

INSPECTION REPORT

**Acacia Nursery School
Waltham Forest**

LEA area: Waltham Forest

**Unique Reference Number: 103030
Inspection Number: 193346**

Headteacher: Miss Rosemary Buckland

Reporting inspector: Mrs T Chakraborti
12603

Dates of inspection: 18 - 20 October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706656

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
Type of control:	Local education authority
Age range of pupils:	3 years - 4 years 11 months
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cecil Road Leytonstone London E11 3 HE
Telephone number:	0181 558 4444
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Appropriate authority:	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Name of Chair of Governors:	Mr Brendan Breen
Date of previous inspection:	April 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Ms D Pacquette, Lay Inspector	Design and technology	Teaching
		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
		Attendance
Mr R Whittington	Mathematics	Curriculum and assessment
	Art	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
	Geography	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
	History	
	Music	
	Physical education	
	Religious education	

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The school's ethos is very good and its aims, values and policies are implemented effectively.
- The school promotes children's personal and social development very well.
- The school's provision for moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The relationships between staff and children and between children themselves, are always very good. There is a high degree of racial harmony in the school. Pupils respect other cultures, religion and pupils with special educational needs.
- The school has very good links with parents and the community. Parents are provided with a thorough evaluation of their children's progress in all areas of learning.
- The leadership and management of the school is good. The headteacher has clear educational direction for the school and is supported well by the staff and the governing body in her task of leading the school forward.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Use of assessment is insufficiently developed and has yet to inform future planning consistently to ensure progress for all children.
- II. The monitoring role of the headteacher is insufficiently developed, because of the very limited time available to her for administrative work.
- III. Planning does not consistently link the learning objectives of the Desirable Learning Outcomes to the activities provided for children.
- IV. Appraisal has not taken place yet.

The weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of children at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has overcome most of the weaknesses identified in its previous OFSTED inspection in 1996. The headteacher has made a number of improvements in order to address the key issues identified in the last inspection. Policies and schemes of work have been developed ensuring appropriate coverage and a balanced curriculum. Planning has improved since the last inspection, though it does not always include specific learning objectives and clearer targets for all children. There are effective procedures for assessment in all areas. Baseline assessment is used effectively. Appropriate records are kept indicating what children can do and portfolios, with examples of children's work, are kept. However, assessment is yet to inform future planning, targeting individual children and charting their progress. A plan for monitoring curriculum development and teaching is in place, but yet to be implemented. The quality of teaching has improved and nursery nurses teach and support children very effectively. Personal and social, creative and physical development of children are consistently good throughout the school. The school is well placed to make further improvements in all areas of the curriculum.

· **Standards**

The school prepares the children well for entry into the Key Stage 1. By the time they are five years of age, most children reach appropriate standards in language and literacy, mathematics and all other areas of learning. They make good progress in all these areas, especially in personal and social and physical development.

· **Quality of teaching**

· **Teaching in areas of learning**

Personal and social development	good
Language and literacy	satisfactory
Mathematics	satisfactory
Knowledge and understanding of the world	satisfactory
Physical development	satisfactory
Creative development	satisfactory

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 100 per cent of the lessons observed. Approximately 24 per cent of teaching was good and 76 per cent satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed.

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

· **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good behaviour throughout the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory.
Ethos*	Very good ethos characterised by very good relationships between staff and children and between children. Strong commitment to promoting moral and social development of all pupils.
Leadership and management	Good leadership by the headteacher and a clear educational direction. Satisfactory involvement of governors in all areas of school life.
Curriculum	Broad and balanced, in line with the Desirable Learning Outcomes. Some weaknesses in planning and assessment.
Children with special educational needs	Good provision. Pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. All receive good support from teachers as well as nursery nurses.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good provision for moral, social and cultural development. Good provision for spiritual development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staffing is adequate. Resources are sufficient to deliver the curriculum. Good use is made of the outdoor area. Accommodation is good, well maintained and used efficiently.
Value for money	Good value for money.

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

· **The parents' views of the school**

What most parents like about the school

- V. Encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school.
- VI. Does keep parents well informed about their children's progress.
- VII. The headteacher and teachers are approachable.
- VIII. Handles complaints from parents well.
- IX. The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on pupils.
- X. The school gives a clear understanding of what is taught.
- XI. Promotes a high standard of good behaviour.
- XII. Enables pupils to achieve good standards of work.
- XIII. Encourages pupils to get involved in all aspects of school life.
- XIV. Children like school.
- XV. Homework is effectively used to enhance children's reading skills.

What some parents are not happy about

Inspection findings support the positive views expressed by parents.

· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

To raise and sustain standards the governors, headteacher and staff should:

XVI. improve planning further by matching tasks effectively to specific learning objectives;
(paragraphs 22 and 29)

XVII. use assessment to inform planning consistently by setting clear targets for individual children and thereby tracking their progress, especially in core areas;
(paragraphs 23 and 30)

XVIII. develop the monitoring role of the headteacher in monitoring the planning and teaching in all areas of learning by providing time for this aspect;
(paragraph 45)

XIX. meet the statutory requirement by implementing the appraisal procedures.
(paragraph 48)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weakness should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. This is indicated in paragraph 48.

- XX. provide opportunities for further development of teacher expertise in all areas of Desirable Learning Outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Acacia Nursery School is situated in the south of the London Borough of Waltham Forest and is the largest of the borough's four nursery schools. The school was opened in 1978 as part of a local infant school. In 1993 the school became autonomous under the management of its own headteacher and governing body. The school is situated in an area which consists of high rise blocks of flats, local authority housing, private rented accommodation and owner occupied houses. There is a high degree of mobility in this area.
2. The school offers part-time as well as some full-time places. At present there are 101 part-time and 10 full-time children (59.5 FTE) in the school. Children come from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. Thirty eight pupils come from homes where English is not the first language and currently ten children are supported through Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant. Currently eight children are at Stages 1 to 4 of the Code of Practice for special educational needs and two children are with Statements of Special Educational Need. Four full-time pupils are eligible for free school meals.
3. Children are given the opportunity to join the extended sessions which operate from eight o'clock in the mornings and until six o'clock in the evenings.
4. The previous OFSTED inspection reports that the school has established a happy, secure and harmonious environment for learning and has a number of strengths. This inspection findings agree with the last report. The inspection report also identified the need for setting more specific objectives for the curriculum and clearer targets for children to achieve.
5. The school aims to provide children an attractive, interesting and stimulating environment: to provide equal opportunities for all children; to match the provision to the needs of children and their families and to extend children's learning that begun at home. The school's development plan and action plan addressed the key issues identified in the last inspection and appropriate priorities for the current year have been set in the 1999-2000 development plan.
6. The meeting with the parents and the analysis of questionnaires suggest that parents are very happy with the school's provision.

6. Key indicators

6. Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	-
	Satisfactory or better	100

Less than satisfactory -

6. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

6. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

6. Attainment and progress

7. Early assessment of children's competencies when they first enter the school indicates that children show a wide range of attainment across all areas of learning but generally below the expected levels. A sound start is made to their school life and children make good progress in all areas of learning. By the time they reach statutory school age, they attain standards that are in line with the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children of this age.
8. In language and literacy, children listen well and respond confidently to teachers' questions during story times. They enjoy reading and taking part in rhymes and songs. Most recognise letter sounds and read simple texts using picture clues. Activities involving role play, such as Imran's Clinic, the shop provide opportunities for children to develop and use new vocabulary and their imaginations to create different characters.
9. In mathematics, children can count up to ten using fingers and multicubes and recognise shapes like circles, triangles and squares. They weigh dolls, comparing them with a relevant number of bricks, and themselves, recording their weight. Many recognise and create patterns, complete jigsaws and play matching games. Many understand mathematical language such as in front of, behind, large, small, before, after, heavier and lighter, using these correctly in their everyday play. Many appreciate the passage of time, and are able to name the days of the week in the correct order.
10. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are developing well. They use the pond area to observe living creatures, such as tadpoles and discuss how tadpoles grow into frogs. They take part in growing and watering vegetables in the school garden and observe the growth of the plants. They collect leaves and seeds from the school garden and learn to recognise the trees.
11. Children select various materials to make models, such as using disposable bottles and plastic containers for 'junk modelling' of aeroplanes, boats and towers. They are gaining increasing independence in using computers. They learn mouse control and the use of the keyboard to colour pictures, to type their names and to develop their understanding of direction. Older children are able to select appropriate programs.
12. The children's physical development is good. When playing outside on trikes and cars, they are generally aware of space and others, pedalling forwards and backwards and weaving skilfully around others. Using the equipment provided, they climb, balance and hang from bars with increasing skill. In all these activities they display a growing confidence, dexterity and, above all, enjoyment.
13. The children make good progress in developing their imaginative and creative skills. In art, they begin to appreciate different textures, such as mixing by hand powder paint with washing-up liquid and making patterns to print from this. They begin to recognise patterns in the environment, and name some of the different colours in autumn leaves. There are numerous

opportunities for role play, whether doctors, nurses, patients, parents with their babies, drivers and mechanics, to name but a few. Children experiment successfully with percussion instruments and a piano and they enjoy singing.

14. All children acquire good personal and social skills and work very well independently. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets set for them.

14. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

15. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Their interest and enthusiasm develop steadily as they progress through the school. They are well motivated and sustain their concentration well in activities of their own choice and teacher-led activities. Pupils are proud of their work which is displayed on various walls in the school. They work well together and are supportive to each other both in classroom activities and those in the playground. This results in good standards and progress. Parents answering the questionnaire confirm that the nursery successfully teaches their children to share and play with each other well. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to learning.

16. Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and when moving around the school is good. Most pupils are courteous, friendly and helpful. The nursery's behaviour policy is observed and sensibly and sensitively applied. Staff control and the management of children are good and the nursery is an orderly community. Children show respect for property and books. Parents support the view that the school promotes good behaviour and as a result children are well behaved and well disciplined.

17. Very good relationships exist in the nursery between pupils, and also between pupils and adults. Children work well together and are supportive to those experiencing difficulties. They happily share play equipment in the home corner and wheeled toys in the outside area. There is a high degree of racial harmony in the school. Pupils respect other cultures, religion and pupils with special educational needs.

18. Pupils' personal and social development is good. Pupils effectively take responsibility and show initiative for a number of tasks around the school. They respond well to doing basic chores in the classroom and the playground. Pupils are encouraged to explore learning opportunities and take responsibility for where they hang their coat, getting their name cards, going to the toilet, taking messages and taking books home and returning them. Most pupils do these well.

19. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the pupils in the nursery contribute positively to attainment, the progress children make and the general quality of school life. The relationship which pupils form with their peers and adults is a significant strength of the school.

19. **Attendance**

20. School attendance is satisfactory in both the morning and afternoon sessions. Most children are punctual and planned activities start and finish on time. Pupils and their parents are welcomed into the nursery school and many parents help settle children to activities. Registers are taken on time and the nursery maintains close links with the educational visitor to monitor long-term

absences.

20. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

20. **Teaching**

21. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In 100 per cent of the lessons observed teaching was satisfactory or better. In 24 per cent of lessons teaching was good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection where there was some unsatisfactory teaching.

22. In most lessons, good pace, high expectations and very good class management make a positive contribution to pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers make good use of resources to support pupils' learning. Overall they have a satisfactory understanding of the areas of learning as outlined in the Desirable Learning Outcomes. Planning is generally satisfactory and covers all areas of learning effectively. However, learning objectives are not always appropriately linked to the activities and planning does not ensure that all children have the opportunity to explore the planned activities.

23. Teachers know their pupils well and make satisfactory assessment of their progress in lessons. However, assessment does not inform future planning to set targets for individual children.

24. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Very effective use is made of the nursery nurses to support pupils with special educational needs. There is very good co-ordination between teachers and nursery nurses in planning. The quality of teaching by the nursery nurses is good and makes a significant contribution to the progress made by all pupils.

24. **The curriculum and assessment**

25. The school provides a curriculum which is broad and balanced and is planned effectively to cover all the desirable outcomes of learning. The curriculum promotes children's intellectual, physical and personal development and they are prepared well for entry into Key Stage 1. Planning and inspection observations show that the children benefit from a wide variety of group and individual tasks.

26. The previous inspection found that although the curriculum was broadly satisfactory, three key issues for action were set to improve it. One of these: to provide a balanced curriculum, has been met; the other two: to set more specific objectives and clearer targets, and to develop assessment to inform future planning, have not yet been fully addressed.

27. All children have equal access and opportunity to the various activities. Planned activities take good account of the needs of young children to learn by exploring and experimenting with a wide range of different materials and equipment. Termly planning is broken down into weekly activities. This planning is, however, insufficiently rigorous and does not ensure that all children actually make use of these opportunities. For example, a good learning experience was provided where children weighed themselves, helped effectively by a teacher. Only those children who wanted to try this activity took part and there is no method of planning or recording which ensures that each child benefits from this learning experience. The school has not yet fully achieved the necessary balance between encouraging children's independence and the need to teach specific skills to specific individuals.

28. The school makes good provision for children with special educational needs. The curriculum meets the statutory requirements of the Code of Practice and there are good levels of support. Need is identified early and all staff are aware of the procedures. The special educational needs support assistant provides effective help and works closely with the class teachers. There is a regular audit to identify need, detailed individual education plans are drawn up; they are reviewed regularly and parents are fully involved. These children make good progress. Those with higher abilities are withdrawn daily for a story session, which extends their development in literacy. No arrangement is made to ensure equally good progress for these children in all other areas of learning.
29. The curriculum is planned to ensure continuity and progress, but this is not sufficiently specific. The planning covers those opportunities which are provided to all the children as a whole, rather than identifying the next specific step of learning for each child as an individual. There are no suitably specific learning objectives. Children's progress is good, but by planning for opportunities rather than outcomes, staff tend to help and support rather than direct teaching, and some learning is, therefore, restricted. All staff are involved in planning and assessment and all work consistently within the team. The school liaises well with the schools to which the children transfer.
30. There are effective systems for assessing children's attainment. Notes are kept which indicate what children are able to do and all staff contribute to these. Regular meetings are held and specific information is shared on the children's achievements. There are useful portfolios of children's achievements, although some of these note personal and social developments rather than other areas of learning. The progress of individual children is not sufficiently recorded to ensure that planning covers the next step of learning for each child. Cameras are readily available to all staff, and photographs are used very effectively to record the children's progress.
30. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**
31. Provision for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and may be seen as a strength of the school. Although this aspect was found to be good at the time of the last inspection, there has been an improvement. Provision for this area of development runs through all aspects of the nursery.
32. The school provides good provision for spiritual development. Ideas are valued and children are generally sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. Children accept those with special educational needs and include them in their activities. Children are provided with opportunities for sharing a variety of emotions, whether joy at a picture completed well or a sense of wonder at a spider's web. Relevant religious holidays are celebrated, the major non-Christian festivals being Diwali, Eid and Guru Nanak's birthday.
33. There is very good provision for moral development. Children are aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, understanding some elements of the difference between right and wrong. They respond appropriately to praise and some are able to put themselves in the other person's place, to appreciate what he or she is feeling.
34. There is very good provision for social development. Most children play happily together, and there are very few occasions when children fall out. Most are co-operative, and even those who

find social mixing more difficult, are accepted. There are numerous opportunities provided within the school for the children to develop responsibility and independence, whether taking registers, collecting drinking cups or helping to tidy up. A sense of responsibility is particularly encouraged in those who stay for lunch. Here all children help themselves to vegetables and second helpings. This trust is rarely abused. Children understand the need to take turns and most wait patiently. When two children argued over who had a doll first, a third came and offered her doll. All ended happily.

35. There is very good provision for cultural development. The wide range of the children's ethnic and cultural backgrounds bring a strength to the school. All are readily accepted and mix together very well. There is a good range of resources to represent other cultures.

35. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

36. Good provision is made for pupils' support, guidance and welfare. This makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved. The nursery is committed to active promotion of the welfare and guidance of pupils through effective links and liaison with most support agencies and parents. Parents are very pleased with the support which the nursery gives their children. The nursery provides a warm, welcoming, secure and caring environment in which pupils are given support and encouragement to develop their self esteem and confidence. This has an important impact on attainment and progress. There are good induction procedures for new children and parents are encouraged to remain with their children until they feel settled.

37. The nursery has good procedures for monitoring progress and personal development. Pupils are observed on a regular basis and careful records are maintained. Progress and personal development are monitored through a portfolio system and record cards. There is good provision for children with special educational needs. Identification systems are in place and there is good support on a daily basis.

38. The nursery has good procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour, of which the parents are aware. Good behaviour is encouraged through positive strategies such as regular praise and encouragement, pupils being given clear guidelines, individual behaviour programmes and regular meeting with external agencies. The school has good procedures to promote and encourage full attendance. The school works in close partnership with parents and external agencies and is sensitive to the needs of parents.

39. There is a named person in the nursery with responsibility for child protection. Procedures are well established and staff are aware of them. The nursery promotes the health and safety of the children well. All staff are aware of safe working practices and there is consistent safe practice in the school and outside play areas. All the required inspections and safety checks, such as risk assessments, are regularly carried out and recorded. There are good procedures covering accidents, illness and medicines. Pupils are well cared for and supervised by staff during all break sessions.

39. **Partnership with parents and the community**

40. The nursery has very good links with parents and the community. The nursery provides parents with comprehensive information about the school and their children's learning. This is done through a variety of means such as the school brochure, open days, monthly newsletters and both informal and formal meetings. Termly parents' meetings and reports give a thorough

evaluation of progress towards the Desirable Learning Outcomes. Parents answering the questionnaire were very happy with the level of information the nursery provides.

41. Parental links are very good. The nursery values the part which parents play in the school. Parents are very keen to work in partnership with the school. They feel very welcome into the nursery and many of them make a significant contribution in the school by helping in a number of areas, such as, translation, attending trips, mending equipment and working in the conservation area. On Fridays parents are invited to attend a singing session at the nursery. This has an important impact on attainment and progress. Parents and carers of children with special educational needs are kept well informed and are involved in any reviews. The nursery shares a Parents School Association with Cann Hall Primary School and parents are active in organizing fund raising and social activities.
42. The nursery has very good links with the local community and these help to contribute to pupils' progress and development. The nursery has very good links with Acacia childminding group which offers the school extended sessions. Pupils benefit well from this service. Other links include the health visitor, local play groups and the educational visitor, which all contribute positively to pupils' learning. Children enjoy educational day trips, for example, visits to the natural history museum and the maritime museum. The nursery has very good links with the feeder schools. The transitional period and the induction of new children and parents are well managed. Overall, the nursery effectively promotes the pupils' educational and social development through its links with parents and the community.

42. **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

42. **Leadership and management**

43. The leadership and management of the school is good, as it was found in the last inspection. The headteacher has a clear educational direction and provides purposeful leadership. Many new strategies have been put in place since the previous inspection to improve educational standards, such as reviewing policies and planning and appropriate assessment procedures. The Chair of Governors, governors and the headteacher work together very well and they are effectively supported by a hard working, committed team of staff.
- 43.
44. The headteacher often faces difficulty in recruiting governors who are able to spend time in the school during the school time and also have sufficient knowledge about the educational provision for the children under five. However, the Chair of Governors and the numeracy governor are actively involved in all aspects of school life. The school is in the process of appointing two parent governors and expects increased involvement of the governors in near future. The governors at present have a strategic view of the school's development and support the headteacher in implementing the targets specified in the action plan. The Chair of Governors monitors the effectiveness of the school through regular visits to the school and close liaison with the headteacher. Some governors have begun to monitor the curriculum by receiving regular reports on curriculum development from the headteacher. There are governors for literacy and special educational needs who visit the school whenever possible.

44.

45. Policies have been reviewed and revised appropriately. The school development plan contains a strategic overview of the needs of the school for the current year and appropriate priorities, such as curriculum development, staff development and management are identified. The appraisal program is yet to be implemented and is planned to start from next term. The headteacher's monitoring role, particularly of teachers' planning and teaching, is insufficiently developed. This is due to her teaching commitment which leaves her very limited time for the management of the school.

45.

46. The day-to-day administration is efficient. The provision for the children with special educational needs is co-ordinated very well by the headteacher. A range of policies in the areas of behaviour, equal opportunity and health and safety guides the work of the school. The school has a very good ethos and the aims and values of the school are very clearly reflected in its practice.

46. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

47. The number, qualifications and experience of the teachers match the demands of all areas of learning. Non-teaching classroom staff contribute effectively to the quality of learning, sharing the planning, assessment and recording with the teachers. Children with special educational needs receive good quality support. The school secretary and caretaker are committed and hard working and the midday staff provide a settled and happy environment at lunchtimes. All staff are good role models.

48. Statutory appraisal of teachers is not taking place but arrangements for the development of staff are sound, with the headteacher conducting regular interviews with all staff. All staff have appropriate job descriptions and take part in relevant professional development. However, the school is yet to plan for more specific training for staff to enhance their understanding of Desirable Learning Outcomes further.

49. The school is housed in a pleasant, clean and well-maintained building, which allows all the areas of learning to be covered effectively. It is largely open, and is used well. Displays of children's work are used effectively, not only to record some of the work done, but to provide stimulus and interest. The outdoor area is good, with plenty of space for energetic play. There are plants, trees and bushes, as well as an enclosed garden with a pond, providing a wide range of opportunities for all areas of learning.

50. The quantity and quality of resources are generally good. They are accessible and are used effectively to enhance learning, many children helping themselves as required. There is a good range of books and these are used very effectively to develop early reading skills. There is a variety of newly acquired tricycles and cars which are very popular.

50. **The efficiency of the school**

51. Overall the efficiency of the school is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Financial planning is good. The school development plan identifies priorities for the coming year with costs appropriately identified. Governors are involved in the budget setting and monitoring processes through the work of its Chair of Governors and whole governing body meetings.

52. The allocated fund for the pupils with special educational needs are used efficiently. The use of teaching and support staff is good. All staff are effectively deployed, with support for pupils with special educational needs. The role of the headteacher as the special educational needs co-ordinator is effective in providing leadership to the work of the staff.

53. Good use is made of the available accommodation and of learning resources.

54. The school is still a local education authority designated cost centre, but expects delegation of funds to the school in near future. Financial control is good. Day-to-day procedures are administered efficiently. Taking into account the sound quality of education provided, good personal and social development of children, their average standards of attainment and overall good progress, the school provides good value for money.

54. **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

54. **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

55. Children start school at three years of age. Standards for attainment for children on entry are below those normally found in children of this age. They make good progress throughout their stay in the nursery. By the time children are five, they attain in line with the Desirable Learning Outcomes.
56. Inspection findings confirm that the school continues to maintain the same standards as indicated in the last inspection.

Personal and social development

57. Children relate very well to each other; the staff and to other adults in the school and are friendly and welcoming to visitors. Most are good independent learners and work well independently or as part of a group. They are well motivated in their play and take turns sensibly. They move about the room confidently, making appropriate selections of books, activities, toys and equipment. They understand the rules and show interest in their activities. They work with enthusiasm and are generally on task. They develop very good social skills. They are willing to share and support each other in learning, such as reading books and in outdoor play activities. They understand and respect the cultural and religious diversity and celebrate festival like Diwali and Eid as well as Christmas. They make good progress in this aspect.

Language and literacy

58. Children listen well and respond confidently to teachers' questions during story time. They talk about their own experiences during story time. For example, in one class children spoke confidently, relating their own experience about their baby brothers or sisters while listening to the story 'Something Special'. They take part in role play, speak to each other and the adults with confidence and use appropriately growing vocabulary to explain their roles. For example, during the role play situation in 'Imran's Clinic' most children showed clear understanding of the purpose of the clinic and are able to use new vocabulary, such as 'heavier', 'lighter' and 'prescription', appropriately to describe their activities. They remember various rhymes and songs and enjoy reciting rhymes from memory.
59. They enjoy books, handle them carefully and recognise that in English print is read from left to right and top to bottom. Most are keen to look at books and talk about the pictures to retell or make up their own stories. They choose books, often independently, to take home and understand that print tells the story. They can recognise letter sounds and read simple texts using picture clues. Most children recognise their own names and the letters of the alphabet.
60. There are some examples of emergent writing, such as, mark making. They are beginning to name, sound and write individual letters. Some write their names and recognise that writing communicate meaning. Children make good progress in all aspects of language and literacy. Children make good progress in acquiring the literacy skills.
61. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers use effective questions and answer technique

to draw responses from children and to assess their progress. Management of behaviour and class organisation are good. Nursery nurses support and teach children effectively. Resources, such as story books and non-fiction texts are used effectively to enhance children's interest in reading. However, teachers do not ensure that all children are given opportunity to experience all activities to develop their language skills.

Mathematics

62. Although children enter the nursery with a wide spread of attainment in mathematics, this is generally below the national average. Numerous opportunities for learning are provided, and although these tasks do not always match the needs of each individual, the children make good progress. By the time they transfer to Key Stage 1, their standards of attainment are generally in line with that national average.
63. Progress in mathematical skills is effectively promoted through various practical activities. They weigh dolls, comparing them with a relevant number of bricks, and themselves, recording their weight. Many recognise and create patterns, complete jigsaws and play matching games. They thread different coloured beads and make patterns by cutting and pasting coloured paper. They have made 'butterfly' patterns with paint and discussed symmetry. Many understand mathematical language such as in front of, behind, large, small, before, after, heavier and lighter, using these correctly in their everyday play. During group time children sing number songs, most count how many children are present and are able to name the separate digits. In the 'shop' children buy baby food, and are aware of money, counting out what is needed. Many appreciate the passage of time, and are able to name the days of the week in the correct order.
64. The quality of teaching is sound. Relationships are very good. Teachers and nursery nurses plan well together and have a shared role in assessment. In all activities, adults look for meaningful ways to help the children learn. Although a wide range of valuable activities are provided, there is no way of ensuring that every child benefits fully from these, or that these activities are sufficiently challenging to meet the carefully targeted needs of every child. Resources are good, are readily available to the children, and used sensibly.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65. Children in the nursery make good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world. A number of topics have been effective in widening children's experiences. The role play area is a clinic. Here children dress up as doctors and nurses, using stethoscopes and other 'medical' equipment thoughtfully. Children have learned about babies as part of their topic, feeding and bathing a wide variety of dolls and changing their nappies. Photographs of themselves (and staff) as babies provokes interest and children enjoy identifying themselves and friends. There is a large map behind the clinic of the area around the school, children are taken for walks in the area around the school and are encouraged to think about their surroundings.
66. The outdoor area is very well developed and is used effectively. Children use the pond area to observe living creatures, such as tadpoles and discuss how tadpoles grow into frogs. They take part in growing and watering vegetables in the school garden and observe the growth of the plants. Some children found a spider and talked thoughtfully about the pattern of the web. Sycamore seeds were discussed and some children talked about the visit of tree surgeons who pruned some trees in the road outside the school, first by explaining what had been done using a

book of photographs, then by looking at the trees themselves. Some discuss the clouds and what makes them move.

67. Children select various materials to make models, such as using disposable bottles and plastic containers for 'junk modelling' of aeroplanes, boats and towers. They are gaining increasing independence in using computers. They learn mouse control and the use of the keyboard to colour pictures, to type their names and to develop their understanding of direction. Older children are able to select appropriate programs.
68. Teaching is satisfactory across the classes. An effective variety of opportunities are provided, and teaching and non-teaching staff give good quality help and support, facilitating development. Relationships are very good. There is a good range of resources, and these are very effectively used. Books of photographs illustrate many of the activities and these are appreciated by the children.

Physical development

69. The children's physical development is sound. When playing outside on trikes and cars, they are generally aware of space and others, pedalling forwards and backwards and weaving skilfully around others, often at high speed! They play following and chasing games. Most wait patiently for their turn. Using the equipment provided, they climb, balance and hang from bars with increasing skill. In all these activities they display a growing confidence, dexterity and, above all, enjoyment. Children understand a variety of 'movement' words, such as 'holding', 'twisting' and 'bouncing'. Most children make good progress in this area.
70. The quality of teaching is good, with adults supporting, suggesting and discussing activities with the children. All staff work effectively as a team to plan for a variety of activities and provide a safe environment within which the children develop and learn. These activities have a positive effect on children's development of co-ordination and mobility. Awareness of the importance of physical development is evident in work in all the areas of learning. Tasks and resources for writing, creative development, technology, role play and social development all emphasise the growth of physical skills. However, because planning is general rather than specific, staff sometimes miss opportunities to plan activities with greater attention to the needs of each individual child.

Creative development

71. The children make good progress in developing their imaginative and creative skills. An imaginative variety of opportunities are provided for the children to paint and print, exploring different media, styles and colours. They begin to appreciate different textures, such as mixing by hand powder paint with washing-up liquid and making patterns to print from this. They begin to recognise patterns in the environment, and name some of the different colours in autumn leaves. There are numerous opportunities for role play, whether doctors, nurses, patients, parents with their babies, drivers and mechanics, to name but a few. Children experiment successfully with percussion instruments and a piano and they enjoy singing. Those who stay for lunch express strong likes and dislikes connected with taste. Many talk enthusiastically, demonstrating their feelings about a situation, such as the baby photographs. Others, noting the feeling of bubbles on their hands, talk about their observations.

72. Role play with dolls is continued, children 'cook' and some travel in an 'ambulance', furthering the topic of the clinic. Children play individually and in groups with toy trains and cars, constructing roads and railway lines. Children act out stories, such as repairing an aeroplane in the sand area.
73. The quality of teaching is good. Activities which provide different learning opportunities are prepared, managed and supervised well. Praise is used effectively to encourage and support the children. A wide and interesting range of work is provided to ensure that the children are prepared well for work in the National Curriculum. Work covered in this area of learning makes a strong contribution to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
74. The classrooms are interesting, colourful and attractive and provide a welcoming learning environment. Resources are sufficient to teach all areas of learning. They are well organised and readily accessible to children.

74. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

74. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

75. A team of three inspectors, including a lay inspector, visited the school for a total of seven inspection days.
76. A meeting was held for parents and 21 parents returned questionnaires.
77. A total of 21 lessons or parts of lessons was observed.
78. Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including minutes of governors' meetings, the school development plan, last OFSTED report and action plan, budget statements, policies, teachers' planning and records, letters to parents and school attendance registers.
79. Governors, teaching and non-teaching staff were interviewed and inspectors spoke to individual parents, visitors to the school and the children.
80. A representative sample of children's work was examined in detail and a sample of children was heard reading. Children's records and reports were examined.
81. Inspectors also examined photographic evidence and inspected the buildings and grounds.

81. **DATA AND INDICATORS**

81. **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with Statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full- time pupils eligible for free school meals
Nursery	59.5	2	10	4

81. **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	20

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

Total number of education support staff:	4
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	65

Average class size

Average class size: 20

81. Financial data

Financial year: 1998/1999

	£
Total income	17,231
Total expenditure	17,231
Expenditure per pupil	287
Balance brought forward from previous year	None
Balance carried forward to next year	None

81. PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	60
Number of questionnaires returned:	21

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	52	43	5	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	76	24	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	42	48	10	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	52	42	6	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	67	33	0	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	48	43	9	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	48	37	15	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	33	43	24	0	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	57	29	14	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	62	38	0	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	86	14	0	0	0