

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **HEADINGTON NURSERY SCHOOL**

Oxford

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 122968

Headteacher: Ms T Broad

Reporting inspector: Miss S Ramnath  
21334

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> January – 12<sup>th</sup> January 2000

Inspection number: 194550

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 to 5 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	William Kimber Crescent Oxford
Postcode:	OX3 8LW
Telephone number:	01865 762345
Fax number:	n/a
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Lindsay
Date of previous inspection:	3 <sup>rd</sup> March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Ms S Ramnath	Registered inspector	Mathematics Knowledge and understanding of the world	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Leadership and management Key issues for action
Ms R Hall	Lay inspector	Personal and social development	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
Mrs H Macdonald	Team inspector	Language and literacy Physical development Creative development	Teaching and learning Quality and range of opportunities for learning

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Inspection Quality Division  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Headington Nursery School is housed in a purpose-built, open-plan building in Headington, Oxfordshire. The building dates from 1958 and provides one main classroom and a number of smaller working areas, kitchen and cloakroom facilities and an outside play area. The school is a 40-place nursery, with 80 part-time places. Forty children attend each morning and each afternoon session. There are 41 girls and 39 boys on roll. Children are admitted three times a year in the term of their fourth birthday and most attend for three terms. The school has few children from ethnic minority family groups. School assessments indicate that, although the range of abilities on entry is wide, attainment overall is average for this age group and with a small but significant minority of children attaining below the expected level in personal and social development and early language skills. There are currently three children (two per cent) entered on the school's special educational needs register.

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

Headington Nursery is a caring school with many good features. It provides a sound start for young children and by the age of five, nearly all are likely to attain the nationally set learning objectives for children under five. Some exceed the standards expected of children of a similar age in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in physical development. Standards in language and literacy and mathematics are sound overall and there is a significant proportion of good achievement in communication skills, early reading skills and oral number skills. This is much to do with the direct outcome of the good standards of teaching in these areas of the curriculum and the very good ethos in a school which values children's individuality. There is a strong and purposeful leadership. The hardworking and committed staff work well together as an effective team. The school does not have a delegated budget.

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

- The ethos for learning is good. The school provides a stimulating, happy and secure start to education.
- The school is very well led by the headteacher, with the support of her staff and governors. It has a commitment to raising standards.
- The overall quality of teaching is good and no teaching observed was less than satisfactory.
- Children achieve good standards in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development.
- The school provides a good range of well-planned and meaningful activities.
- Children's behaviour is good. They behave responsibly and play well together.
- Team work is a significant strength. Staff work well together and are dedicated and committed to the promotion of good quality learning.
- Excellent use is made of the outside area throughout the year.
- The quality of information provided for parents is excellent.

### What could be improved

- The current organisation of the start of the day does not always ensure that all children experience the wide range of activities on offer.
- The children in their third term who learn more quickly are not always challenged sufficiently.

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

The many strengths of the school outweigh the weaknesses. However, they are important areas for attention. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection will be tackled. A copy of the plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of children at the school.

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

The school has improved on the quality of provision outlined in the last inspection report of March 1997. Action has been taken on all of the key issues identified in the previous report, although some aspects have not been fully addressed. Most curriculum policies and schemes of work are now in place and are effective, and those that are incomplete have been clearly identified in the school development plan. There are now careful records to monitor attainment and progress and the information is used well to set targets and to report to parents. However, the school acknowledges that a more manageable system which tracks the progress that children make in the different areas of experience would be helpful. Much has been achieved in improving curriculum planning and most learning now builds on earlier experiences. The school has improved the organisation of the start of the sessions as well as monitoring of children's choice of activities. However, further work is needed to ensure that all children experience all areas of learning. Although governors are now more actively involved in the management of the school, their role in monitoring and evaluation still needs development.

The school's capacity for improvement is good. There is a continuing strong commitment to the further enhancement of the quality educational provision for the children.

### STANDARDS

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

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

The above grades show that by the age of five, most children reach standards that are average in nearly all areas of learning with some good attainment in early reading and counting skills and speaking and listening. Children's attainment in personal and social development is above the expectations of children of a similar age. As a result, they adjust well to school routines, learn to co-operate and work independently and respond positively

to adults and to one another. By the time they enter statutory education after their fifth birthday, they are well prepared for school in most areas of learning.

Provision is better than it was at the time of the last inspection and children make better progress than they did then. However, limited opportunities are provided for the older, higher attaining children to further develop their early writing and recording skills in mathematics.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Children are well motivated and most settle to work with positive effort.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Children's behaviour is very good in both the indoor and outdoor learning environment. Children are polite and well-mannered. The school has high expectations and now has a consistent approach to behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Children share and take turns well and are respectful to one another and to adults.
Attendance	Good. Parents bring children to school on time.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	
Lessons seen overall: 20	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.*

The overall quality of teaching is good and children make sound progress. In all sessions observed, the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory. Teaching in language and literacy and personal and social development is good. It is sound in mathematics and good in numeracy.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a good balance in all areas of learning. Strong emphasis is placed on children's social and personal development and on the development of their language and early reading skills. Good provision is made for oral practice of number work and the learning of pattern and shapes. However, not enough challenging work is provided usually for the older, higher attaining children.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Children with learning and behaviour difficulties are well supported and make good progress in relation to the specific targets set for them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision; effective support from all staff leads to good progress at the early stages of learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for children's moral and social development is very good; their spiritual and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff know the children well and provide them with good welfare and support. Children are treated as individuals.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school encourages very good partnership with parents and the information which is provided is very good. Links with the community are good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	All aspects of leadership and management are good. The headteacher gives clear and positive direction to all the work of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are supportive and well informed. They are becoming increasingly involved and work well together for the good of the school and meet their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Support and monitoring of teaching and curriculum development are good.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of all its resources and this has a positive effect on standards and progress. Staff are deployed well; excellent use is made of the outdoor area to promote learning in all areas and resources are well used to support the curriculum. Careful procedures are followed before purchases are made to ensure value for money.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	There are sufficient well-qualified and experienced staff to meet the needs of the early years' curriculum. The accommodation lacks a quiet space for group teaching. Resources are barely adequate and many are worn. There are insufficient big books and computers.

## 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>• They feel their children make a good start to education.</li> <li>• They think that their children make good progress, behave well and enjoy school.</li> <li>• They are made welcome by staff and encouraged to help.</li> <li>• They find the staff friendly, approachable and informative.</li> <li>• The information which they receive from the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No concerns</li> </ul>

Overall there was a very positive response from parents, as indicated by the table to be found on page 23 of the main report. There were no complaints. There is much support for the school.

Inspectors' judgements support the positive comments of the parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and the views expressed in the 49 responses to the parents' questionnaire which were returned.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Attainment on entry to the Nursery school is average. By the age of five, overall attainment for the majority of children is likely to be in line with the nationally set learning objectives for children under five.
2. Since the last inspection, the school has succeeded in raising standards in personal and social development, physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world which are now good. It has maintained sound standards in all other areas of learning. Standards in literacy and mathematics remain sound overall, with many examples of good attainment in speaking and listening, early reading and number skills.
3. Standards in personal and social development are good. The children are developing good personal and social skills. They all work and play well together, and most concentrate suitably on the range of activities made available to them. They develop good relationships with each other and with the adults in the Nursery school. Children share and take turns and most do willingly, for example, when using the sandpit. Milk times are useful in extending the children's social skills and personal development. Children learn where everything belongs and help to clear away and put things in their correct place at the end of the session. The staff are particularly skilled at helping children to grow in confidence and this enables good progress in this area of learning with some children making very good progress.
4. Standards in language and literacy are sound overall, with good levels of attainment in listening, speaking and early reading skills. Most children listen with delight to stories and concentrate well on the pictures, words and on teachers' and communicators' explanations. They follow instructions well and are keen to answer questions and express their ideas. Many are already using full sentences and speak with good fluency for their age. Children handle books with care, replacing them on the shelves after use. Younger children understand that pictures carry meaning and can retell the story in their own words while older children know that print is read from left to right in English and recognise a familiar word from its shape on the page. Some higher attaining children recognise letter sounds and names and read familiar phrases. Children are 'confident mark makers' and write lists and messages for a range of purposes. A few write their own names correctly. However, some of the older and higher attaining children are ready for a greater challenge of work than is generally made available within literacy activities.
5. Standards in mathematics are sound overall with good attainment in early counting skills. Most children count together in a variety of situations and confidently match items one-to-one up to ten and higher attaining children count to ten or beyond by the time they are five. Children solve simple problems, for example, in a number rhyme, most can say how many currant buns are left in the baker's shop. They sort, classify and match objects correctly and order and count accurately along a number line. Many children accurately identify which is the biggest and smallest, for example, when using containers in the sand-pit. Most know the names of simple two-dimensional shapes and higher attaining children know the names of unusual shapes such as, hexagons and the number of their sides. Some older children write the correct

number symbol unaided and do simple practical addition and subtraction sums orally. However, links between oral work and the use and recognition of written numbers is underdeveloped especially for the older children who learn more quickly.

6. Standards in knowledge and understanding of the world are good. Children are interested in the world about them and enjoy talking about their activities, such as planting bulbs. During the year, some educational visits are made within the locality and further afield, for example to the local library and The Science Museum. Children develop an understanding of living creatures through monitoring the growth of tadpoles. They cut, join and build for a variety of purposes. They use their initiative in model making and begin to refine their models. They use information technology well to support their learning and several children are competent in the use of the computer mouse. Children make good progress in all aspects of this area of learning.
7. Standards in the creative area of learning are sound with the exception of music which is below the expected level. Children express their ideas and feelings with growing confidence and skill through drawing, painting and imaginative play. They use a range of materials with confidence, for example when making a puppet. They show good awareness of colour when observing a painting by Matisse of 'The Snail'. They use brushes, tools and glue with increasing control. Both boys and girls show considerable imagination in using the role-play areas inside and outdoors, often following through themes from planned activities. Although children sing songs and nursery rhymes with enthusiasm and enjoyment, opportunities to explore sound through instruments are not as well planned as the other activities.
8. Standards in physical development are good. Children move around the Nursery confidently and have easy access to the outside for the development of a wide range of movement and co-ordination skills. They use all the space well with careful attention to their own and other children's safety. They ride the large wheeled toys with confidence and skilfully manoeuvre around obstacles. Fine motor skills are also well supported, and children are encouraged to use a range of writing, drawing and painting implements. Indoors they handle construction kits, tools and pencils well, and manipulate materials such as dough with increasing precision and fine hand and finger control.
9. Children with identified special educational needs make good progress and take a full and successful part in the work planned for them. There are no significant variations in the standards attained or the progress made by children of different gender or background.
10. Progress is limited on some occasions. The organisation of the start of the morning session does not always ensure that all children participate in an appropriate range of activities. For example, although there are well-planned activities to extend mathematical and literacy skills, not all children sustain their concentration long enough to ensure that they gain full benefit. Also, the mixed ability groups for the focused numeracy and literacy sessions make it difficult to meet the needs of all children, especially the older children who learn more quickly.

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

11. Children arrive at school keen and eager to learn. They have good attitudes. They settle down quickly at the start of the session and are confident in parting from their parents and carers. They are self-assured and show maturity for their age. All

children, even the newest arrivals, understand the nursery routines and the sessions progress smoothly. In adult-directed activities children stay involved. However, the range of abilities within the groups makes it difficult at times to meet the needs of all children. The majority choose their own activities confidently and concentrate well but some children at the start of the session find the choice available too great and, due to lack of adult intervention at this time, move quickly from one activity to another. At tidying up time, all participate well, the newer children are encouraged and are helped by others and all are careful to put toys and equipment back in their right places. All children show good standards of behaviour. At lunchtime they take their places quietly and without fuss and wait patiently to be served, answering the staff politely. Relationships are very good. Children share resources well and no incidents of poor behaviour were seen. They show respect for adults and each other and work well in pairs or collaboratively such as when they play in the role-play area or when putting on a puppet show. They listened carefully to instructions, for example when making play dough and when hearing stories read by adults. They participate well in singing and music making and show perseverance and concentration. They show initiative as they select their own resources and use scissors and masking tape without requiring adult help. Children enjoy taking responsibility such as carrying the tray and handing out the milk cartons or leading the line.

12. School attendance is good in both the morning and afternoon sessions. Children enjoy coming to school and most parents maintain punctuality. The registration procedures are appropriate and all staff give a warm welcome to the children. The good levels of attendance and punctuality contribute to the standards of attainment made by children in the school.
13. A high priority is placed on settling children into the Nursery and parents are encouraged to remain until their children are ready to stay without them. The smoothness of this induction was evident in the positive attitudes of the new children. Children play happily and confidently by themselves and in groups and most concentrate well in both self-chosen activities and those that are adult-led. They persevere well and ask for help in a self-assured manner when necessary. They share toys well and collaborate easily. No disputes were observed during the inspection. Children show respect for adults when they listen to stories or instructions and for each other as they negotiate around the pathways on the tricycles. They are aware of what is right and what is wrong and remind others of what is expected, as for example, when a new child was told by another that all children had to help at 'tidy up' time.
14. Routines within the Nursery are well established. Children understand that they need their coats and boots to play outside and manage to find and put these on competently. They use equipment carefully, for example, with the scissors in the puppet making activity. They participate well in tidying up the Nursery taking care to put everything back in the correct place. They show concern for each other, for example, when involved in a role-play activity with new children, and show developing social skills and courtesy as they eat their lunch together. They have opportunities to learn about the festivals of different cultures and religions such as Hanukkah, Diwali, Eid and Christmas.
15. Children enjoy responsibility such as carrying the milk tray and handing out the cartons. The majority take the initiative well when they settle at their own chosen activities and when deciding which resources to use, for instance, when they make puppets. They manage their personal hygiene needs well and rely on little help in

putting on aprons or dressing-up clothes.

16. The attitudes values and personal development of the children have a good effect on attainment, the progress children make and the general quality of life. The relationships between staff and children have significant effects upon their behaviour and personal development.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

17. The overall quality of teaching is good and this has a positive impact on the children's learning. All the teaching observed in the Nursery was at least satisfactory and more than half was good. The teaching is shared by the headteacher, teacher and nursery nurses who work well together as a highly committed team and who create a carefully planned environment. During the inspection, every member of staff taught at least one activity which was of a good standard. Teaching is good in aspects of language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. In personal and social development the teaching is very good. All staff with a teaching role have a good understanding of how young children learn and the nationally set learning objectives for children under five. All play a significant part in helping to raise standards.
18. All staff give high priority to enabling children to extend their language and use every opportunity to extend the children's speaking and listening skills through interesting discussion about their work, the books they read and about numbers. They value the contribution of every child, answer their questions fully and pose effective and challenging questions. As a result, children increase their understanding and develop new ideas. Story time and the focused numeracy sessions are important elements in this approach. However, the potential for links with written work is not being fully exploited especially for the older children. For example, children frequently count out aloud and use numbers in speech, but teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for children to write the matching symbols. Progression in writing is slow and not all older children are provided with sufficient opportunities to extend their early writing skills.
19. Planning is of a consistently good quality and a wide range of meaningful and imaginative learning activities are well-organised. Since the last inspection, staff take care to identify the learning intentions. As a result, the quality of assessment has improved and work is better matched to the learning needs of most children. Introductions to activities are clear with the learning points carefully highlighted so that children understand what to do.
20. Methods and organisation are good. Staff employ a wide range of strategies so that there is a good balance of adult focused large and small group, individual and self-selected work both indoors and in the well-organised outdoor area. They provide regular times when children work with adults on structured activities to enable children to acquire new skills and knowledge on a regular and systematic basis. At the end of these sessions, children report back to the group. The level of adult intervention at these times is suitable and staff listen carefully to the children's comments and prompt them to enable them to explain their thoughts and ideas. Children make good use of the opportunities to reinforce main teaching points and consolidate and extend learning thoroughly. The way the groups are organised usually supports children's social learning and confidence well. At times however, the needs of children are not always fully met.

21. The staff generally have high expectations of the children, although the children who learn more quickly are not always fully challenged. This slows the progress of some children. Not all activities are planned with sufficient awareness of the different developmental levels of the children. In a numeracy session for example, there was insufficient challenge for those who could already make correct mental calculations and nor was there sufficient attention given to the younger children who could not learn as quickly.
22. All staff manage the children well. The Nursery is well-established, there are orderly routines which mean that children know what is expected. Behaviour is handled in a caring and sensitive manner. It is consistent, which is an improvement from the last inspection. As a result, children are eager to take an active part in the work and are being helped to become confident and independent learners. All members of staff establish a secure and happy environment within the classrooms. They are relaxed and pleasant in manner, using praise and encouragement to develop children's confidence. This has a beneficial effect on the standards attained by the children.
23. All staff demonstrate a good awareness of the children who experience difficulties and provide sensitive support. The good quality of assessment procedures and close links between staff and parents mean that children who need extra help are readily identified. Teachers then use one-to-one and small group teaching strategies to engage the children in well-chosen learning experiences. Children who use English as an additional language are similarly supported. In this way, all members of the staff play a significant part in helping to raise standards of attainment and to improve learning.
24. The use of time and resources allocated to the areas of learning is good. Children have access to the outdoor area for most of the year and the teaching programme includes a range of well-planned, out of doors work activities. Some of the indoor activities are represented outdoors so that children have similar opportunities for learning. During the inspection, the school's one computer was broken. However, information technology is used well to support learning despite limited hardware and a small selection of software.
25. Assessment procedures in the school are now good and have improved since the last inspection. Detailed assessment, including the collection of photographic evidence, evaluations of work and the maintenance of children's profiles mean that there is a wealth of evidence. Satisfactory tracking sheets are used by most staff for all activities to note which children have 'experienced' an activity. This information is not always reliable as monitoring takes place during the self-chosen sessions when children are moving around the nursery. All staff however, use good questioning strategies to assess children's levels of understanding and to extend thinking. Praise is well used to inform children of their achievements and sensitive support is provided on how they might improve.
26. The information produced in assessment makes an important contribution to planning children's work. Staff make good use of their daily written notes of observations in end-of-day discussions to make sure that the children who need more experience and teaching may receive it. Although there is no formal homework, children often take books home to share with their families. Mathematics packs are now being made available to extend this initiative further.

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

27. Headington Nursery provides a wide range of stimulating learning activities both in and out of doors. The outdoor environment is used very effectively as an extended classroom, and provides activities for all areas of learning, often linked with and emanating from activities initiated in the classroom. The well-planned curriculum covers all the national areas of learning with particular strengths in personal, social, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Most aspects of creative development are good. However, music is not consistently included in the nursery curriculum.
28. The planning at all levels has improved since the last inspection and is now well supported by schemes of work in nearly all areas of learning. The teachers and nursery nurses take an active part in planning and developing the curriculum. Staff are fully aware of and make provision for children with particular needs such as those with speech difficulties or who have English as their second language. Care is taken to ensure that all children have equal access to the curriculum. However, the needs of the older children who learn more quickly are not always met.
29. The teaching provides well for the learning of speaking, listening, early reading skills and oral skills in numeracy. However, the tasks and activities provided for the older, high attaining children, do not extend their skills in writing and other aspects of mathematics.
30. Both planning and practice take full account of the children's interests in both sessions. Staff are targeted to various activities and groups. The day-to-day planning clearly indicates what the children are to learn and the range of activities to be provided, both in and out of doors. In the first session, there is a flexible approach to what many of the children do. In some instances, this flexibility does not ensure that all children have experienced the activities planned for them. This makes it difficult for staff to assess whether objectives have been achieved for individuals.
31. Relationships in the Nursery are very good. The staff value and respect the children. This ethos provides an environment where all the children enjoy coming to school and where all develop positive attitudes to learning.
32. Spiritual development is good. The staff plan activities which will excite the children so that they wish to talk about them. In the outdoor classroom, observations of growth and the changing seasons are used well. Equally, the quality of the story telling can bring gasps of delight from the children, as the pages turn to show yet another exciting picture.
33. Moral and social development are very good. All staff deal sensitively with the children and are able, through discussion and encouragement, to deal with the rare examples of misbehaviour. The tone throughout the Nursery is of a calm approach. As a result, the children are polite and friendly and will talk to visitors when asked. The children play well together and are used to taking turns, as for example, when playing outdoors with the bicycles.
34. Cultural development is good and has improved since the last inspection. Additional resources have been bought to increase the level of awareness of other cultures.



Books, artefacts and visits and visitors are used well to promote cultural awareness. Stories, role-play and creative activities, which include observation of the work of other artists, help the children to learn about cultural differences. Satisfactory links have been established with the local community. Local shops donate prizes for raffles and free software from a local company is provided for the school to assess its effectiveness. Nursery students are employed and gain valuable experience working alongside other staff. The governing body in its report to parents, wishes to extend the school's links with the community.

35. There are well-developed links with other schools and the headteacher teaches in one of the receiver schools. At partnership meetings, the headteacher shares knowledge and expertise with other colleagues. Detailed records are sent to the children's new schools and the school self-review indicates that transition from the Nursery stage to the first school is smooth.
36. The teaching provides very well for the children who are on the special needs register. The requirements of the Code of Practice are fully met and relevant, individual education plans are known by all the staff. Early identification is a strong feature and these children are reviewed regularly in order to assess progress or lack of it. Parents are kept informed and good relationships are established and sustained. Support from outside agencies is variable, particularly the provision made for speech therapy.

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

37. The Nursery places a high priority on the care given to children and this makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved. This was noted as a good feature in the last inspection. Parents are positive in their comments about this area. An effective behaviour policy is now implemented consistently and results in high standards of behaviour and in children developing confidence and self-esteem. Each child is known as an individual and, throughout the day, their choices are respected. Attendance is recorded and monitored appropriately.
38. The governors and staff have spent time reviewing the health and safety policy and have undertaken risk assessments in all areas, resulting in a recognition by all staff of their responsibilities in the area of health and safety and of a formal system. There is an ongoing training programme for first aid that ensures all staff have up-to-date qualifications. Records of any first aid incidents are suitably maintained and parents are informed.
39. New children are introduced to the Nursery sensitively and their parents are invited to stay with them for as long as they need and as a result, new children settle quickly. Children are well supervised at all times; lunchtime is a particularly pleasant, unhurried experience as third term children, from both morning and afternoon sessions, sit as a family and develop their social skills.
40. The staff use assessment information effectively to guide the planning. However, not all information is sufficient to ensure this happens consistently. Incidental observations are recorded in the staff's observation files and these are extended during regular discussions with group leaders. These assessments cover both adult focused and child initiated activities. The daily evaluations provide much accurate information which enables the staff to plan for the next stage of learning.

41. The main weakness of this method is the difficulty in assessing both the adult-led and child-initiated activities, particularly when a minority of children do not complete the task and time is spent tracking their progress. In the subsequent discussions at the end of the day, accurate assessments are made for the majority of the children's progress. However, for a minority of children, this system is not working as effectively as it might.
42. The recording of children's learning is good. Formal records are kept to monitor attainment and progress in the children's profiles and these are used well to set targets and write detailed and accurate reports for parents.

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

43. The views of the school expressed by parents and carers are very positive. The school has a good reputation and parents are appreciative of the care shown by staff and the good relationships that exist between staff and children. They find staff very approachable and are satisfied with the good information provided about the curriculum and their child's individual progress. They particularly appreciate the way the Nursery increases children's confidence, self-esteem and independence and all feel that their children are being given a positive start to their school life. Since the last inspection, the Nursery has maintained a strong supportive body of parents who make a significant contribution to the children's success.
44. The relationship the school has forged with parents is a strength and assists well in children's learning. The quality of information provided is of a high standard and parents are kept well informed about progress. The school is very open in sharing children's targets, profiles and achievements with parents. Through meetings which address issues such as reading, special needs and behaviour management at home, and through a series of booklets such as 'Becoming A Writer', the Nursery is encouraging parents to improve their parenting skills and participate fully in their child's learning. Children in their last term are given homework relating to their literacy activities, which is well supported. Parents' help enhances the daily routines of the Nursery, particularly when they read with groups of children on a regular basis.

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

45. The school is well lead by a professionally able and caring headteacher who works closely with the governors and all members of staff. She has a good understanding of what is needed for improvements in the school and suitable emphasis is placed on raising standards and the quality of teaching. Her vision for the provision for the learning of young children is fully shared with staff, and she appreciates their strengths. She has supported staff in making the necessary adjustments to the organisation and improvement in the quality of provision since the earlier inspection. Her collegiate approach to leadership, where all contributions are valued, has helped to develop a cohesive team who share a common purpose. All staff work well together.
46. The school plans well for change and its development plan is a useful document covering a period of one year in detail, planned in outline for three years. Priorities are carefully considered and are based on a thorough analysis of the school's needs, and a review of developments to date. They are costed and the related training is matched to the identified targets. Regular review of the plan takes place to see what has been achieved by the school and all are kept fully informed about the progress made.

47. The school's aims are clear, shared by staff, governors and parents and are successfully reflected throughout its work. It is successful in achieving its aim of creating a happy, caring community. Within this environment, all children are highly valued and cared for, and are encouraged to aim for maturity and independence. The school is aware of the importance of meeting the needs of children of all abilities and tries to ensure that they all have equality of access to the curriculum. However, staff recognise that the needs of the older children who learn more quickly are not always met in the mixed ability groups and that the present organisation of the morning session makes it difficult to ensure that all children have experienced the activities planned for them.
48. Monitoring of attainment is given a high priority and has developed continuously since the previous inspection with considerable success. There are now good systems in place by which the headteacher effectively monitors standards and provision. Through her example, the headteacher appropriately supports teaching. She has benefited from the local authority adviser's observation of teaching and planning. Staff meet daily on an informal basis to monitor and evaluate the provision as well as individual children's attainment and progress. The systems which have developed enable the headteacher and her staff to monitor and evaluate the work of the school effectively
49. Governors have confidence in the headteacher. They take a close and supportive interest in the school. There is evidence of an improvement from the earlier inspection. They are now involved in setting targets and priorities for the future work of the school. Although governors understand their responsibilities and fulfil their statutory duties with regards to the curriculum of the school, their role in monitoring the quality of provision is underdeveloped. However, through regular visits and the headteacher's reports, they are kept well informed about the school strengths and areas for improvement.
50. The school manages its resources well and although it does not have a fully delegated budget, all available funding is well targeted towards meeting agreed priorities in the school development plan. Governors are kept well informed. They are appropriately involved in making spending decisions and have a good oversight of the budget.
51. Good procedures are in place to ensure the cost effectiveness of the goods and services that the school purchases and it seeks several quotations for major items of expenditure before making a choice. Computerised accounts are used well to provide the headteacher and governors with timely and relevant information for financial decision making.
52. The governing body ensures that all funds delegated for children with special educational needs are used correctly and wisely. Grants for specific purposes such as staff training are carefully allocated to support school improvement initiatives as well as to meet the needs of all staff. The substantial funds raised by parents are used appropriately to improve the range of resources and equipment available for children. Overall, the school makes effective use of its available resources to promote children's learning.
53. The school is well staffed with teachers, nursery nurses and assistants to meet the demands of the curriculum for all the children who attend the Nursery. Additionally, the Nursery effectively uses students in training. All members of staff have responsibility for a group of children of all ages and abilities and know these children very well. They are all involved at all levels in planning and evaluating the daily curriculum. This

corporate approach is effective in raising achievement and in the quality of care and education of all the children. The school has suitable formal and informal induction procedures. These work well for supply staff and students. A system of appraisal, designed by a governor, is in place. All staff have been interviewed and targets for their professional development have been agreed. A staff development plan is in place and in-service training is effectively linked to this. These systems have a positive effect on the quality of education provided and on the children's attitudes, progress and attainment.

54. Since the last inspection, the quality of the accommodation has improved, although it is still not ideal. Low, dividing walls have been removed and staff are able to observe children at all times. The toilets and cloakroom area are also now easily accessible and a shower facility has been provided.
55. The classroom is well organised and provides a stimulating environment for children and staff to enjoy. The entrance hall, staff room and headteacher's office are used for withdrawal for literacy and numeracy groups where a quiet environment is needed for maximum concentration. However, the children are often cramped in these spaces and an additional designated quiet room would enhance the accommodation.
56. The development of the outdoor area continues to be used very well. This outdoor provision extends the indoor curriculum very well in all areas. For example, role-play opportunities can be found in a cottage in the Nursery and in the cottage outside. The power assisted veranda blinds enable outdoor activities to continue in spite of cold and wet conditions! Outdoor resources, such as wheeled toys, are sufficient, but constant use means that they are now looking worn and tired.
57. Commercial play resources within the Nursery are barely adequate in spite of good housekeeping. The constant and effective use of these resources means that their condition soon deteriorates. The staff supplement disposable resources ingeniously by their own contribution, by requesting parental help and also with help from local companies. The storage of resources is satisfactory and the children now take responsibility for the care and organisation of the tools and equipment they use.
58. A wide range of story books is used well throughout the day, but there is a shortage of big books. Hardware and software for information technology are limited. The stock of untuned percussion instruments is limited but there are adequate tuned percussion instruments to meet the requirements of the music curriculum. Accessibility is satisfactory in all other subjects.
59. The issues raised in respect of management in the last inspection have been addressed. Systems are now in place to monitor teaching and learning and governors' involvement is increasing. The school has built on its previous strengths and has improved the quality of planning, reviewed policies and now has in place most schemes of work. Assessment procedures have improved. The school is in a good position to continue its improvements because of the good leadership provided by the headteacher and the effective support of the governing body.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

**The school is operating well, but in order to build upon the many positive aspects of the school and further improve the standard of work and quality of the education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff, in co-operation with the local education authority, should:**

- ensure that there are more regular planned opportunities for children, especially those in their in their third term who learn more quickly and to link their oral work more closely to their written work, especially in number and stories;
- review the current organisation of the start of the day to ensure that children experience fully the activities planned for them.

***In addition, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:***

- review assessment procedures to make them more manageable;
- as soon as finances allow, replenish and extend the range of commercial resources;
- ensure that the outside area is secure from vandalism;
- provide additional opportunities for children to experience fully all aspects of creative development especially in music.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	9

### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	9.5	57.1	33.3	0.0	0.0	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***

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	41
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	2

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

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

### ***Financial information – not applicable***

Financial year	[ ]
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	£
Total income	[ ]
Total expenditure	[ ]
Expenditure per pupil	[ ]
Balance brought forward from previous year	[ ]
Balance carried forward to next year	[ ]

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	80
Number of questionnaires returned	49

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	96	4	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	73	27	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	35	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	24	4	4	45
The teaching is good.	84	16	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	33	0	2	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	14	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	41	43	0	0	16
The school works closely with parents.	55	43	0	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	86	12	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	76	16	0	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	76	16	0	0	8



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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

#### **Personal and social development**

60. The personal and social development of the children is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection where personal and social education was considered to be satisfactory. A particular improvement has been the children's response in the lunchtime session. This makes a significant contribution to the children's personal and social development and they respond well to the opportunities offered to them.
61. Currently, most children are expected to exceed the standards expected nationally by the time they are five. During the inspection, children were entering the Nursery for the first time since their induction. Due to the effective relationships established by the adults, they settled immediately and it was difficult to identify some of the youngest children amongst the other children. There was no evidence of nervousness or apprehension. This early progress continues throughout their time in the Nursery.
62. All the adults in the Nursery set a good role model in relationships. The tone throughout the day is calm. Praise, not blame, is used very effectively to show the children what is expected of them. All the children respond well to this approach and they are aware of the presence of others, sometimes in the cramped conditions of the sand area or when playing with the small wheeled toys. Most are able to take turns and share. New children adapt easily to the environment because the well-established children allow them to take part in an activity such as water play. The well-established children also know that the new children are allowed more leeway in their choice of activity than they themselves and this is accepted without rancour.
63. Book sharing with an adult, often a parent, is a well-established routine in the range of activities provided in the first session. Most children are able to do this and share a book from beginning to end. In groups, they are learning to listen to instructions and also in creative activities, when they observe a painting first and then try to reproduce it using a range of media and materials. Most children are able to concentrate and persevere and complete the activities planned. However, some children do not achieve the objectives in spite of good adult support. These children are not frustrated by the task itself and have paid sufficient attention to it according to their maturity. They are able to ask for help and accept it from the supporting adults. However, on some occasions, more could be expected of the children in persevering with a task.
64. In creative activities, the children are encouraged and most are able to make choices. They choose from paints when painting outside. A wide range of recycled materials and media are provided for them to make choices. In role-play, some children, mostly girls, can initiate the action including other children, if they wish to take part, by playing different roles. Most of the materials and equipment are set out for them in the activities both indoors and outdoors. Some children are accustomed to offering an alternative to the one suggested, knowing that their ideas will be received sympathetically. At the end of the sessions, all the children are expected to tidy up and return resources to their place. This is so well understood by the well-established children, that new children are reminded of their responsibilities! Children are taught and quickly learn to change from indoor to outdoor clothing. They understand that handwashing after the toilet and before lunch is very important. At lunchtimes, those

who stay learn about the importance of good manners and that eating is a social and enjoyable occasion where they can talk about themselves and what they enjoy about nursery school. The presence of an adult at each table effectively promotes this aspect of social development.

65. Teaching of these aspects of children's development is good and personal and social development is given a high priority. Staff are welcoming in their approach to the children and unobtrusively give positive encouragement to unacceptable behaviour, sometimes merely by involving the child in the activity or a gentle reminder to the child who needs to learn to wait their turn. The strategies are subtle and very successful and help to create a calm atmosphere which provides a good basis for learning.

### **Language and literacy**

66. This area of learning permeates every aspect of the school's work, particularly speaking and listening and in the acquisition of early reading skills. As in the last inspection, attainment is satisfactory overall and good in speaking and listening. Most children are able to attain the desirable learning outcomes, however, progress in writing could be improved for the older children.
67. The teaching throughout the nursery day focuses appropriately on developing the children's listening and speaking skills. The quiet timbre of all adult voices sets the tone for attentive listening in one-to-one with an adult, in shared book sessions and in groups receiving instructions. Stories and rhymes play a major role in the curriculum and the current theme, 'Traditional Tales', is used well alongside story sessions to encourage listening and speaking. In small groups, the children sit quietly and look at the storyteller, answering questions and sometimes finishing off well-known, repeated phrases. In a small woodland scene set out to demonstrate the sequence of the story of the three little pigs, most children listened well to the teacher and were able to discuss both with her and with each other, what would happen next. Some younger children were unable to sustain concentration and did not derive full benefit from the teacher's attempt at story sequencing.
68. The children are confident in their use of role-play, not only in the 'Three little pigs' cottage but also when inventing stories and playing with each other with small world toys. The staff are adept at responding to opportunities for spontaneous role-play. A group of chairs set out by a nursery nurse was used by the children to make a bus where each child played a role, including a driver and ticket collector. After the initial organisation, the children were left by themselves and they talked in role for a further ten minutes. The few children with English as a second language and the children with special educational needs, are well supported by all the adults in the development of their oral language.
69. Early reading skills are well taught and all staff focus on developing the children's love of books. As a result, the children enjoy books and handle them carefully. They browse quietly through a book by themselves or with a friend, turning the pages carefully and putting the books away in their proper place. When sharing the book with an adult or listening to a story, many can follow the print and point to the correct picture. Most children in their third term understand the way that English print is organised. They understand that parts of words can be sounded separately and can recognise the sound of a familiar word from its shape on the page. The higher attaining children can recognise letter sounds and names and use sounds to build single syllable words and they can read familiar phrases. Average children can

pronounce some letters of the alphabet and hear letter sounds and point to some of them.

70. Sessions which draw upon the structure of literacy are good. The work on phonics is challenging, particularly for the average attaining children, and in all the lessons observed, the children make good progress. This is consolidated by work to complete at home. These sessions are fruitful and could usefully be extended and more effectively targeted to children of different ages and ability. Overall, letter recognition and phonetic sounds could be more systematically taught to the children in their third term.
71. Many opportunities are provided for children to use writing to support their play and they understand that writing takes many forms; a letter, a set of instructions, a list, a menu, and so forth. The children's early attempts at making marks are valued and there is an ongoing activity which is the making of a book which re-tells one of the traditional tales. A wide range of writing tools and a selection of papers are provided. Fine motor skills development which will help them with their writing, is included in the range of physical activities provided. The children are confident mark makers. Progression in writing is slow due to lack of challenge for some older children. Opportunities to teach correct letter formation are not consistently built into the programme of work.
72. The quality of teaching is good. All the children are keen to learn to listen, speak, read and write. All the staff have a good knowledge of the desirable learning outcomes and an understanding of the literacy strategy and its implications for the Year R children. A good range of strategies is used throughout the day and resources are carefully chosen and used imaginatively to foster the children's interest in reading and writing. Currently, the range of big books and associated texts is limited.
73. Children with special educational needs are identified early and are well supported. Planning has improved since the last inspection and involves the whole teaching team who work very well together. However, it is very difficult for the teachers to keep daily evaluations of progress in the activities in the first session. This is demanding. Not all children achieve the objectives which have been set for them.
74. Parents and carers are used very well in school to share reading books and the school has prepared a helpful information book for parents about early reading. A shared reading folder to improve home/school liaison is being prepared.

## **Mathematics**

75. Attainment in mathematics is likely to be in line with the desirable learning outcomes, with some children reaching standards beyond those expected by the time they are five years old. Most children make sound progress. They develop mathematical understanding through the provision of a wider range of well-prepared activities, and purposeful play. This marks an improvement upon the finding of the last inspection.
76. Most children attain good number recognition. They count confidently and accurately to ten and several count well beyond this by the time that they leave the Nursery. They place numbers in order on a number line, identify a missing number in a sequence and solve simple addition and subtraction problems orally. Most successfully sort, match, order and compare numbers of objects. Many recognise patterns and correctly identify and name simple two-dimensional shapes, such as

circles, squares and triangles. A few name some of their properties, for example, how many sides a triangle has and know the correct word for a hexagon. Some higher attaining children develop a basic understanding of tessellation when working with shaped blocks to fit shapes together. Some older children can write the correct number symbol unaided and do simple addition and subtraction sums orally. All children successfully use number in many areas of the curriculum. For example, when mixing ingredients for play dough children use non-standard measures when counting the number of cups of flour needed. During sand and water activities, children begin to understand basic concepts related to capacity as they play with containers and develop their understanding of correct mathematical vocabulary such as 'bigger/smaller' and 'heavier/lighter' when making comparisons. By taking part in role-play in the home corner, they become aware of numbers when laying the table and using the telephone to dial numbers. Most understand 'over', 'under', 'on top of' and 'through' and this is well reinforced through discussions between staff and children when using the climbing apparatus. They use information technology to support their mathematical development and develop sound mathematical skills which provide them with a satisfactory basis for the National Curriculum in Key Stage 1.

77. Most children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in focused mathematics sessions and make sound progress over time by experiencing a range of teacher-led or self-chosen activities. Many of the youngest children recite numbers to ten and by the time children leave the Nursery, they have progressed well and are able to count beyond ten securely and with confidence. The school's daily routines ensure that children build on previous knowledge and learning. This is consolidated by frequent use. For example, the understanding of addition and subtraction is reinforced by encouraging the counting of the number of children in the group during the milk break. This helps children's understanding of these processes. When making dough, they use terms such as 'bigger' and 'smaller' and when playing board games they recognise the shapes that are needed.
78. The children respond well to mathematical learning and most show keen and positive attitudes to their work. In focussed sessions they concentrate well, often for much longer than expected for children of this age. This has a positive impact on their attainment and progress. However, at the start of the morning session when children make their own choices, their response is only satisfactory. Many find difficulty with sustaining concentration as children constantly join and leave the activity. Their relationship with all adults is good and children enjoy playing alongside, and with others. They join in number rhymes, songs and counting games enthusiastically and show good respect and care for the equipment.
79. Teaching in mathematics is sound overall, (and good in the focussed numeracy sessions). Staff have a good knowledge of the desirable learning outcomes and they plan a wide range of practical activities to extend children's mathematical skills both indoors and in the outside area. Teachers work hard to provide interesting ways of introducing mathematical concepts at an appropriate level for the mixed ability groups. Learning intentions are successfully integrated into songs, rhymes, games and other activities. In these sessions, teachers use accurate mathematical terms and this helps the children's learning. Skilful questioning contributes well to the consolidation and extension of skills, knowledge and understanding. However, the opportunities provided for correct number formation and challenge for the older and higher attaining children are infrequent. Where teaching is less successful, although still satisfactory, the pace is slower due to the many interruptions as children join and leave the group at different times. As a result, it is difficult for adults to ensure that all children have

experienced the identified learning objectives. Building on previous learning is not always guaranteed. Overall, good relationships result in good management of the children. Older children however, and those who learn more quickly, are not always sufficiently challenged.

80. Since the last inspection, the school has implemented the mathematics policy. Assessment procedures are more rigorous and the information from the focussed session is used well. Staff are aware of the difficulties of tracking pupils during the first session in order that all pupils have experience of the intended learning. Resources are adequate, accessible and used well.

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

81. Knowledge and understanding of the world includes early experience of science, design and information technology, history and geography. Attainment overall is likely to exceed the nationally expected outcomes because children are given good quality day-to-day opportunities for learning through exploration, observation and examination of features of living things, objects and events in the natural world. Most children make good progress in this area of learning. The school has consolidated attainment in this area and has improved on standards since the last inspection when it was found to be average.
82. Children have a good understanding of living things and life cycles. They monitor the growth of their frog spawns and know that if they survive that they will become frogs. They are becoming observant and some ask relevant questions about how things work and why things happen. For example, when making play dough they look closely at what happens when the ingredients are blended together and discuss the changes that occur when they are cooked. They know the names of the different parts of a plant, notice the changes as a bulb grows into a plant and learn about the conditions needed for growth. Children investigate what happens when water is poured on sand and know how ingredients change when they are mixed and then baked into Christmas cakes or made into soup. They use their senses when making popcorn and confidently describe the things they could hear and see. They have a direct knowledge of the forces used to pull and push carts and wheelbarrows.
83. Children learn about the present and past in the context of talking about their families, remembering favourite toys when as a baby and recalling things they have done. Their visit to the science museum gave them some understanding of the times when dinosaurs lived and that things change over time. They know about the immediate area around the school and where they live, through their visits to the local post office, library and shops. Children start to develop their geographical vocabulary in the course of following directions, making routes in the outside play area and pointing out different parts of the school. In their construction activities, they competently use construction equipment to make models and to build elaborate road systems from wooden blocks. Most choose from a good range of recycled and collage materials which is the most suitable to make the model of their choice and develop skills in joining different materials. They sometimes change their method, by fixing them together, to achieve the desired effect. They use computer programs independently to support their learning and most operate the mouse or arrow keys adeptly to operate programmes in matching shapes, pictures and letters. In their play, children show that they know how telephones and other home-based electronic equipment are controlled.

84. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in all aspects of this area of learning. The well-planned provision and good teaching ensure that children have plenty of worthwhile learning opportunities and chances to practise a wide variety of skills. Children increase their ability to observe similarities and differences through the well-organised learning opportunities. They begin to recognise ways of improving their models and their drawings become more detailed.
85. Children respond well to this broad area of learning. Most have good levels of motivation, concentrate well and are keen to find out more. They behave very well, both indoors and outside and this has a positive impact on their attainment and progress. They handle equipment with careful control as when using a magnifying lens to look closely at growing bulbs and show a suitable awareness of safety. Relationships are good.
86. Teaching for knowledge and understanding is good. The planned curriculum is broad and it offers good first-hand experiences which are appropriate. Staff have good subject knowledge across the various aspects of this area of learning, are aware of the children's interest and organise stimulating activities which engage the children's curiosity. They interact and question the children skilfully to ensure that they have understood and they then reinforce the learning by extending activities whenever necessary. Good use is made of the outdoor area throughout the year to extend learning. Assessments are frequent and regular, and well focused to measure progress. The information is used well to plan the next steps of learning for all children, including those who are slower than others to learn.

### **Physical development**

87. Attainment in physical development is good, particularly in the development of confidence and mobility in the outdoor environment. Here, the spacious outdoor area and a good range of well-planned activities promote the development of confidence, agility and physical control. The children soon become aware of each other as they stand in line waiting to put on their wellington boots. Equally, when riding bikes and pushing other wheeled vehicles and when manoeuvring round other obstacles, they show an awareness of the need for safety. There were very few instances of children tripping or bumping into each other during the inspection. When setting out the crates for an audience for a puppet play, the children were aware of the allocated space. In the large wet-sand area, where the focus was on mathematics, the children had good opportunities to dig vigorously to make a castle or a big hole. This space outside is also used effectively for singing and dancing in a circle and parachute play. Parachute play involves the children in vigorous and imaginative exercise during which they gain in confidence in leaping and landing with control. The inclement weather meant that the large climbing apparatus was unused and children had no opportunities to play chasing or ball games.
88. Both indoors and out, the children experience a number of well-prepared activities which help them to develop and improve their skills in handling and manipulating small items and materials. Outside in the construction area, when weather permits, large bricks are used to make and design things and the children experiment with wet sand. Whatever the weather, papers and paints are always available for the children to use.
89. Most of the children can hold pencils and crayons and other writing utensils with the correct grip. Those who have difficulty are provided with special grip pencils to enable them to gain in confidence. In craft activities, the children use scissors and prit sticks

with increasing dexterity. Dough and other malleable materials are used well to push and mould into various shapes. Construction sets, small world toys, train sets, track ways and puzzles provide a range of activities which require careful and accurate manipulation. Music and dance, although not included as a regular feature, provide another context for physical development. Children clap or tap in time to a song or the untuned percussion instruments.

90. The teaching is good. The outdoor area operates successfully as an additional outdoor classroom. Here, the adults are always involved in extending the children's learning and they watch carefully to ensure the children are working safely. Informal monitoring is used to check whether the children have experienced the range of activities on offer but this does not always ensure that the objectives which have been set are achieved.
91. Most small scale activities are well directed, for example art, craft and writing tasks, where adults are used well to support the children. Informal focusing on pairs and groups occurs during small world toys and constructional play. This is often effective as the adult present challenges and extends the children's designs and constructions.
92. Children with special educational needs have full access to all activities which ensures physical development. Adults are always aware of the minority of children whose progress in fine and gross motor skills is a concern and they make appropriate provision.
93. Resources for both indoor and outdoor physical development are satisfactory and there are plans, when funds permit, to purchase new small equipment for the outdoor area. This is timely. Currently, there is no written policy for outdoor play. This has not detracted from the quality of the work seen, but when time allows, a systematic recording of the range of experiences offered would enable continuity should there be any staff changes.

### **Creative development**

94. Children attain well for their age, particularly in their exploration of colour, texture, shape and form and are likely to achieve the desirable learning outcomes in these aspects before they reach five years of age. They are less likely to do so in the exploration of sound. Children are accustomed to selecting from a wide range of materials which are well organised and accessible. In the making of a puppet, all could use scissors and masking tape and had learned to fold and tear, fitting pieces of paper and cardboard together with some dexterity. When observing a painting by Matisse of 'The Snail', the children were able to choose colours from a range of media which included all colours of paper, tissue paper and crayons. During this activity, they were able to recognise the range of colours and some older children were able to accurately match their colours with those of the original painting. Throughout their time in the Nursery, they are encouraged to observe the changes in the garden and record these changes in their artwork. Scrutiny of work from the past shows that high attaining children are able to observe and draw accurately.
95. Opportunities for free painting are offered and taken on a daily basis. All the paints are ready mixed, but the wall display of leaves shows that the children have learned to mix paint and make simple prints.

96. The children dress up and play realistically in the 'cottage' and with small world toys. They enjoy imitating the mannerisms of others, particularly adults, for example 'on the bus' or in the puppet play outside. The dramatic story telling by the adults engrosses the children and they become caught up in the characters and the plot.
97. Exploration of sound is less well developed. The children enjoy singing well-known nursery rhymes and clapping to rhythm. However, there is no open access to musical instruments and musical experience appears to be informal and spontaneous and not as well planned as the other activities.
98. The quality of teaching of aspects of this area of learning is good. The staff plan well and provide a good range of appropriate activities and experiences which enable children to express and develop their ideas and feelings and respond imaginatively. A work shop area has been set aside with a wide range of equipment that is easily accessible to children. This area is in constant use. Throughout the year, displays of books, pictures, materials and posters of artists are used to show different patterns. Commercial equipment is also used to explore pattern.
99. During the inspection, the art and craft activities were well targeted by adults, one of whom was a student in training. Their methods and organisational skills were good. They interacted sensitively with the children, encouraging them to participate and extend their learning, often into dramatic play.
100. The children's work is valued and displayed effectively and art and craft are used well to help the children develop independent skills. Tracking of the children takes place to ensure that they all have the opportunity for the range of creative activities provided, and all children, including those with special educational needs, have equal access. The scheme of work focuses appropriately on the learning intentions according to desirable learning outcomes and the advice with regard to adult input is appropriate. The adults attempt to track the children's experience in this area of learning. However, in some instances, this is not successful and some individuals, particularly the younger, less mature children, do not fully achieve the objectives set by the teacher.