

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **HIGHFIELD NURSERY SCHOOL**

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103125

Headteacher: Mrs R Tedds

Reporting inspector: Mrs P Francis  
2440

Dates of inspection: 12 – 15 March 2001

Inspection number: 194452

Full 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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Highfield Road Saltley Birmingham
Postcode:	B8 3QU
Telephone number:	0121 327 4617
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Appropriate authority:	Birmingham Education Authority
LEA responsible officer:	Margaret Fletcher
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2440	Mrs P Francis	Registered inspector	<p>Communication, language and literacy</p> <p>Creative development</p> <p>Physical development</p>	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' achievements.</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9981	Mr S Hussain	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
23067	Ms D Brigstock	Team inspector	<p>Personal, social and emotional development</p> <p>Mathematical development</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of the world</p> <p>Special educational needs</p> <p>Equal opportunities</p> <p>Under-fives</p>	<p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</p>
2940	Mrs D Zachary	Team inspector	<p>English as an additional language</p>	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is a community nursery school for boys and girls aged 3-4 years, and is larger than many nursery schools. It caters for 113 children, 28 of whom are full-time; the remaining children attend for a morning or afternoon session. There is almost an even balance of boys and girls. Nearly all pupils are from an Asian background with the majority from families that originated in Pakistan, and 15 per cent from Bangladesh. A few individual children are from white families and from those that originated in India. Nearly all children speak English as an additional language, and are at an early stage of learning English. There are four home languages spoken at the school; the majority speak Mirpuri Punjabi and Urdu, and the minority speak Bengali and Pushtu. Pupils come from the very disadvantaged area of Saltley, which has high levels of unemployment and is about two and a half miles from the city centre of Birmingham. The proportion of the full time pupils who are eligible for a free school meal is high at 43 per cent. Overall, the range of pupils' attainment on entry and throughout the school is well below average and the school has a proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, 27 per cent, which is above the national average. There are no children who have a statement of special educational needs.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school is effective. The children achieve well in most areas of learning from their low standards on entry, due to the good teaching. The leadership and management of the school is sound and the school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Due to the good teaching, children learn well and their achievements are excellent in personal, social and emotional development, very good in mathematical development, good in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, and in physical development.
- The very good provision for children's personal, social and emotional development and the good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development give rise to children's very good attitudes, good behaviour and good personal development.
- Children who speak Mirpuri Punjabi and Urdu achieve well due to the very good provision made for them.
- The school has a good partnership with its parents and good links with the community, which contribute positively to pupils' learning.
- The school takes good care of children.

#### **What could be improved**

- The use of the information from assessments to guide teachers in planning for different groups of children.
- The evaluation of the monitoring of children's academic performance and teaching, the delegation of responsibilities to co-ordinators and strategic planning.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the appropriate authority's action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in May 1997. Since then, it has made satisfactory improvement. Standards have been maintained and pupils achieve well from their low standards on entry and there has been good improvement in the quality of teaching. The judgements made during this inspection on most aspects of the school are similar to the previous report. The school has not fully addressed the key issues from the previous report, as the school now follows a different curriculum and has had a complete change in its teaching staff with frequent changes of temporary teachers. The school's capacity to succeed is satisfactory. The headteacher has made a start on the weaknesses identified within this

report, such as planning and the recording of assessments to provide a better programme of work for different groups of children.

## STANDARDS

Due to the good teaching, children achieve well in most areas of learning in the foundation stage. At the end of their year in the nursery they reach above average standards for their age in personal, social and emotional development, and average standards in mathematical and physical development. Children reach below average standards in communication, language and literacy and in knowledge and understanding of the world, and well below average standards in creative development. In comparison with their low standards of attainment on entry to the nursery, these standards represent excellent achievement in personal, social and emotional development and very good achievement in mathematical development. They achieve well in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development, and satisfactorily in creative development. There are no significant differences between the attainment of girls and boys.

Nearly all children are learning English as an additional language at school. This affects their progress in all areas of learning. Overall, these children achieve well. The speakers of the majority languages, Mirpuri Punjabi and Urdu, achieve very well. This is because the bilingual staff make good use of their home languages to support them. The school has tried hard to appoint speakers of the minority languages, Bengali and Pushtu. It has been successful in appointing a Bengali speaker for next term. However, the children who speak the minority languages do not receive support in their home languages. They achieve satisfactorily due to the good individual support from all staff. Children, who have special educational needs, achieve well in all areas of learning. This is due to the good ratio of children to staff and the good support that they receive from all adults.

## CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good attitudes towards learning. Children co-operate very well with staff and apply themselves fully to tasks. They show very high levels of interest and involvement in activities.
Behaviour	Good. Pupils behave sensibly in classrooms and outdoors.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are good. Pupils show very high levels of initiative and responsibility for their age.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory attendance. A high proportion of absence is due to extended holidays to the Indian sub-continent. Punctuality is unsatisfactory. Many pupils arrive late and therefore miss the important settling in and introductory periods. The school's approach to monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance is satisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	
Sessions 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.*

Overall teaching is good and has a positive effect on children's learning. Across the school the majority of teaching is either sound or good and there was no teaching that was judged to be unsatisfactory. In 71 per cent of the lessons observed it was good and it was very good in a further eleven per cent. There was some good teaching in every class. Teaching in personal, social and emotional development is very good and has a positive impact on children's excellent achievement. In communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development it is good overall and, as a result pupils make good progress in those areas of learning. The positive effect that teaching has on children's achievement accounts for the good start that children make to their formal education.

There are strengths in teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for the foundation stage, in the teaching of personal, social and emotional development and in the basic skills of language and number. All staff in the nursery have good relationships with children and manage them very well, they use resources well and set activities for homework that are appropriate for the age of the children and reinforce the basic skills. These strengths in teaching result in children who achieve well, try hard to succeed, work at a good pace, are very motivated to work and know how to improve. There are weaknesses within teachers' planning. They do not use the information from their assessments of children sufficiently to plan for different groups. They do not always meet the needs of all groups, such as the children who speak Bengali and Pushtu. Consequently these children make satisfactory progress rather than the good progress of the majority in the school. Children with learning difficulties make good progress due to the good support from individual staff.

#### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that includes a suitable range of interesting learning opportunities and activities reflecting the recommended areas of learning for children who are under five. There are good strategies for literacy and numeracy.
Provision for children with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is sound due to the extra support given by all staff.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Good overall. The provision for pupils who speak Mirpuri Punjabi and Urdu is very good; for the speakers of Bengali and Pushtu is satisfactory due to the lack of provision in their home languages.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision for pupils' personal development with strengths in the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its children	The school takes good care of children. However, there is unsatisfactory monitoring of pupils' academic performance and poor use of information from assessments to guide planning.

The school has a good partnership with its parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Overall satisfactory. The headteacher provides good pastoral leadership and the school's aims are met successfully. There are weaknesses in the monitoring of children's academic performance and teaching, the delegation of responsibilities to staff and in strategic planning.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. The appropriate authority is committed to the school's success, is aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses but it plays an insufficient role in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The school has begun to monitor teaching, but does not analyse its performance data. Consequently it does not use a very useful tool for identifying weaknesses for the different groups of children, and to plan strategies for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Overall satisfactory. There is sound use of finance to provide good staffing and satisfactory learning resources. Accommodation is adequate. The appropriate authority has applied best value principles satisfactorily.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Their children are making good progress in school.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Behaviour in school is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of work their children receive to do at home.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The parents' views of the school are not a representative sample because only 22 parents attended the pre-inspection parents' meeting and only a small proportion of parents (35 per cent) returned the questionnaire.

The inspectors agree with the parents' positive views of the school. The range of activities outside lessons is as expected for other nurseries of this size. The arrangements for homework are good; the provisions of the book and toy libraries are strong features, and the school's approach to homework is appropriate for this age group.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. It is difficult to make comparisons with the judgements of the last inspection, as there has been a new curriculum for the foundation stage, a new team of teachers, a new headteacher, a different intake of children and a new framework for inspection. Generally standards have been maintained. Children are admitted to the nursery in the September of the school year during which they become four. They transfer to the reception classes of the adjacent primary school after a year in the nursery at the age of four. At home, nearly all of the children speak one of four community languages. On entry to the nursery the attainment of most pupils is well below average particularly in their speech in their home languages and in English.
2. Due to the good teaching, children achieve well in most areas of learning in the foundation stage. At the end of their year in the nursery they reach above average standards for their age in personal, social and emotional development, and average standards in mathematical and physical development. Children reach below average standards in communication, language and literacy and in knowledge and understanding of the world, and well below average standards in creative development. These standards represent excellent achievement in personal, social and emotional development, very good achievement in mathematical development, good achievement in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development and satisfactory achievement in creative development. There are no significant differences between the attainment of girls and boys. In physical development boys reach slightly higher standards in the physical skills of riding tricycles.
3. When children leave the nursery they reach above average standards in personal, social and emotional development as a result of the very good teaching and the strong emphasis that is correctly placed on this area of learning. Staff provide very good opportunities to promote and develop personal, social and emotional skills throughout the school day. Teachers in the adjacent primary school are pleased with the excellent achievement made in this area of learning by children from the nursery, as it has a positive effect on the way in which children settle into the reception classes. They understand school routines, maintain concentration, listen and respond appropriately as soon as they arrive in the reception classes. In the nursery, children behave well both in and out of classrooms, work sociably together in that they take turns, wait patiently and enjoy sharing experiences with their particular friends. They quickly learn some independent skills. They put on aprons and help to tidy up, follow instructions to make a queue at the door, wait patiently, put on their own coats and look after their belongings.
4. As a result of the good teaching in communication, language and literacy, children achieve well and, by the time they leave the nursery, most reach below the average standards expected for children of this age. There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of English throughout the day in all the areas of learning. Staff continually introduce and reinforce new vocabulary and engage children in conversations. Most children can respond in single words and phrases in English but few speak in full sentences. Many children show their responses by gestures when they have difficulty in finding the English words to express their feelings. Most children handle books carefully, hold books the correct way up and turn pages. A few of the higher attainers have favourite books, understand the concept of a word and know that information can be relayed in print. Some children simulate writing and know that they need to choose a pencil for writing rather than a coloured crayon. While their writing consists of pencil marks on the paper interspersed with occasional letters, a few children ascribe meanings to these marks and read their personal writing to an adult.

5. The consistently good teaching in mathematical development ensures that children's achievement over the year is very good and, by the time they transfer to the reception classes they are in line to reach the expected levels for their age. Adults' frequent use of mathematical language throughout the day is an important factor in the good progress made by all children, including the majority who are at the early stages of learning English and those with learning difficulties. By the time they leave the nursery, most children can name squares, rectangles, triangles and circles and have a good understanding of number for their age. They understand and can use some comparative language such as larger or smaller, longer or shorter. The highest attaining children can count beyond twenty and most can count to ten. Children with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language also achieve well, their lack of language skills affecting their learning less in counting and activities with shapes.
6. Children achieve well and reach below average standards for their age in knowledge and understanding of the world compared with well below average standards on entry to the nursery. In the good teaching, they are presented with a wide range of experiences to help them learn about the world around them, including the daily use of computers and very good use of the local area. Their achievements in 'cookery' tasks are good. They have experience of them at home that gives them a good base to build upon. Children are beginning to use computers independently. They approach them confidently, can choose a colour from a palette, fill the shapes of pictures and print them out. They are beginning to gain control of the 'mouse' and the highest attaining children can use it to make recognisable drawings of a fish with an eye and bubbles.
7. On entry to the nursery, children's attainment is below average in their physical skills. As a result of the good teaching, children achieve well and they reach average standards for their age in physical development by the time that they leave the nursery. Teachers provide a good range of daily activities, both indoors and outside, using small and large equipment to develop children's physical skills. Children move confidently and imaginatively and demonstrate good awareness of space. Occasionally there is too little intervention and direct teaching of skills for girls in improving their skills in riding tricycles, consequently, girls' skills and progress were not as good as the boys. Children's manipulative skills are average for their age, in that they handle pencils and other tools and materials, such as construction sets, with increasing co-ordination and control.
8. On entry to the nursery, children's attainment in creative development is well below average. Due to the satisfactory teaching, children's achievement is satisfactory and they attain well below expected standards in creative development by the time they leave the nursery. While children's skills in art and musical activities are sound, activities are dominated by adults, consequently, children have too few opportunities to make choices and be creative because the end product is determined by the adults instead of being a response from the children to a stimulus. In imaginative role-play, adults give children good support to develop their own ideas and to assist them with expressing their ideas in actions, mime, English or their home languages.
9. Nearly all children in the school speak their community languages at home and are learning English as an additional language at school. This has an effect on their achievement in all areas of learning. Overall, these children achieve well. The speakers of the majority languages, Mirpuri Punjabi and Urdu, achieve very well. This is because the bilingual staff make good use of their home languages to translate stories and instructions when required. The school has tried hard to appoint speakers of the minority languages, Bengali and Pushtu. It has been successful in appointing a Bengali speaker for next term. However, because the children who speak the minority languages do not receive support in their home languages, they achieve satisfactorily due to the good individual support from all adults. Children, who have learning difficulties, make good progress due to the good ratio of children to staff and the good support that they receive from all adults. The school does not analyse the comparative attainment of different groups of pupils to find out whether all children are achieving as much as they can.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

10. The findings of this inspection report are similar to that of the last inspection. Children's enthusiasm for the nursery is very good and this is reflected in their very good attitudes towards learning. They co-operate very well with staff and apply themselves fully to tasks. They show very high levels of interest and involvement in activities. Consequently, they all make good strides in their learning from a very low starting point. There were many examples of children's positive attitudes. During a mixed-activity session there was much interest and enjoyment in making models by gluing strips of paper on balloons; matching numbers onto hooks; role-play and activities in the water tray. In the 'office' and 'home' role-play areas in one of the classrooms, children played keenly with each other, enacting many scenes. For example, several children spontaneously participated well as they played out a 'coming back from work' scene. One boy even asked a girl if she had a nice day at work and if she was tired. There were also very good attitudes in several outdoor sessions in the play area. Children also show very high levels of interest and enthusiasm in the book and toy libraries. They enjoy sessions taken by visitors from the community and going on trips and visits themselves. For example, they recently enjoyed singing and sharing books with residents at a local home for the elderly.
11. Behaviour is good. This makes a significant contribution to children's progress and to the positive ethos of the nursery. The nursery is a very friendly, happy and orderly community. Parents value the happy atmosphere very much. Children behave sensibly in classrooms and outdoors. Lunchtime with the full-time pupils is a very pleasant occasion where they sit together quietly and enjoy each other's company. The great majority of parents is pleased about behaviour and did not express any concerns about name-calling or other bad behaviour. During the inspection there was hardly any bad behaviour for this age. When it occurs, staff deal with it straight away. They help children to make friends when they have been selfish or behaved wrongly towards each other. Children are learning good manners. For example, during the morning registration period in the full-time class, many children respond with "yes please" when asked if they want a lunch. Staff give gentle reminders when needed about the basic rules regarding behaviour. Consequently, children are developing a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. There were no exclusions at this nursery in the last academic year.
12. Relationships are good. The level of harmony in the nursery community is a strength of the school. Children show much respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. In lessons, they collaborate well and value each other's contributions and achievements. They share role-play areas and equipment with good consideration for each other and generally play and work very well together.
13. Children display the level of trustworthiness and care for property that would be expected for their age. They are learning to respect their own property and that of others. At break-times, children are encouraged to use the bins provided and not litter the premises.
14. Personal development is good. Children show very high levels of initiative and responsibility for their age. In the full-time class children take responsibility well. All children take turns to be the main helper of the day, and there is much enthusiasm from them in this regard. They are eager to be selected, and when they are, they perform tasks such as returning the register to the office with great pride and care.
15. Attendance is unsatisfactory for a nursery of this size. A high proportion of absence is due to extended holidays to the Indian sub-continent. Punctuality is unsatisfactory. Many children arrive late and therefore miss the important settling in and introductory periods. These factors reduce children's learning opportunities considerably. The school's satisfactory approach to monitoring and promoting children's attendance is detailed in paragraph 40 of this report.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. Teaching has shown good improvement since the last inspection when eleven per cent of teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. Across the school the majority of teaching is either sound or good and there was no teaching that was judged to be unsatisfactory. In 71 per cent of the lessons observed it was good and it was very good in a further eleven per cent. There was some good teaching in every class. Teaching in personal, social and emotional development is very good and has a positive effect on children's excellent achievement. In communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical development, it is good and, as a result, pupils make good progress in those areas of learning. Teaching is sound in creative development.
17. All staff have good knowledge and understanding of the needs of children in the foundation stage, and of most of the areas of learning to meet those needs. There is a weakness in creative development where adults dominate the activities in art and music and do not provide sufficient opportunities for children to respond to their own ideas and to be truly creative. Teachers provide very good opportunities throughout the day to promote and develop personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and number. In all activities, adults emphasise the way in which children should relate to others. They show by good example how to talk to each other, to be well mannered and they reinforce examples of children's good behaviour as models for children to copy. Adults continually encourage children to listen carefully and to communicate and speak in English during all activities. Bilingual staff, who speak Mirpuri Punjabi and Urdu, often use these languages to translate instructions and stories to support the majority of children who speak these languages at home, which has a positive effect on their good progress. The school, despite its best efforts, does not yet have adult speakers in Bengali and Pushtu. This means that the minority of children who speak these languages does not have access to support in their home languages. Consequently, they learn more slowly and make satisfactory progress. All adults use mathematical language, particularly to reinforce counting skills, very well throughout the day. The registration time at the beginning of sessions, stories, a walk around the local area, cooking and role-play is used effectively to practise counting and to identify numbers.
18. Teachers' planning is unsatisfactory. Teachers plan activities effectively from the stepping stones in the six areas of learning for the foundation stage and they ensure that the children undertake many practical experiences and make good use of play to extend their learning. However, they do not always plan work to match the different prior attainments of different groups of children. Weekly planning rarely makes specific reference to children with learning difficulties or to children who speak minority languages or to their learning outcomes. During the week, teachers evaluate their teaching and children's learning and make evaluative comments about individual children's progress on their weekly planning sheets. The information from these assessments is not used sufficiently in the next week's planning to match the activities accurately to the needs of the different groups of children. Occasionally in communication, language and literacy, the teacher forms a group to extend their skills in writing but this is rarely seen in other activities, as children work in mixed ability groups for most of their time in the nursery. To compensate for the lack of specific planning to meet the needs of different groups, staff respond well to children's individual needs during the day on an ad hoc basis.
19. Other strengths in the teaching are the very good management of children, based on good relationships and a calm, quiet discipline. In this secure, stimulating environment children try hard to succeed and work productively at a good pace. The organisation of the classrooms is good; children know what is expected of them, know the routines well and become independent very quickly. Resources match the children's needs and are well organised for them to have access independently. Teachers make good use of well-chosen resources to match the objectives of the lesson and often use them in imaginative ways that make learning fun. When sharing the story, 'The Blue Balloon', the teacher blew up a blue balloon and let it go before sealing the neck with a knot. The children were excited and laughed merrily when the balloon careered around the classroom. The teacher further challenged the children to try to describe what was happening to the balloon and why. The staff do not compensate sufficiently for the lack of adult Bengali and

Pushtu speakers. Teachers and most nursery nurses always speak in English. While teachers make good use of the learning resources they have, the school has a very limited supply of books in the community languages and while there is writing on labels in Urdu around the school in displays and notices these are limited in the other languages.

20. There is a very good team approach to working in all classrooms and all adults know the children well. Teachers use students from local colleges well to support children's learning and most make good interventions and are of considerable support to the teachers and children. When they deploy them effectively, teachers make good use of bilingual assistants and nursery nurses, but too often they are used inefficiently as they sit and listen to the teacher and the group instead of using time for other more useful activities.
21. The teachers use homework well so that learning is reinforced and parents are able to make a worthwhile contribution to their children's learning. Children and parents may borrow books and toys from school and a teddy bear regularly visits a child's home overnight and the child is expected to share the bear's experiences with the class during the next session. Staff regularly encourage and praise children for their effort and work, and ensure that they have good knowledge of how to improve.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

22. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that includes a suitable range of interesting learning opportunities and activities reflecting the recommended areas of learning for children who are under five. Planning documents have been altered this term to reflect more accurately the Early Learning Goals from the new foundation curriculum. Changes to the previous schemes of work have been made so that there are better links between the areas of learning, including early literacy and numeracy activities. Personal, social and emotional development has a high priority in the school as does improving children's skills in English and extending their vocabulary. This is particularly apt as most children have English as an additional language. Adults rarely miss an opportunity to reinforce or teach new words and phrases to extend children's vocabulary so that they become more active learners in all areas of the curriculum. The nursery has a colourful and stimulating environment which is welcoming and which puts children at their ease.
23. All staff are involved in assessing whether newly admitted children have special educational needs. The range of home languages that are spoken complicates this process. Where there is no bilingual support some children cannot be accurately identified. The school addresses this through the use of group and individual educational plans. When re-assessed in the spring term, several children are taken off the register as, by then, the staff have a clearer picture of those children with learning difficulties and those who need additional support in learning English. The school makes good use of external agencies, such as the educational psychologist, plus the important contribution of parents during home visits to make its assessments. Overall, provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. For those with educational plans it is good, but record keeping procedures for those children on the earliest stage of the register are under-developed.
24. Those children who are speakers of the majority languages have equal access to the curriculum, as skilled, bi-lingual classroom assistants provide additional support. Despite the school's best efforts, two language groups remain where no additional support is provided. This puts these children at a disadvantage.

25. The nursery is promoting children's literacy skills well. Teachers use Big Books for stories and constantly reinforce and extend children's language and communication skills throughout the planned curriculum. Each classroom has examples of written English and other languages such as Urdu. Spoken English is modelled well and children eagerly share books at the beginning of each registration session. Children's skills in numeracy are also developing well. They practise counting daily, and number work, a sense of time, shape and measuring are exploited effectively in all six areas of learning. Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development has a high priority in the school and is very good. Children's very good attitudes to school, good behaviour and relationships with each other and staff, plus their quickly growing confidence, demonstrate the school's effectiveness. Children's learning is strengthened further by first-hand activities such as exploring the local area to learn about houses and through visitors to the school such as the local policeman or the fire service. The use of the attractive and interesting garden, outdoor play areas and structures provides children with a safe place to play, explore and learn, and is effective in enriching the curriculum further.
26. Since the headteacher's appointment, she has led changes to the previously planned curriculum and has introduced a new common planning format. Policy documents are in need of further development to more accurately reflect the new curriculum. Developing schemes of work for all subjects was a key issue from the last inspection. This key issue has been overtaken by the introduction of the foundation curriculum. The school is now in the process of altering its long-term plans and, this term, these have been adapted to make specific references to the Early Learning Goals. The emphasis in the planning has been changed to focus more on the development of children's communication and language skills through stories and to make it more relevant to the children's lives. Although adults in classrooms provide additional support for those children who need it, and extend the highest attaining children by challenging them to achieve more, not enough emphasis is given to planning levels of work for the different groups of children. Long-term plans do not include guidance for teachers on the way content should be approached for children who speak different languages and for those with learning difficulties.
27. Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good in each regard. The nursery has successfully maintained the high quality of its provision since the last inspection.
28. Spiritual development is well catered for through assemblies, circle time and within the wider curriculum. Children are introduced to the beauty of the world around them and are invited to think about and reflect on the achievements of others. Staff often ask children to think about the natural world, including plants and animals. They are also often invited to think about others, and values such as friendship and sharing. There were many instances of children showing awe and wonder in their learning. For example, during an outdoor play session several children voluntarily helped the headteacher to plant bulbs and flowers in garden boxes. A few children were amazed when they heard about how plants draw water from the soil, through their roots. One child marvelled at how beautiful the roots looked as he placed the plant in a hole that the headteacher had made for it. During a water play session, a few children were captivated by bubbles they were blowing using washing up liquid.
29. Very good management of children by staff gives pupils clear messages about right and wrong in their behaviour. Children are given gentle reminders about what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and they soon understand what is considered good and bad behaviour. Staff are very patient and sensitive as they explain why certain characteristics and behaviour are wrong, and this is effective in developing children's understanding. Children are frequently praised or given stickers for their good work and behaviour. They are learning to share, take turns and to be unselfish. For example, as lines of children walk along corridors and through doorways they are reminded to walk in pairs and let others go first when it comes to narrow points. They are taught to care for the environment as well as other forms of life. Staff offer very good role-models for children and this fosters respect and the treatment of others with courtesy and fairness.
30. Good relationships exist at all levels and this is a result of the good provision for children's social development. The nursery promotes good manners, co-operation, care and helpful attitudes towards others. Numerous contacts with the wider community allow children to see and

experience a typical cross section of society. For example, visitors talk to children about their work and experiences. Through this, children begin to learn about the world of work and the need for certain occupations and services. Personal and social education is a strength at this nursery. The very wide range of responsibilities enables children to experience responsibility towards others. For example, children are asked to give messages to adults, return registers to the office and give out fruit and orange juice to their classmates at break time. After many activities, children are taught to tidy up their areas so as not to inconvenience others.

31. Good provision for children's cultural development results in children developing a very basic appreciation and knowledge of their own culture, and others around them. The nursery carefully selects learning resources such as books, artefacts and toys so that children can learn and play in a strong multicultural setting. Children's own culture and that of others is well celebrated through assemblies to mark important religious events and festivals. For example, Christmas, Divali and Eid are well discussed and children do much work at those times of the year. The inspection took place shortly after Eid and there were good quality artefacts, photographs and displays around the nursery to celebrate this occasion. A particular strength of the nursery's cultural provision is the regular thematic weeks that are held from time to time. For instance, weeks have been devoted to Italy, France and China. This allows children to take part in many activities such as cooking and sampling different foods. They can also find out about traditions, costumes and lifestyles. Children undertake many visits in the local community and this too supports their cultural development.
32. The nursery has maintained good links in the community since the last inspection. These links provide many additional learning opportunities and enrich children's experiences. There are frequent visitors to the school. For example, a community police officer, the fire service, a dental nurse and a nutritionist all visit from time to time doing much valuable work with children in promoting health and safety. A community dental health video was recently filmed in the nursery and this is now used more widely in the community to promote hygiene. School trips and visits to local shops and stores provide children with an insight into the world around them. Examples of other trips include the 'light and science' exhibition, Cannon Hill Park and a local rail station when children looked at 'trips by train'. The nursery promotes the love of learning through books, particularly well. This includes trips to the local library and regular use of the 'words on wheels' mobile library service. The nursery has recently secured funding from a local business that is promoting reading in particular.
33. The nursery has good, constructive relationships with partner institutions. There is an effective partnership with the Adult Education Service. This results in the high number of good courses available for parents in the community room. A number of students from the City College undertake their childcare work experience at this nursery and there were many good examples of the additional support and experiences they offer children.
34. The nursery is a part of the Saltley cluster of schools. Regular meetings and communications ensure that this nursery is keeping abreast of local and national initiatives in education. There is a good link with Dyson Gardens Community Nursery (a pre-nursery playgroup where Highfield Nursery playgroup is held) enabling children to transfer successfully to Highfield Nursery.
35. There are good relationships with Highfield Junior and Infants' School. Nearly all the nursery children transfer there. There is an effective summer term programme of integration. This includes shared assemblies and visits to the reception class for story. These arrangements are effective in giving children the confidence to transfer to the next stage in their education. The primary school is impressed at how independent the nursery school children are, and how easily they settle into reception.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

36. Although there are a few areas for further development, the nursery has made several improvements in this area of its work since the last inspection. A number of procedures are in place to ensure the health and safety of all pupils. The level and quality of support in this regard is good. The nursery provides a happy, safe and secure learning environment for its pupils. The educational and personal support and advice given to children is good overall. These provisions contribute significantly to the caring and family ethos of the nursery, and are effective in supporting children. Parents rightly feel that the nursery's staff are very caring and want their children to start developing their potential as learners as soon as possible.
37. Arrangements for child protection are good. The nursery has developed a sound policy document to supplement the local authority procedures. Staff are well aware of the procedures and receive regular updates on any changes from the designated officer. The designated officer is appropriately trained and experienced to deal with any issues. The nursery has good relations with external welfare agencies.
38. The nursery has good procedures to check safety provisions. 'Safety audits' are undertaken annually and arrangements are made to ensure that all equipment and appliances are regularly tested. Accident and emergency procedures are well developed and effective in dealing with problems. Fire drills are carried out regularly. One member of staff is fully trained and qualified in administering first aid.
39. The nursery works very closely with several external agencies in raising awareness of health and safety matters. For example, a nutritionist and dental hygienist have recently held sessions with parents and pupils and given much advice to help parents and their children to live safely and healthily. The community police officer and fire service are regular visitors to the nursery, they too get involved in promoting health and safety.
40. Procedures to monitor and promote pupils' attendance are satisfactory. The secretary produces detailed summary reports of attendance for each half term. This enables the headteacher to see what the levels of attendance are in each class. The nursery does not keep records of reasons for absence and lateness to promote good habits in parents and children for the future. Newsletters regularly mention the importance of good attendance to parents, and attendance is sometimes raised as an issue at parents' meetings. The nursery gives certificates to those children who achieve high rates of attendance each term and this is also a positive feature.
41. The nursery's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. This results in hardly any bad behaviour. Appropriate records are kept of any significant incidents of bad behaviour and this allows the nursery to identify any worrying patterns in children very early on. Children are frequently praised and rewarded for walking nicely, for good manners and for good behaviour. This is highly effective in promoting high standards of behaviour. Friendship, helping and caring for others are well promoted by the nursery and are often the underlying themes of personal and social education.
42. Procedures for assessing children's attainment and progress are satisfactory. Teachers know the children in their classes well and quickly evaluate what they can do. Bilingual classroom assistants use their knowledge of children's home languages to find out, through tasks and questioning, what children know and can do. In addition, parents make a valuable contribution to this process on the home visit that takes place before entry into school and through talking to adults in school during the year. The nursery uses the local education authority's baseline assessment during the first half term of the academic year. The statements on the grid match the Early Learning Goals. Their attainments are recorded again when they leave the nursery when children's achievements can be assessed. Parents are informed of their children's progress through continuous conversation and through annual written reports. In addition, teachers make judgements on some children's achievements at the end of every week, which they record next to the objectives on their planning sheets.
43. Each child has a portfolio in which samples of their work are kept. These samples do not explain how much help children were given, the focus of the work or in what context it was completed

and, as such, have limited value. In addition, each child has a personal portfolio called 'All about me' that is filled in on entry to the school and again when children leave. What is missing are planned, recorded assessments of children's learning after entry and before their exit. This omission has a negative impact on teachers' future planning. Weekly planning documents sometimes identify different expectations for different groups of children but the recording of assessments in a common format to give an overview of attainment in each class, which would assist teachers to plan for different groups of children more effectively, is missing. Children on stage 2 and above of the special needs register are assessed against the targets on their educational plans in the spring term when new targets are set, so this group of children does benefit from assessment followed by focused planning to meet their needs. The headteacher has introduced weekly evaluations of children's achievements since her appointment and is raising awareness of this issue.

44. A key issue from the last inspection concerned using information from assessments to improve planning and to develop a more uniform method for recording children's progress. This has not been achieved. The recently appointed headteacher has begun to address the issue through the use of baseline testing but a coherent whole-school procedure for using assessments to inform future planning for different groups of children is not in place.
45. Teachers do get to know the children in their classes well and gather additional information from nursery nurses, and classroom assistants. All adults have a good personal knowledge of what 'their' children can do and they extend their social and personal development well. This shows in their questioning of children, the quality and level of difficulty in the language they use and their expectations of behaviour and good manners. Good behaviour is rewarded through very good use of praise and affirmation. Adults constantly monitor children's personal development, reporting to their parents and carers at regular intervals. Children's work is displayed attractively around the school and photographs are also used to display and record special events in school such as Diwali or Christmas. In addition, photographs are used as teaching aids. For example, over the washbasins a series of photographs are displayed in a sequence to show children the proper way to wash their hands, including remembering to turn off the taps. The classroom and corridor displays celebrate and give value to children's work. The procedures for monitoring and supporting children's personal development are good.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

46. The nursery has successfully maintained this major strength since the last inspection and continues to enjoy very good relationships with parents who are highly supportive of the school and its work. Although inspectors received a low response to the inspection questionnaire and low attendance at the parents' meeting, their views are positive. They have much confidence in the school and the quality of education provided. Parents' views are very similar to the last inspection. They have confidence in the head-teacher. Nearly all parents said that: their children like school; teaching is good; their children are making good progress and the nursery is helping their children to develop a sense of responsibility. Most parents feel that they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. Parents feel welcome in school. They are very comfortable in approaching staff about any problems. Most say that the nursery has high expectations for their children; and behaviour is good.
47. A few parents are disappointed at the range of activities outside of lessons, but inspectors assure parents that the range is similar to that found in other nurseries of this size. Some parents were concerned about the arrangements for homework but the inspection team feels that the provisions of the book and toy libraries are strong features, and a more structured approach to homework is not appropriate for this age group.

48. The quality of information to parents, especially about children's progress is good; a similar picture to the last inspection. Parents' meetings are held three times in the academic year and this gives them plenty of opportunity to discuss their children's progress with staff. The nursery provides useful annual reports to parents about their children's achievements and any difficulties. These reports provide a good pen picture of their children's progress in relation to the nationally agreed learning priorities for this age group, including details of personal and social development. Although the nursery's brochure lacks details about the curriculum it does provide some useful information about policies and routines. There is much information about the nursery's aims and curriculum to be found in the reception area. This includes many photographs of pupils taking part in activities, such that parents get a good idea of what their children are doing. The community room notice board is particularly informative about parents' courses, events and issues. Newsletters are frequently sent home and these effectively keep parents abreast of developments in the life of the school. Many notices around the nursery, and also key letters, are translated into Urdu and Punjabi. The nursery's bilingual staff continue to play a strong role in liaising with parents.
49. Links with parents are highly effective and their involvement has a good impact on the work of the nursery. The contribution of parents, to children's learning, at the nursery and at home, is good. The school is very active in promoting good relationships with parents and involving them in their children's learning through running courses and workshops for them. Parents and children can borrow toys from the toy library and parents take part in cookery sessions, which they enjoy. They are free to talk to teachers and classroom assistants at the beginning and end of each morning and afternoon. They are involved in celebrating major festivals from different faiths such as Christmas, Diwali and the festivals of Eid.
50. The nursery has good arrangements for induction. Parents and their children receive three well-planned sessions to familiarise them with the nursery's provisions, policies and routines. This includes 'stay and play' sessions in classrooms in the summer term prior to the child starting. The nursery staff carry out home visits and the pre-school worker runs courses for parents in the school's community room. Pupils are gradually and sensitively settled in the nursery. The community room is well used by the nursery to promote the involvement of parents in their children's learning. Many adult education classes are held there, for example, beginners and intermediate level computer courses; 'improve your maths'; dressmaking; childcare and English as a second language. Parents of children with special educational needs are effectively involved in regular reviews of progress and also in target setting. A few parents help with nursery activities. For example, they help in the playgroup, make 'story sacks', share stories and help on nursery trips and visits.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

51. The leadership and management in the school are sound. The school has been through a period of uncertainty with a change of headteacher less than a year ago and a high turnover of temporary teaching staff. The present headteacher's first priority has been to appoint a permanent teaching team. This aim is about to be realised at the beginning of next term when a deputy headteacher and a Bengali speaker start their contracts. There is a strong, shared commitment to improve and the school's capacity to succeed is satisfactory. The improvement since the last inspection has been sound. The headteacher provides good pastoral leadership and the school's aims are met successfully. Because the headteacher has been waiting until she appointed a permanent team, a previous key issue to delegate responsibilities for the leadership of the areas of learning to staff, has not been addressed. Consequently, the headteacher leads in all curricular areas and acts as the co-ordinator for special educational needs. The responsibility for information and communication technology has been delegated effectively to a nursery nurse and other areas could have been delegated to other members of the support staff. The headteacher is aware of the weaknesses in planning and the recording of information from assessments and has begun to

tackle this key issue from the last inspection. There are weaknesses in the leadership and management that need to improve to ensure that the good teaching is more secure. These are in the strategic planning, in monitoring and evaluating teaching and the children's performance, and in delegating leadership responsibilities to staff.

52. The appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities satisfactorily. The responsible officer takes an active interest in all aspects and has a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She is very supportive and helps to monitor the quality of the curriculum provided, however, the appropriate authority plays an insufficient role in shaping the direction of the school. The quality of the school's development plan is a weakness. The plan is for a year only and does not plan over a longer term. Priorities in the plan are not related sufficiently to raising standards and the school's financial planning does not effectively support educational priorities.
53. The school makes sound strategic use of resources and a recent audit by the local education authority found that financial systems are administered satisfactorily, ensuring adequate control but it identified significant weaknesses in the school's development plan. The school uses information and communication technology effectively for its administration. The school makes sound use of specific grants such as the finance for special educational needs. The appropriate authority has applied best value principles satisfactorily.
54. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers and support staff is good overall, but there are no bilingual support assistants who speak Bengali or Pushtu. Satisfactory induction procedures are clearly documented for teachers who are newly qualified. Appraisal for teachers is not yet in place, however, training for the staff in the recently introduced procedures for performance management has been planned. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is unsatisfactory. The headteacher teaches a class for four days a week, which has left her limited time for her management role. While she monitors teachers' weekly plans, her monitoring of teaching is at an early stage except for the newly qualified teacher who has been monitored regularly in line with national requirements. No analysis of progress for children with different home languages has been made to identify factors that may have an impact on their progress.
55. The accommodation is sufficient for the current numbers of pupils and the outdoor environment has been improved for physical development since the last inspection. The school has appropriate resources for most areas of learning, although there is a need for more books in community languages and for music in creative development.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. The school should now:

(1) Improve the use of the information from assessments to guide teachers in planning for different groups of children by:

- improving the school's system for recording assessments to track children's progress through the year;
- using the information from assessments in teachers' weekly planning to provide activities that match the needs of different groups of children, including those with special educational needs and speakers of Bengali and Pushtu;
- \* revising the long-term plans for the areas of learning to include guidance for teachers on the way the content should be approached for children of different language backgrounds and for those with learning difficulties.

(Paragraphs 18, 26, 43, 44, 62, 69, 73, 76, 79)

(2) improve the leadership and management of the school by:

- improving the monitoring of teaching to identify the impact of teaching on the progress made by different groups of children;
- improving the monitoring of the school's performance by analysing assessment data to identify the comparative progress made by children from different language backgrounds;
- \* improving the delegation of leadership roles to staff ensuring that they make an effective contribution to raising standards;
- improving the strategic planning to shape the school's direction more clearly.

(Paragraphs 9, 51, 52, 54, 62)

57. The following minor weaknesses should also be addressed:

(a) Increase opportunities for creative development for children, particularly in art and musical activities.

(Paragraphs 8, 17, 86, 87)

(b) Improve provision for the speakers of Bengali and Pushtu.

(Paragraphs 9, 18, 19, 24, 51, 60, 61, 70)

(c) Improve children's attendance and punctuality.

(Paragraph 40)

\* Indicates issues already included in the school's development plan.

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

58. Almost all the children in the school speak English as an additional language. As this is the case the standards they reach and their achievement are detailed under the previous heading 'How high are standards?' of this report. The strongest areas of learning are personal, social and emotional development and mathematical development where achievement is excellent and very good respectively. The weakest area is creative development, where, nevertheless, achievement is satisfactory. Overall standards are below what is expected at this age, but achievement is good. The children are making great strides compared to their attainment when they enter the school.
59. There are four main home languages spoken by the children. These are Mirpuri Punjabi, spoken by the majority, Pushtu, Bengali and Urdu. Within the overall picture of good achievement, there are differences in the progress made by children with different home languages. The differences are due to different levels of bilingual support. The school uses the grant money it receives appropriately, to provide bilingual adult support to the children. So far, however, it has only been able to find adults appropriately skilled in Mirpuri and Urdu. An appointment has been made to provide Bengali support next term. Currently, as a result of this, the children who speak Mirpuri or Urdu make very good progress and achieve very well. The majority of those who speak Bengali or Pushtu make satisfactory progress. The children who speak Bengali or Pushtu who are most confident with English achieve well, as the lack of home language support has less impact.
60. The teaching of children with English as an additional language is good overall. Again, the detail of this is found elsewhere in the report, in paragraphs 17 and 18. The children's learning is good overall, but again the speakers of Mirpuri or Urdu learn particularly well whilst the learning of the majority of the Bengali or Pushtu speakers, without bilingual support, is satisfactory. The bilingual support staff both interpret instructions or teaching points and develop home language skills. They are skilled at intervention to develop both languages. They give the children the confidence to talk about what they are doing. In a small group working with dough, for example, a support staff member asked a child, in English, what shape he was making. He replied in Mirpuri and she simply responded 'wow'!! He beamed, selected another cutter, showed her it and said the shape name in English. The children for whom there is no bilingual support make satisfactory progress because they are given adult attention in small groups. The adults speak English and demonstrate actions at the same time to give a clear illustration of meaning. This effectively enables the children to broaden their English vocabulary but does not provide the same level of engagement.
61. The school has put significant efforts into trying to attract bilingual support staff, and this is a sensible approach. Nevertheless, some other avenues of support and inclusion have not been sufficiently developed. Although informed interpreting is not possible without adult bilingual support, children have not been grouped in classes in such a way as allows children fluent in English to support others. Although, again, development of home language competence is hard to encourage without adult input, valuing of that home language can be achieved in other ways. Monolingual adult speakers of English can learn basic welcoming phrases in other languages, which is a reassurance to children starting school, for example. The written form of the language can be displayed as labels about the school. At the moment there is insufficient labelling in Bengali.

62. The school relies on the skills of its bilingual support staff and its teachers to ensure the good overall progress of children. At the moment the results are good, though not across all language backgrounds. There is, however, not enough coherent curricular support to ensure teaching remains good or to address the weaker achievement of some groups. Schemes of work outline content, but have no suggestions for the way it should be approached in current circumstances for children of different language backgrounds. This is left to individual teachers, and thus relies on their individual skills. Assessment data is not analysed to see the comparative progress made by children of different language backgrounds. This means that a tool for pinpointing specific weaknesses for the different groups, and planning strategies for improvement, is not being used. These are areas for future development in the school's efforts to raise achievement for all its children.

**PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS**

**Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection**

Number of sessions observed

28

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

10

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	71	18	0	0	0

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

**Information about the school's pupils**

**Pupils on the school's roll**

Nursery

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

72

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

12

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Special educational needs**

Nursery

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

0

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

30

**English as an additional language**

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

113

**Pupil mobility in the last school year**

No of pupils

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

7

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

21

**Attendance****Total absence**

	%
School data	23


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

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and support staff**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.7

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	270

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.6
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

**Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	244,914
Total expenditure	242,125
Expenditure per pupil	2,124
Balance brought forward from previous year	1,999
Balance carried forward to next year	4,788

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	114
Number of questionnaires returned	40

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	18	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	27.5	2.5	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	31	2.5	5	2.5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	43	17	10	13
The teaching is good.	56	36	2.5	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	42	11	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	38	5	2.5	2.5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	35	5	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	51	36	8	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	58	27.5	5	0	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	33	5	0	2.5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	35	13.5	0	13.5

The parents' views of the school are not a representative sample because only 22 parents attended the pre-inspection parents' meeting and only a small proportion of parents (35.1 per cent) returned the questionnaire.

**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**

63. Children are admitted to the nursery in the September of the school year during which they become four. They transfer to the reception classes of the adjacent primary school after a year in the nursery at the age of four. At home, nearly all of the children speak one of four community languages. On entry to the nursery the attainment of most pupils is well below average particularly in their speech in their home languages and in English. The children are accommodated in three classes, two of which are part-time and children attend for a morning or afternoon session, and one in which children attend school for the full day.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

64. The school has maintained the very good standards of provision in this area of learning identified following the last inspection. Personal, social and emotional development has a high priority in the school. Before entering school most children have limited opportunities to mix and share games with other children outside their own families and many have had no experience of play settings. They enter the school with low levels of personal, social and emotional development but are likely to exceed the expected levels of attainment by the time they transfer to the reception class in their next school. This represents an excellent achievement over the year and is due to the very good and diligent support they receive from all adults in the nursery. The provision of a wide variety of activities and the calm, effective and consistent interactions with staff make a significant contribution to the children's learning.
65. Children work well together in that they take turns, wait patiently and enjoy sharing experiences with their particular friends. Children who cannot communicate because they speak different languages still take part in activities and collaborate through gestures and facial expressions. The children are supported very well by teachers, bilingual classroom assistants and nursery nurses who constantly interact with them, reinforcing good manners, extending their spoken vocabulary and promoting a higher level of independence. Adults make a point of joining the children and modelling actions and language during activities, such as in a role-play activity where a nursery nurse guided them in 'building' a house, or in making roti bread to eat. The children watch and listen carefully and act out their parts extremely well. The interaction between adults and children which follows, and the constant reinforcement of good behaviour and relationships, through use of praise and the acquisition of language from example, has a noticeable and very positive impact on children's learning.
66. Children quickly learn some independent skills. They put on aprons and help to tidy up, follow instructions to make a queue at the door, wait patiently, put on their own coats and look after their belongings. All members of staff quietly and positively, praise children for their good manners and each small achievement constantly reinforces these skills throughout the day. Children enjoy the attention of staff and approach those they know with confidence to ask for help or share an idea or need. The good organisation of resources promotes children's independence well. Labels around the rooms help them know where equipment is stored and this promotes their literacy skills as well as encouraging an appropriate level of personal responsibility.
67. Children's behaviour is good both in and out of the classrooms. They develop their social skills well, for example, as they give out fruit and drinks during snack times. They are encouraged to say please and thank you at all times. The welcome extended to parents and carers at the beginning and end of each session adds to the children's confidence. They willingly fetch and pin their name badge to a board to show they are in school and most have learned to answer the register with a cheerful, "Here I am!" They follow routines sensibly and understand the timetable for the day.

68. Staff actively promote independence by providing a range of interesting activities where children can make some choices within planned tasks or, when not directly being in an adult led group, can choose to play with a wide range of games and settings which are not overcrowded. Signs all around each classroom give the number of children who can be in any one area at a time, for example, "4 children can play in the sand." or "3 children can play in the water." Children respond to these signs well as they have developed a good understanding and recognition of numerals for their age. Children persevere with tasks and concentrate on them for considerable lengths of time, particularly when the task is adult led. If they have to wait for their turn, they do so patiently, accepting the adult's instruction.
69. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good resulting in high quality provision that leads to very good progress for the children. Staff provide very good opportunities to promote and develop personal, social and emotional skills throughout the school day and in all areas of the foundation curriculum. These opportunities are provided for all children, including those with learning difficulties and English as an additional language. Those children with English as an additional language make very good progress when supported by a bilingual assistant. Although teachers plan opportunities for children to share their feelings, the low command of the English language limits their involvement in discussions. Children with bilingual support can make their comments and feelings known through translation but those without support do not have the same opportunity. Children are challenged to learn and they are eager to do so. Teachers, classroom assistants and nursery nurses know the children very well and make evaluative assessments of what children know and can do. There is no day to day whole school strategy for keeping records of these achievements, and the assessments are not reflected in future planning documents for different groups of children.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

70. It is difficult to judge improvement from the last inspection, as the teachers, the curriculum for the foundation stage and the intake of children have changed, but inspection findings are similar to the last report. As a result of the good teaching, children achieve well from their well below average standards on entry and, by the time they leave the nursery, most reach below the average standards expected for children of this age in communication, language and literacy. Teachers provide many good opportunities for children to speak and communicate during the day. There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of English in all the areas of learning, as staff continually introduce and reinforce new vocabulary. For the majority language speakers, bilingual staff make good use of their home languages to translate stories and instructions when required. Consequently, these children make very good progress in the development of language. They listen attentively and answer questions in words and phrases in English and the more confident children speak in sentences. For the minority language speakers, there are no staff who speak their home language so it is more difficult for them to learn and they make satisfactory progress in gaining skills and understanding in English. They speak to adults in single words and communicate through use of facial expressions and actions. They are given good individual support from adults as the ratio of children to staff is good in all classes and adults communicate with them individually and through gestures to enable them to make satisfactory progress. Children with special educational needs also make good progress in acquiring language skills due to the good support from all the staff.
71. Teachers teach the beginnings of literacy well and introduce the children to a good selection of children's literature in their topics. They use their support staff and resources well. In one lesson the teacher used the Big Book of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' to teach the English vocabulary in the story and the sequence of the life cycle of a butterfly. After the teacher read each page of the story, the bilingual support assistant translated the page for the majority language speakers and showed pictures and models of the caterpillar and its food to help other language speakers understand the text. When translating, the assistants sit at the side of the group, an unsuitable position for the children to listen and they had to keep turning their heads to see her. During the activities following the story, the bilingual support assistant made very good use of a story sack of resources to reinforce the spoken vocabulary to a small group of children asking questions such

as, 'Can you find the four strawberries that the caterpillar ate? Show me two plums. Where is the cake? Say cake.' In another lesson the class was singing a number rhyme and the teacher used large pictures of five currant buns to illustrate the meaning of the rhyme and to help the children understand the English vocabulary. The children show their positive responses by smiles and laughter when they have difficulty in finding the English words to express their feelings. The school has a very limited supply of books in the community languages and while there is writing on labels in Urdu around the school in displays and notices these are limited in the other languages. Teachers and most nursery nurses always speak in English.

72. Teachers introduce children to the early stages of literacy through enjoyment of books and stories. At the beginning of each session the registration time is used well for children to find their name badges, to look at pictures in storybooks that they have chosen and to respond to their names by saying, 'Here I am!' Most children handle books carefully, hold books the correct way up and turn pages. A few of the higher attainers have favourite books, understand the concept of a word and know that information can be relayed in print. Sometimes children will ask an adult to read the text on a page for them. In one class there is a writing table, and during the time for free activities, children wrote letters to friends and posted them. Teachers sometimes teach the higher attainers in a smaller group, as seen when children were encouraged to draw a picture of the story heard and to write underneath the picture. While their writing consists of pencil marks on the paper interspersed with occasional letters, a few children ascribe meanings to these marks and read their personal writing to an adult. Teachers make good use of books and toys for homework. Parents may borrow books and toys from the school's book and toy libraries to share with children at home and, each night a teddy bear in a carrying bag with nightclothes and a toothbrush goes home with a child. When the teddy bear returns the next day, the child talks to the class about the bear's experiences while visiting the child's home.
73. All staff have good relationships with children and manage them very well. As a result, children try hard to succeed, want to please the adults and work hard. They are interested, concentrate well for their age, behave well and have very good attitudes to school. Due to adults' praise and good modelling of speech and behaviour, children know how to improve their work. While staff make sound assessments of children's progress during lessons and intervene to help individuals when necessary from their good knowledge of each child, there is not a consistent system for tracking each child's progress through the year. In one class there is the beginning of a system of recording some observations of children's progress to inform long term records. The information on children's progress is not systematically used to guide planning to meet the needs of each group of children in the class and most activities are available for all children. Only occasionally is a group taught at a higher level to challenge their thinking.

### **Mathematical development**

74. Children enter the nursery with well below average levels of skills in all areas of mathematics, particularly in their use of mathematical language, which quickly increase. On entry, most do not know the names of common shapes. By the time they leave the nursery, most children can name squares, rectangles, triangles and circles and have a good understanding of number for their age. They understand and can use some comparative language such as larger or smaller, longer or shorter. The highest attaining children can count beyond twenty and most can count to ten. Their achievement over the year is very good and they are in line to reach the expected levels for their age by the time they transfer to the reception class. Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language also achieve well, their lack of language skills affecting their learning less in counting and shape activities. This finding reflects that made during the last inspection. However an improvement from the last inspection is in children's understanding of shapes, and measures.

75. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers and other adults use mathematical language very well throughout the day. The time spent on the carpet during registration is particularly effective in reinforcing counting skills. Children count how many children are present and answer questions such as one more than 2 is 3. Children talk about the weather and the day of the week each morning and choose the correct labels to put on display. There are good links with literacy. In one class the children were listening to the story of the Three Billy Goats Gruff which the teacher was reading from a Big Book. The teacher asked them to answer simple questions about the text, including mathematical ones, such as “ One billy goat has crossed the bridge, how many are still waiting? Children are asked to show the teacher a number of fingers to answer questions so that they don't shout out and this prepares them very well for mental maths in the National Numeracy Strategy that they meet later in their school life. In addition, all classrooms have a rich number environment. The number of children allowed to play in each area is clearly labelled and activity tables, for example, in weighing and balancing are set out for their investigations. Some adult led tasks are specifically designed for mathematics and adults keep a tick list to ensure that all children take part in them. Adults' frequent use of mathematical language throughout the day is an important factor in the progress that children make.
76. Mathematical activities are integrated well into each week's activities and have good links with other areas of the curriculum. For example, after hearing the story of the Blue Balloon, the children made simple jigsaws of blue balloons and discussed their shapes including non-regular shapes like a banana. Teachers plan their activities well using a weekly planning sheet. These plans are drawn from the topic web made at the beginning of the term and are specifically linked to the Early Learning Goals in the foundation curriculum. Teachers make accurate evaluations of what individual children know and can do at the end of each week but no overall record of their achievements is made to help teachers plan, for example, more challenging work for the highest attaining children. During lessons, teachers do make assessments of how much children know and extend their learning well through the use of open and closed questions. The nursery has a good range of resources to support mathematical development, which are clean, colourful and up-to-date. They include some very good story sacks that illustrate well known children's literature and emphasise the numbers used in the stories.

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

77. The content of the curriculum has changed since the last inspection when standards were judged to be average. Standards are now likely to be below average by the time children leave the school and join the reception year. Children enter the nursery with well below average knowledge of the world around them. For some this is the first experience they have had out of their own family homes. They are presented with a wide range of experiences to help them learn, including the daily use of computers, and the improvement they make throughout the year is good. The nursery has improved provision for information and communication technology since the last inspection and this is a major development.
78. Children are introduced to a varied curriculum. The school uses the local area very well to teach children early geographical skills and makes effective links with other areas of the foundation curriculum. For example, after walks around the local areas, photographs of the doors of their homes are taken and the numbers on the doors are used to extend children's understanding of mathematics. Some of the stories used in the curriculum are specifically chosen with this area of learning in mind. For example, after listening to and discussing a story about a concrete lorry, children learn simple facts about how to build houses. They take on the roles of builders and mix sand and water together to 'build' whilst wearing hard hats, wielding spades and moving sand from one place to another in a wheelbarrow. The language they learn and practise extends their spoken skills well and their group and collaborative work has a positive impact on their personal, social and emotional development. Where children's knowledge and understanding is above average it is in cooking. Staff give cooking a high priority. During the inspection the children were making roti bread and fruit salad. Their achievements in 'cookery' tasks are good. They have experience of them at home that gives them a good base to build upon. Children quickly learn the names of fruit, which some can peel with good dexterity for their age, and are familiar with the process of

cooking roti. Children are beginning to use computers independently. They approach them confidently, can choose a colour from a palette, fill the shapes of pictures and print them out. They are beginning to gain control of the 'mouse' and the highest attaining children can use it to make recognisable drawings of a fish with an eye and bubbles.

79. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan activities well that clearly focus on the stepping stones leading to the Early Learning Goals. The planned activities complement other areas of learning such as language, mathematical and social skills. Teachers prepare an interesting range of activities for children to explore. All adults in the classroom are well prepared and understand their roles in each lesson. Teachers extend the highest attaining children and give additional support to children with particular learning needs throughout lessons through their use of questioning and through providing additional support and challenge although this is not clear in all planning documents. They make assessments of individual children's achievements at the end of each week but there is no overall system to record their progress through the steps of the foundation curriculum and activities are not specifically planned for groups of children of different attainment.
80. The quality and quantity of resources to support this area of learning are satisfactory. Additional resources for information and communication technology have been bought recently but are not yet in use. There are collections of costumes and artefacts to support children's learning about different faiths and cultures plus collections of shells, mirrors and other equipment for early investigations in science. The school also uses the contributions of visitors and visits to places of interest well to enhance the curriculum for knowledge and understanding of the world.

### **Physical development**

81. On entry to the nursery children's attainment is below average in their physical skills. As a result of the good teaching, children achieve well and their attainment is in line with the standards expected for their age in physical development by the time that they leave the nursery. Although the standards reached are similar to the last inspection there has been good improvement in the quality of teaching and in the range and challenge of outdoor activities presented to children. Teachers provide a good range of activities both indoors and outside using small and large equipment.
82. Although the restrictions of the building mean that it is not possible for children to move spontaneously between indoor and outdoor environments, staff provide daily times for outdoor play. Teachers often match the activities in outdoor play to the story that stimulates the topic. For example, in the class that was reading 'The Big Concrete Lorry', one of the activities outside was wet sand in which children could pretend to be builders and another was painting as a decorator. Children move confidently and imaginatively and demonstrate good awareness of space when they move in role as builders and decorators. The staff work enthusiastically with the children, challenge them to improve their skills, ensure their safety and that they use the equipment very sensibly. When children were riding tricycles on the marked road, they were challenged by questions such as, 'Can you steer around the plant tub?' 'Can you ride inside the lines marking the road?' and by a nursery nurse, 'If I step on to the zebra crossing, what should you do?' There is a strong emphasis on teaching English in all sessions with constant introduction and reinforcement of vocabulary such as words to describe direction.
83. Teachers make good use of nursery nurses and bilingual support assistants. All staff and students work well as a team and children receive very good individual support. Occasionally there is too little intervention and direct teaching of skills, for example, in a session when girls did not have sufficient skills in riding a tricycle or adequate access to the vehicles because boys were too dominant. Consequently, girls' skills and progress were not as good as the boys. In another class, due to the good direct teaching of skills to girls when they had difficulties, the girls made good progress in riding and by the end of the session were successful. On the large equipment, children mount steps using alternate feet and travel down the slide confidently. They use a range of small equipment such as differing sized balls, throwing and catching the small balls and rubber

rings and kicking large balls. They show fascination when gently catching bubbles from the air and watching the bubbles reflected in the sunshine. In a session when children were transplanting small plants into soil in large tubs, they handled the plants carefully and used tools proficiently, such as a hand fork and spade, to transfer them to the larger containers. Continually through the gardening activity, adults taught new English words such as 'soil, roots and leaves'.

84. Children's manipulative skills are average for their age, in that they handle pencils and other tools and materials, such as construction sets, with increasing co-ordination and control. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to cut and stick, cook, paint, explore sand and water and handle 'small world' objects such as the farmyard. When preparing to go for a walk around the local area or for outdoor activities, children dress themselves independently only needing help with some zips and fasteners and with help, pour their own drinks from a large jug at snack times. Staff and students have good relationships with children and manage them very well. As a result, children derive great enjoyment from their physical activities, they try hard to succeed and want to please the adults. They work at a good pace, are interested, concentrate well for their age and work independently. They particularly enjoy outdoor activities and are very enthusiastic. Pupils with special educational needs learn well due to the good support from the staff in all classes that have good ratios of adults to children.

### **Creative development**

85. On entry to the nursery, children's attainment in creative development is well below average. Overall teaching is satisfactory with strengths in the teaching of skills in handling tools, using different media in art and in supporting imaginative role-play. Children's achievement is satisfactory but they attain well below expected standards in creative development by the time they leave the nursery. It is difficult to make comparisons between the judgements in the previous report and this inspection because there have been changes in the curriculum for the age group, there is a different cohort of children and a changed team of teachers.
86. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for children to use paint in different ways, to use the computer to draw and colour pictures, to cut and stick materials for collage pictures and models, for singing songs and for role-play. However, there is a strong emphasis on teaching skills and limited opportunities for children to be creative. There is an over direction and dominance by adults, particularly in art and musical activities. The art on display around the school is well presented, colourful and valued but is not truly creative because the end product is determined by the adults instead of being a response from the children to what they see, hear, smell, touch and feel. In one class children were painting pictures of fruit. Although there was a good range of fruit for children to paint, each child was guided by the adult and was told which fruit to paint and where to apply the paint, which did not allow the child to make choices or be creative. A good example of a child initiating a creative response happened during outdoor play. A child discovered an opening daffodil bud and pointed it out to the teacher as something of beauty. The teacher spent time with the child encouraging her to observe, touch and smell the flower, which created a climate where the child's curiosity was encouraged. Sometimes teachers provide opportunities for children to work alongside creative adults and at the same time, accommodate children's religious beliefs. This occurred when parents and children worked together in designing a wall hanging to celebrate Eid and the Millennium.
87. Generally in singing and dance activities, the staff are dominant and children follow the singing and movements suggested or modelled by the adults. Teachers provide limited opportunities for children to respond to musical sounds independently and creatively.

88. There are areas for role-play activities in each classroom as well as outside. Although children form groups in these areas, they usually work independently unless a member of staff participates in the activities with them. Children have difficulties in speaking in their home languages or English to one another and often need the adult to initiate ideas and share roles amongst the group. This is an instance where the minority language speakers experience more difficulties because there are no adults who speak their home languages to assist them in developing their ideas. A good example of role-play, where the teacher sensitively developed a child's ideas, occurred in a home corner. The teacher joined the group and, in answer to the teacher's questions, a child suggested that they should hold a party. The teacher helped the child to develop the theme by dressing in party clothes from the selection on display and they both dressed for the imaginary party, the teacher allowing the child to lead in choosing outfits for both of them. The group then decided on the food for the party and prepared it. In another class the role-play area was a building site and children became builders. They explored how they could construct and stack plastic bricks vertically to make a very high wall and with the good support of a bilingual assistant, were very pleased with their achievements when they succeeded in building the wall taller than the adult.