. There is good leadership. The headteacher, staff and governors work as an effective team to deliver the school's main priorities.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good
- Promotes very good relationships and provides a high standard of care
- Behaviour is very good and children have positive attitudes to school
- Leadership and management are effective
- Makes very good provision for children who have special educational needs
- Attendance is very good

What could be improved

- Children are sometimes given too much help by adults
- Provision for physical development outdoors
- Too much time is spent completing some activities
- Multicultural education and links with other communities

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 steady progress in many areas. Standards in information and communication technology and in children's personal and social development have been improved. This is due to better curriculum organisation and because more time is spent teaching basic skills. Staff have greater confidence in these areas of learning and a new computer is in use.

Planning of teachers' work is better for most areas and good use is now made of day to day assessment. The assessments are used well to change the next stage of teaching. The exception to this is outdoor play where lessons are not so well organized.

Systems for checking on children's progress and attendance are better. Staff have detailed information about individual children and the targets they hope they will achieve. This helps them to set the work more accurately when they are trying to meet individual needs. Levels of attendance have improved considerably and now they are very good.

The school development plan is much better. It clearly sets out the school's priorities and has good links with finance. It also sets out how the school will know whether it has been effective by establishing success criteria to measure against. Governors are more actively involved in the life and work of the school and have a better understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The school has set clear priorities and realistic targets for the future and is well placed to make further improvements.

STANDARDS

Performance in:		Key Well above average A Above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E
Language and literacy	C	
Mathematics	C	
Personal and social development	B	
Other areas of the curriculum	C	

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

The school's standards are in line with national averages in most areas. The exception is in children's personal and social development where standards are higher. Most make steady progress during their time in nursery. Children who have special educational needs make good progress when their achievements are compared to what they managed previously.

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children enjoy school. They have positive attitudes and participate fully in all activities. For example, they concentrate well when asked to complete a task.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Children's behaviour is very good in all areas. They are particularly good at sharing and taking turns.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Children are very kind to each other and are particularly thoughtful towards their classmates who have special needs. A good example of this is the way in which they help one another during construction activities.
Attendance	Very good levels. It is well promoted and children's attendance is closely monitored by the 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.

Almost half of the teaching is good, one in ten is very good and the rest is satisfactory. This shows an improvement from when the school was last inspected. The quality of the teaching is consistently good across most areas of the curriculum. Staff set high standards for the children and make sure that lessons are well organised by making good use of the resources available. They know the children well and set the tasks at just the right level of difficulty. They plan most of their work thoroughly but planning for physical development outside is not detailed enough. Most lessons move at a brisk pace and children stay actively involved but there are a few occasions when the teaching is less successful. Examples of this were seen at group time, when children waited too long to start work and some were given too much support. This reduced the progress they made.

Teaching of literacy and numeracy is successful. This is because staff have adapted the national strategies to meet the needs of nursery age children. A good example of this was during the short mental maths sessions that each group takes part in.

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. Most curriculum planning is clear and provides a good level of support for the teaching. Greater detail is needed in teachers' planning for developing children's skills outdoors.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision. Children's individual learning needs are being well met. Effective support and good teaching enable the children to achieve well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision is made for all aspects of children's personal development. Early experiences in the development of spiritual, moral and social aspects are sensitively encouraged through well planned activities and careful explanation. Not enough opportunities are provided for introducing children to other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of the children. Staff are consistent in their management of behaviour and children grow in confidence as they experience a variety of social settings.

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 are effective. The headteacher and staff have created a very positive ethos within the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors play an active part in the life of the school. They fulfil all their statutory responsibilities and support the headteacher well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good systems are in place which collect detailed information about the progress of individual children. Not enough use is made of this data to check on the progress made by each year group.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of the available resources. The school does not have a delegated budget but seeks out value for money when making spending decisions. The development plan provides a detailed evaluation of how successful spending has been.

Staffing is adequate to meet the needs of the children. Accommodation is good, both indoors and out. Resources for learning are adequate in most areas. The exception is in the quality of resources for outdoor play. Many of these are old and worn and need to be replaced.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and they behave very well • Standards are good. They have improved in information and communication technology • Self confidence and independence are encouraged • Children make good progress, especially those who have special educational needs • Staff are approachable and friendly, they respond positively to any concerns that are raised • The school is well led and managed • Teaching is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would welcome more information about their children's progress • Some felt there were not enough activities outside of lessons

The inspection findings confirm parents' very positive views about the school. It has established a very effective partnership with them. They are overwhelmingly positive in their views on almost all aspects of the school. It promotes positive attitudes amongst the children and encourages good behaviour. Children enjoy coming to school and, once there, they are well taught. A small number of parents would welcome more information about their children's progress. However, the school makes good attempts to keep parents well informed through regular feedback, written reports and individual meetings when they deliver and collect their children from school. Some parents also felt that not enough activities were

offered outside of lessons. The inspection findings indicate that the school offers a sufficient range of activities. They are similar to those found in most nursery schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children arrive in school with levels of attainment which are broadly average although more children have speech delays than when the school was last inspected. By the time they are five they are likely to reach average standards in most areas of the curriculum. The exception is in their personal and social development where standards are likely to be higher. Children are enthusiastic and hard working. They learn well during their time in nursery and this results in the steady progress they make. Standards are similar to those found in the previous inspection.

2. Some improvements have been made because more emphasis is placed on the direct teaching of basic skills, the quality of the teaching is consistently better and the planning of work is more detailed for most areas.

3. Children's attainment in personal and social development is similar to that found during the school's last inspection. They are confident in the nursery and are eager to try new things. They are friendly and speak spontaneously to both adults and children. Some children actively seek out their special friends. They can work successfully independently, in small groups or as members of a large group for story time. Children work and play co-operatively, indoors and out, readily taking turns on the tricycles and other wheeled vehicles. Children behave very well and are beginning to know the difference between right and wrong. They are developing a sense of fairness and consideration for the feelings of others. For example, they say they are sorry spontaneously and try to make amends. All children respect their environment, treating all books and equipment with care.

4. Improving children's language and literacy skills is given a very high priority within the nursery and all staff encourage children to practise their emerging language skills. Children are attentive and respond positively when asked to do something as, for example, when they pass on a message to another group or tell their friends to tidy up in the home area. At group time, they listen patiently for long periods 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. A good example of this was seen when children gathered each day for snack time. Most were able to describe in detail what they had done during the session using words they had learned during their discussions. Adults sitting with them kept the conversations purposeful and asked questions which gave each group member the chance to express themselves. Children know how to handle books carefully and they can share them with others, often retelling their favourite stories. They are able to explain how books convey a meaning and many of them use the well resourced library independently. Most children make good attempts at writing their own names and they can identify some of the letters in other words they find around the nursery. They know some of the sounds that these letters make.

5, Numeracy skills are developing well with most of the children able to count to ten with some counting higher than this. A feature of their work is the way in which they can apply their knowledge in practical situations. For example, they can recognize patterns in everyday objects around their classroom such as carpets and curtains. They are then able to recreate some of these patterns in their own work. On another occasion, a group of children was able to make simple addition and subtraction calculations as they tried to work out how many drinks they would need for their group at break time. They have a good understanding of mathematical language and are able to talk about position, shape, size and quantity.

6. Children are developing enquiring minds. Most are confident when they talk about features of their local community and the jobs that need to be done. For example, during the period of the inspection, police were visiting the area regularly. Children were able to describe how they were there to help people and why their job was such an important one. They can recognise some elements of time passing such as the ages of their brothers and sisters or everyday objects in nursery 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 demonstrate good observation skills as they talk about patterns on shells and leaves that they have seen. For example, they could pick out similarities and differences as well as understanding why the patterns and properties of leaves changed during the seasons of the year. Children are confident when using computers. Many know how to use the programmes independently, changing shapes and sizes using the mouse to control the screen.

7. Attainment in physical development is average overall. Indoors, most children are able to handle tools correctly. Many use pencils, crayons and felt pens with control when drawing and attempting to write their name. All can use paintbrushes competently, for example, when painting patterns and pictures of family members. Standards are not as high in physical development outdoors. This is because teachers do not plan activities in as much detail. Nevertheless, most children have developed early games skills and they can throw and catch a ball successfully. Others can roll a ball accurately and knock down skittles.

8. Creative skills are developing because children have access to a broad range of creative experiences. Most can express themselves with growing confidence and skill through drawing, painting, imaginative play and music. They apply paint in a variety of ways to make patterns and pictures. They use a range of tools with care and skill to make a collage of Easter eggs in a nest. Children readily initiate role play in the home corner and 'clothes shop' which helps to capture their imagination. Children listen well to music, sing tunefully and use percussion instruments with enthusiasm to mark the beat of the music.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Children have good attitudes to learning. They show great interest in the activities offered and most persevere well with a task to completion. Most children listen carefully to adults and follow instructions well. For example, during a creative activity, children watched carefully as the teacher demonstrated how to tear strips of paper to be used as stripes on a zebra mask. They then followed her instructions about how to hold the paper and tore their own strips with some success. Many children remain very involved in role play activities due to the presence and encouragement of at least one adult. For example, children selected garments from a sale rail, tried on the item in the changing room and paid for the clothing at the till. The adult ensured they remembered to check for a good fit, to decide if the sleeves were too long and to match the number of items to the tag outside the changing room. This added interest for the children and also consolidated their mathematical knowledge in a practical way.

10. Children behave very well. They are well mannered and are very polite to visitors. For example, one girl in the clothes shop could not unzip the top of her dress so she approached a nearby visitor and asked "Excuse me, will you undo my dress, please? I can't do it." Children are polite and take turns at snacktime and they also behave very sensibly outside; this helps them to make the most of any learning opportunities and contributes to their progress. There have been no exclusions.

11. Relationships are very good; the school is a busy and welcoming environment. Children really like school and they chatter happily to staff at the start of sessions, at snacktime and during activities. Staff encourage these warm relationships through their open interest in everything the children say. Children relate very well to each other; girls and boys work and play very well together during role play and when playing outside. This helps them to learn from each other as well as from their teachers. Some

children co-operate well with one another, taking turns, for example, on the computer and sharing toys. Children are very supportive of any peers with particular individual needs and readily include them in their play and work. They relate very well to the positive role models set by adults in the school and this helps their social development.

12. Children's personal development is good and they take a responsible approach to any requests for help by staff. They are eager to help and really enjoy running small errands and tidying away at the end of the session. Most children can take care of their own personal needs and express preferences for certain foods at snacktime. Children with special educational needs are fully involved in activities and are encouraged to be as independent as possible. For example, staff encouraged one child to use a straw when drinking from a carton of milk at snacktime rather than using a beaker and his success was widely praised.

13. Parents state that they are very happy with the standards of behaviour at the school. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that their children were becoming more mature and responsible.

14. Levels of attendance are very good for a nursery school. Parents ensure children attend very regularly and this contributes to the quality of the children's learning. Children are punctual and the sessions begin promptly.

15. Attendance levels have improved since the last inspection. Children's attitudes and behaviour are of a similarly high standard to those reported previously; the headteacher and staff encourage positive attitudes in all areas of work and play.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Overall, the teaching in the school is good with almost half the lessons seen judged to be good. One in ten lessons were very good and none were unsatisfactory. This is better than at the time of the last inspection when the majority of lessons were satisfactory. Staff have responded to the weaknesses pointed out then. Tasks set for the children are well organised and most of the planning is more detailed. The learning outcomes for most lessons are clearly stated and children know what they are expected to achieve. Children of all attainment levels are well catered for. They are set work which is interesting but also demanding. They learn faster because of this.

17. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children. They are successful in introducing some elements of 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 encourage the children to predict what might be happening next in the story. Children begin to understand how tension can be built up in storytelling and then relate their own ideas into personal experiences which they share during snack time. In good lessons such as these, children stay actively involved and learn quickly.

18. Most lessons are well organised and the teaching caters for children of all levels of prior attainment. An example of this was seen during a mathematics activity when a group of children was creating different patterns. Some found the task very challenging at first and the teacher'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 too easy and so she gave them much more complicated patterns to complete and then gave these children her attention as they discussed strategies for making them. Children of all ability levels made good progress during this work, they concentrated for long periods and were able to think for themselves. The high quality of the

teaching ensured that each group member had acquired new knowledge and could explain how their work could be improved. Teachers 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.

19. The good quality 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 information and communications technology was less successful.

20. It is only on a few occasions when the quality of the teaching does not meet these standards. For example, there are some times when adults give too much help. Some write children's names on their paintings when they are quite capable of doing this themselves and give out and collect equipment instead of giving children this responsibility. Similarly, there are occasions when time is not used to best effect and children wait too long for the opportunity to contribute. Examples of this were seen at group time as they waited for their snack to be distributed and when children queued to use the computer.

21. All adults manage children well. They insist on consistently high standards of behaviour and children are very clear about these expectations as they are constantly reinforced throughout the school day. Very good relationships are apparent, children feel confident and secure within a well ordered learning environment.

22. Staff make good use of most available resources to support their teaching. For example, 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 computer is newer, supporting a much better range of software for nursery age children.

23. Good use is made of 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 and are described by parents as being friendly and approachable. The good relationships with parents helps children to consolidate their learning at home.

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

24. The school has made good progress in addressing the curriculum issues raised by the previous inspection.

25. The school now provides a good curriculum, which is broad, balanced and relevant to the children's needs. It is securely based on the 'Early Learning Goals'. There is effective emphasis on personal and social development, language and literacy and mathematics with the result that the children make satisfactory progress in these areas. The curriculum prepares children very well for the next stage of education and early work in the National Curriculum.

26. There have been good improvements in curriculum planning since the last inspection. All planned topics have been analysed and improved to ensure that children will make steady progress during their time in nursery. The weekly and daily planning is better now that it identifies what children should learn and achieve. The evaluation of each week's teaching is used well to plan future work.

27. The curriculum planning provides a clear structure for the organisation and management of the nursery. It describes how staff will be used and how the equipment and room are organised. However, planning for physical skill development outdoors is not always as detailed and helpful to the teaching and learning as it is for other curriculum areas. The school is aware of this weakness and has identified the area as one for improvement in the school development plan.

28. Provision for children's learning in information and communication technology is much improved. There are now more planned opportunities for its use although, on occasions, children still have to queue for their turn.

29. The curriculum provides a broad range of worthwhile opportunities which meets the interests and needs of all the children. Every child has full and free access to the activities and resources provided for each session. Boys and girls have the same choices and show similar interests in all activities. Every child is treated as an individual and care is taken to ensure all children are involved in all the opportunities and activities provided by the nursery. For example, sensitive intervention and support by staff helps children, particularly those who are reluctant to play in the creative area, to participate in all experiences and activities. The achievements of all children are valued.

30. There is very good provision for children with special educational needs. Staff support the children well as they engage in activities of their choice. As a result, children make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual educational plans

31. The school encourages parents to extend their children's language and literacy skills at home. All children take home library books on a regular basis to share with family and friends.

32. The school has satisfactory links with the local community. Although the children do not make many educational visits, they often walk to nearby shops such as the florist and greengrocer. However, not enough use is made of the wider neighbourhood to improve the children's knowledge of other cultures.

33. Good links exist with local colleges of further education; students on school /work placements make a positive contribution to children's learning. Effective links with the nearby primary school allow children to make several visits to school before they begin full time education.

34. Overall, the school makes good provision for children's personal development. Provision for children's spiritual development is particularly good. It is carefully promoted through a wide range of planned activities and experiences, both indoors and out. There are many opportunities for children to reflect on the beauty and wonder of the natural world. During the inspection, for example, the children observed with great excitement and fascination the number of tadpoles in a large tank that were quickly turning into frogs. They discussed where they were going to release the baby frogs and considered what they could do to keep them safe.

35. The provision for moral and social development is also good. There is a positive approach to good behaviour in the nursery which makes a significant contribution to the children's moral development and the life of the school. Children are told sensitively the difference between right and wrong and all staff, who set a good example, consistently reinforce moral values. Whenever a child makes a mistake, they are gently asked to consider how they should have acted and make amends. Parents agree that the children's behaviour is good.

36. Teachers and nursery nurses spend much time teaching children to be kind and fostering the qualities of tolerance, equality, courtesy and good manners. All learn about sharing and caring and are keen to help others. For example, a group of children playing an exciting game on tricycles and

scooters, slowed down their speed so that a child with special needs could travel along the same path in safety and join in their game. Parents agree that children are taught to be kind and considerate to one another.

37. All children are encouraged to take responsibility and show initiative. Children select their own learning activities and choose appropriate resources to complete the task. All help to clear away activities before snack time and story time.

38. The provision for children's cultural development is satisfactory. The curriculum provides opportunities for children to learn about their own culture. They listen to traditional stories and sing and recite nursery rhymes. Children celebrate special days, such as Christmas, Easter, and birthdays.

39. The school provides some opportunities for children to learn about other cultures. For example, during a topic on pattern, children looked at patterns on a plate from Spain and tried to recreate a similar pattern. The school has adequate books and resources which reflect the multicultural nature of society. The last inspection identified that the children's knowledge and awareness of other cultures was not as good as their own immediate culture. Whilst there has been some improvement, there are still not enough opportunities to introduce children to other cultures or for them to find out how different faiths celebrate their beliefs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school takes very good care of the children; this is one of the strengths of its provision which parents value highly.

41. Appropriate child protection arrangements are in place and these are well known to staff. Health and safety issues are carefully considered and the school provides a safe and secure learning environment for children. During the inspection week, the school responded very efficiently to a neighbourhood security alert to ensure the well being of all the children and adults in the building. Appropriate arrangements are made for the provision and recording of first aid. Parents commenting on the pre-inspection questionnaire highlighted their appreciation of this very good provision.

42. The school establishes good levels of educational and personal support and guidance for children and these have a positive impact on children's learning. Termly assessment sheets provide valuable information for staff and parents. Staff carefully monitor the progress children make. There are very effective procedures in place to ensure high attendance levels. The headteacher emphasises the importance of good attendance and punctuality to parents when their children first start school.

43. Staff have consistently high expectations of good behaviour and children are very familiar with these. Staff cope with any rare instances of unacceptable behaviour in a sensitive manner. Parents are very complimentary about how the school encourages their children to behave well and inspection confirms their views.

44. At the previous inspection, assessment was identified as an issue for future improvement. The school has worked hard in this area. It has reviewed and agreed its assessment procedures in all areas of learning except for physical skill development outdoors. This area is identified for development during the coming year. All children are assessed during the first half term of their entry and then assessed regularly throughout their time in the nursery. Overall, arrangements are good. Children's achievement and progress are documented comprehensively. Useful documents highlight the needs of different groups and the strengths and weaknesses of individual children. Although staff have detailed knowledge of each child's ability and progress from these documents, the monitoring of the whole year group has

not yet taken place. Samples of work are included in a book for each child and these provide evidence of progress over their time in nursery.

45. Overall, standards of pastoral care have improved since the last inspection. Attendance monitoring is better and has led to consistently high levels.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. The school maintains a good partnership with parents and standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection. The headteacher welcomes and encourages parents' involvement in their children's learning. Most parents feel the school works closely with them although a few would like more information about the progress their children are making.

47. The school has good verbal and written links with parents. Documentation, such as the prospectus and home school contract, is clearly written, and gives a useful overview of school life and a brief summary of the areas of learning. The staggered intake at the start of the school year reassures parents that their children's individual anxieties will be addressed when they first begin school. Parents are encouraged to come into nursery and to discuss any concerns they may have with staff. A book showing each child's 'best work' is compiled throughout the year and is shown to parents and to the primary school to which children transfer. Parents receive a useful written report on their child's attainment at the end of the school year and this is also sent to the primary school. A parents' meeting is arranged during the summer term to allow parents to meet with staff outside school hours. Close contact is maintained between staff and parents of children with special educational needs. Parents can meet daily with the specialist support staff to discuss what their children have been doing during the session. Parents of children with special educational needs are very happy with the way the school enables them to support their children's learning at home by complementing the work started in school.

48. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to children's learning, both at school and at home. They ensure their children attend very regularly and bring them to school on time. They sign the well-considered home school contract and are generally supportive of school life. Many support fundraising events which help to provide resources. The library is run with parental help and others regularly help in classrooms and at snacktime. When asked, some parents bring in their newborn babies or pets to show to the children. Others will dress in their work uniform and come in to talk about their jobs. This helps children to understand more about the world beyond the nursery. Most parents feel involved in the life of the school and are happy to approach staff with any questions.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The headteacher provides effective leadership. Working with colleagues and governors, she has set clear educational direction for the school and has maintained a positive ethos. This has been achieved through strong teamwork and the way in which all staff are able to contribute to decision making. For example, the school development plan, which was criticised during the last inspection, now provides a clearer picture of how the school's success should be measured. This helps to make it a much more useful document as it sets out detailed targets for improvement over a longer timescale. The plan also has much closer links with finance so that the agreed priorities can be carefully costed.

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

51. The contribution of the governing body has also improved now that it is more actively involved in monitoring the standards achieved and looking at the quality of education provided. A curriculum

committee has been established and governors receive regular feedback from the headteacher and staff. Members are yet to visit classes regularly during a normal working day and there is recognition that this is an area that needs to be addressed. Governors operate effectively on behalf of the school and they fulfil all their statutory responsibilities.

52. The school keeps a close check on the progress that children make. There are effective systems in place which allow staff to evaluate how successful their teaching has been and, if necessary, change what they are doing next. An example of this could be seen in the way the school recognised the need to improve teaching outside. It receives a good level of support from the local education authority adviser who checks on progress towards meeting agreed targets.

53. 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 this data to check on the progress made by each year group or to make year by year comparisons.

54. Systems for monitoring the planning and teaching have improved considerably since the last inspection. All staff are involved in appraising performance and there is a commitment to improving the quality of the teaching and children's learning. For example, all staff meet to discuss how each topic will be organized and then evaluate how successful they have been.

55. Communication systems used within the school are good. The school operates very efficiently with responsibility for the administration shared between the school secretary and the headteacher. There has been no recent local authority audit of the school's finances. However, detailed records are kept of the funds raised by the school itself and these are checked annually.

56. 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 by the headteacher to ensure they have maximum impact on children's learning.

57. There are suitable numbers of well qualified and experienced staff to teach the children. Funds allocated to special needs are used to good effect in providing extra support for children with specific problems.

58. Resources are adequate for most areas of learning. They are well used and thoughtfully organised. This helps children to become more independent as, for example, they help themselves to art materials or jigsaws. The exception is in the quality of resources for outdoor play. Some of the equipment is old and worn and needs to be replaced. The accommodation, both indoors and out, is good. The learning environment is enhanced through thoughtful displays which celebrate children's work and achievements. The areas for learning are well organised and accessible to children.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

(1) Raise standards and improve the teaching by:

- Better organisation of snack time.
- Starting activities more quickly so that no time is wasted.
- Better planning, organisation and delivery of physical development outdoors.
- Ensuring adults do not offer too much support.

(paragraphs 7, 20, 27, 65, 76, 84, 86)

- (2) Improve the provision for multicultural education by making better links with other communities.
(paragraphs 32, 39)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- (1) Use the information already available to measure the attainment and progress of each year group. This will allow year by year comparisons to be made and the school's performance to be evaluated. *(paragraphs 44, 53)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	10	48	42			

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)	40
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	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3

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	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attendance at nursery is not compulsory. Nevertheless, levels are very high when compared to other nursery schools. The school has worked hard to make improvements in this area.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and support staff

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	45

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

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	6497
Total expenditure	6497
Expenditure per pupil	162
Balance brought forward from previous year	-
Balance carried forward to next year	-

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	80
Number of questionnaires returned	51

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	88	12			
My child is making good progress in school.	73	25			2
Behaviour in the school is good.	76	22			2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	24	6	2	
The teaching is good.	78	22			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	43	8		
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	12	2		
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	31		2	2
The school works closely with parents.	59	35	6		
The school is well led and managed.	86	14			
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	78	22			
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	8	8	4	9

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

59. Children's attainment in personal and social development is good. They achieve beyond the standards expected nationally of children by the time they are five years old. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in all aspects of personal and social development. Parents are pleased that the children develop self confidence and good social skills during their time in the nursery.

60. Children enjoy coming to the nursery and are happy to say goodbye to their parents or carers. Most are confident and are keen to try new activities. All understand the daily routines and some are willing to explain to visitors what will happen next and when it is time to tidy up. They quickly develop friendly relationships with each other and with all adults in the school. Children enjoy each other's company and happily include their friends and others in all activities. For example, children playing in the 'clothes shop' invited a watching child to come and join them, giving him the key role of cashier.

61. Children work well together, for example, when making jigsaws or building with construction kits. They are thoughtful and sensitive to others' needs. All share equipment very well. For example, when taking turns with the toys outdoors, they allow the youngest children the first choice of tricycles. When sharing popular activities, such as working with the computers, most respect the rights of other children and willingly give them a fair turn.

62. Most children are independent. They make choices for themselves throughout the session, 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, books and equipment with care.

63. Children are beginning to understand the difference between right and wrong and carefully remind others of the school rules. For example, those going out to the story room reminded another child to wait in the line until the teacher came. 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.

64. The quality of the teaching was good in half the lessons observed. The rest was satisfactory. Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn. They have very good relationships with the children and understand their needs. They consistently encourage consideration for others, praising children enthusiastically for playing together successfully and co-operating. All are patient and kind with the children, especially those who are young and 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. Staff expect children to behave well and they generally do. Staff have high expectations of good behaviour, gently reinforce simple school rules and take every opportunity to increase children's personal skills.

65. In the more ordinary lessons, some children are given too much support. This happens in some musical activities when, for example, percussion instruments are given out and collected by adults. There are also a few occasions when adults write children's names on their paintings even though the children are able to do this for themselves. Whilst most lessons proceed at a brisk pace there are occasions when some activities are too slow. When this happens, children take longer to make progress. For example, at one group time, all children waited for one child to finish his task before starting the next activity. They also waited while each child was given their carton of drink.

66. Planning for personal and social development is better than when the school was last inspected. Adults regularly monitor how effective their teaching has been and keep a useful skills' check list to record how well the children have done. This enables the staff to plan the next stage of work more accurately.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

67. Children enter nursery with language skills that are average although an increasing number are arriving with speech delay. By the time they are five, most children's attainment in language and literacy is likely to be in line with the standard expected. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and children make steady progress during their time at the school.

68. This area of the curriculum is given a suitably high priority within the nursery and good opportunities are provided to consolidate and practise what children have learned.

69. Children are good listeners. In most groups, they listen attentively to stories, to their classmates' contributions or to the instructions that they are given. Their ability to listen for long periods and then respond to instructions is particularly impressive. When they come together for group time each day, these skills are reinforced and practised. For example, they listen carefully as each member of their group shares their news. They understand how taking part in discussions means they have to take turns and value the contributions made by others. Their ability to listen so well is due to the consistent approach used by all staff. This makes a positive contribution to the standards they achieve.

70. Children express themselves confidently and they take an active part in imaginative play. For example, some children recreated a family scene in the well-equipped home corner. They sustained their play for a long time, involved each member of their group, sharing resources and taking turns. 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. They help to keep the activities purposeful and increase children's confidence.

71. Children enjoy using books and they know how to handle them carefully. Many will choose books spontaneously and take them into the library area to read. The school provides an interesting and stimulating literary environment which encourages children to enjoy and value books. They understand that the words and pictures in the book can 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. They 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.

72. Children make good attempts at writing their own names unaided and some manage to do this when they complete a piece of work. Writing features across the curriculum and children are keen to talk about their writing in their imaginative play. One group, for example, made lists of shopping they would need in their imaginary kitchen. They knew that the marks they made conveyed a meaning to the reader.

73. Most children respond well to the lessons. They concentrate well and stay on a task until it has been completed.

74. Children make steady progress in their learning. This is primarily because staff expect a lot of them. 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 their work 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 practised rhyming words and many were able to recognize the initial letter sounds for each of the words. This helps to build their confidence.

75. The small number of children who are identified as having special educational needs receive a very good level of skilled, adult support. They have detailed programmes of work which give them the opportunity to make consistently good progress. They enjoy their work because staff make it interesting and children experience success in what they do.

76. The quality of the teaching is good overall. One third of lessons observed were very good, another third were good and the remainder were satisfactory. The quality of teaching is better than when the school was last inspected. Teachers' planning has also improved. It sets out more clearly what the teacher expects children to achieve during an activity and this supports teachers' work. The planning also sets out work for children of different levels of prior attainment. This means that all children, regardless of gender or ability, learn well and make steady progress. Staff are enthusiastic and keep children's interest on most occasions. They have introduced some parts of the national literacy strategy such as looking at 'Big Books'. This has helped to increase children's understanding of and interest in books. However, there are some lessons when the pace is too slow and children have to wait too long to make their contribution to the discussions.

MATHEMATICS

77. By the age of five, children's attainment in mathematics is likely to be in line with the expected standard. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and children's ability to use their mathematical knowledge in practical situations is now much better. As with literacy, numeracy is given a high priority throughout the school and many children have a good understanding of how mathematics can be found in other curriculum areas. For example, they can work out how many blocks will be needed to complete their models and then select the correct number. Similarly, they organize play settings in the role play area so that those playing can sit down together.

78. Many of the children can count to ten and some can count higher than this. 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. This was well illustrated during a group activity when children were asked to identify the number of spots on the spider models. They recognised the figures that represented the numbers and a few higher attainers were able to find the correct answers to simple sums.

79. Most children 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. They can also identify patterns and recreate some for themselves. For example, in one group all the children managed to produce a pattern, of varying degrees of complexity, using pasta shapes.

80. Children learn well and they make steady progress in their mathematics. Those who are identified as having special educational needs make very good progress. They receive a high level of skilled support

and most achieve the targets set out in their individual education plans. Their progress is so good because their work is very closely checked and adapted when necessary. Children's records indicate that the progress they make is consistent throughout their time in nursery.

81. Children behave very well and are keen to succeed. They have positive attitudes towards their work and concentrate very well. Their keenness and cooperation are significant factors in helping them reach the standards that they do.

82. The quality of teaching in mathematics is very good in a third of lessons. Another third 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 different sized pasta shapes 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 knowledge in practical situations, recognising shapes around the nursery. An example of this was seen during a follow up activity when children were looking at wallpaper patterns. They recognised similarities and differences and could also explain some of the complexities involved in making sure the patterns matched when they glued them to the wall. They learn more quickly when they are given practical opportunities such as these.

83. Planning is better than when the school was last inspected and 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 this keeps children's learning purposeful.

84. On the few occasions when the teaching is more ordinary, the pace of the lessons are not brisk enough and adults do too much for the children. An example of this was seen when the adult counted out the drinks at snack time for the children instead of encouraging them to count themselves. Children enjoyed the social occasion but too long was spent on the activity.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

85. The quality of children's learning is good because the teaching is well matched to the needs of all of the children. By the time children are five, most will attain the national standard. Standards match those achieved during the last inspection except in information and communications technology where standards have improved.

86. Children talk confidently about their family, friends and the world around them. Staff select topics well to stimulate interest and introduce historical and geographical ideas. For example, following a series of lessons on transport, children were able to recognize how methods of travelling had changed over time. They are developing a good understanding of the passage of time and recognise objects which are old and new.

87. 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 that they are working with. For example, most know that the cake dough they are rolling will change, becoming softer and more workable the longer they roll it. They were able to apply this knowledge during a baking activity. They knew that changes would occur when the ingredients were heated and many could predict what might happen. Similarly, when they planted seeds they could talk about what the seeds needed to grow and explain why water and light are very important. They make accurate observations and are keen to share their knowledge with their classmates.

88. Most children can select construction materials sensibly and safely. They know how different materials can be joined and show good skills when, for example, they constructed a large, wheeled vehicle using plastic blocks.

89. Children show particularly good levels of concentration during such activities and are well behaved. During one activity, a group of 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 doing and then made the necessary changes before beginning construction.

90. Children are now much more confident in their use of information technology. They have better access to the computer now that they do not need to share it with the school office. When working at the computer, they know how to use the mouse and enjoy working on the programs available. 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. However, there are some occasions when queues build as children wait their turn to use the computer. This is not good use of their time and slows the progress they make.

91. Most children learn well and make steady progress. Those with special educational needs make good progress. This is due in large part to the good level of support given to them and the good organisation of the curriculum that is offered to them. There is a broad and balanced curriculum, which keeps children interested. It helps to consolidate and then build on their previous experiences.

92. The quality of teaching is good in half the lessons observed. A quarter of the teaching is very good and the rest 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. Teachers also check to see how effective their teaching has been by assessing what children know. This information is used well to plan the next stage. Classrooms are well organised, children behave well and staff make sure that the work suits their individual requirements. Children stay actively involved in practical lessons, concentrating for long periods and this helps them to learn more quickly. In one particularly successful lesson, where children were engaged in a practical activity, the adult working with them asked all the group questions in turn. It meant that all the children felt part of what was going on. Her particular skill on this occasion was to phrase each question in such a way that the child who was asked to respond was able to achieve some success and get the answer right. This encouraged children to take on increasingly difficult questions.

Physical development

93. In their physical development, children's attainment is likely to be in line with the national standards by the time they are five. This is similar to the attainment levels recorded in the previous inspection report.

94. Children move around the school, both indoors and out, with confidence and care. Indoors, children use all the play equipment with increasing control and confidence. They handle construction kits and complete jigsaws with developing precision. Most pencils and crayons are held correctly. Paintbrushes and tools and other materials such as dough and pastry are used competently.

95. Outdoors, children demonstrate both good co-ordination and an awareness of others as, for example, when running up and down the hills on the field. Children can pedal and steer a variety of tricycles, scooters and wheeled vehicles along the pathways. They can pedal at speed, slowing them down to avoid another child. Some children can balance along a raised bar with adult help and others can climb onto a box and step down the other side. Most children have some early games skills and can roll a ball at skittles and throw beanbags in a basket. A few can throw and catch a ball with accuracy.

96. The quality of teaching is good in over half of the lessons; the rest is satisfactory. The teaching of physical skill development, indoors, is good. All the staff have a good knowledge of the needs and abilities of the children. Activities are well organised with the adult role clearly focused on the skill to be developed. For example, the adult supporting children working at the creative table, ensured that all children held the sponges with care when printing patterns with different colours of paint. All children are taught to use a variety of tools and implements purposefully and safely. However, some of the teaching outdoors is not as good as that indoors. Teachers' planning for this area is often brief and does not always contain sufficient detail to help the teaching. For example, children climbing on the raised box were reminded of safety rules but opportunities to improve climbing and balancing skills were missed.

97. Children enjoy the physical area of learning and work with great enthusiasm. All adults have very good relationships with the children and children's behaviour, both indoors and out, is good. The school has adequate resources to develop physical skills. However, some resources outdoors are well worn and need to be replaced. In this current year's school development plan, the school has already identified this as an area to be improved.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

98. Children's attainments in creative development are likely to be in line with the standards expected nationally of children by the time they are five years old. This is similar to the attainment found in the previous inspection. All children, including those with special educational needs, have access to a wide range of resources and activities.

99. Children are enthusiastic participants in role play. They use their imagination well and are skilful in copying the mannerisms of others and incorporating them into their play. For example, in the home corner they use their ingenuity to dress up and act out family life, cooking and eating dinner and then washing up. They extend the play further by incorporating the 'clothes shop' into their story and choose dance dresses for an 'evening out'. Experiences such as these develop their vocabulary and creative thoughts well.

100. Children respond positively to music and many are able to sing a range of action rhymes and songs. They are able to beat out a simple rhythm with percussion instruments, such as triangles and sticks, and stop and start at a given signal. Children listen with interest to taped music recognising when it is loud and when it is soft.

101. The quality of teaching in three quarters of the lessons is good. The rest is satisfactory. 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. Staff enjoy teaching creative skills. Their enthusiastic approach transmits to the children and they work with great enjoyment and pleasure. Adults are very supportive during creative activities, encouraging children to experiment and patiently helping them to develop their ideas further. For example, children observing patterns on a variety of plates were encouraged and praised as they designed and painted patterns on paper plates. In the best lessons, adults encourage children to be independent and make appropriate choices. For example, children at the printing table were encouraged to choose the colour of paint to use, select attractive coloured paper and then make choices about useful tools. They were encouraged to concentrate and finish the task.

102. Attractive displays around the nursery reflect the value staff place on the children's creative efforts.

